Checklists : Resume, Cover Letter, References

RESUME Heading:
- ☐ Name stands out (uses larger font, **bold** and/or CAPS)
- ☐ Includes address (optional), phone number & professional sounding email address
- ☐ Include both current and permanent addresses only if necessary; include dates ("After May, 2017:..")

Summary of Qualifications or Objective (optional):
- ☐ Clearly and concisely states the type of job and organization/industry being sought
- ☐ Focuses on experience and skills the employer needs, not what job seeker will gain

Education:
- ☐ Education section includes: **Degree**, Major(s)/Minor(s), University and College (optional), (expected) Graduation Date. GPA is optional (if above a ~3.0. Include scale, to two decimal points: x.xx/4.00)
- ☐ High School Education has been removed if more than approx. 2 years old
- ☐ Related courses and class projects are listed if education is the most relevant information on resume

Experience:
- ☐ Category heading for experience matches the position or industry, "Design Experience" or "Research Experience" or "Marketing Experience" and includes all relevant experience
- ☐ Other experience is listed later, under "Other Work Experience" (or similar heading)
- ☐ Each experience includes job title, organization name, division or dept., location (city, state), and dates of employment (include months if less than ten)
- ☐ Street address, supervisor name and phone number have been removed
- ☐ Details and results are included about the position to demonstrate skills and accomplishments relevant to goals of the resume ("bullets" or "skill statements")
- ☐ Bullet points all have parallel content; one is not a subset of another
- ☐ **Language from the position description** is used to help target the resume
- ☐ Each statement begins with a strong and descriptive action verb, in appropriate tense
- ☐ Information in skill statements ("bullet points") is quantified where possible
- ☐ Dates are included on the right margin so as to not detract from position title or employer information
- ☐ Accomplishments and results or impact are included wherever possible

Other Categories:
- ☐ Other sections (memberships, honors, volunteering) demonstrate transferable skills
- ☐ Role, skills, accomplishments, affiliation (such as University of Minnesota, for school club participation) and dates of memberships have been included

Overall Appearance:
- ☐ The headings stand out from the rest of the text, making categories easy to find
- ☐ There is a balance of text and white space when holding the page at arm's length
- ☐ Margins (approx. 1 ") are appropriately adjusted to make content fit well on the page. Eliminate the wasted space of one- or two-word lines by writing concisely
- ☐ Bold, CAPS and italics are used sparingly to make important items stand out, but not distract
- ☐ The font style is easy to read and the font is not too small (or so large as to look unprofessional)
- ☐ Indentation and tabs and formatting within sections are consistent throughout

Details:
- ☐ One page limit for undergrads, two pages for graduate students. Government applications require more detail, so they may be 2-4 pages. Name & page number (only) are included on page 2
- ☐ First person (personal pronouns such as I, me, my, myself) has been omitted
- ☐ Remove any private family information (Nanny, ~~Jones~~ Family)

- ☐ Punctuation and font size are consistent throughout
- ☐ Sections are listed in order of importance or relevance to the position
- ☐ Unfamiliar acronyms and abbreviations are written out or described
- ☐ All experience (including education) is listed in reverse chronological order within each section
- ☐ References are NOT on the resume, but rather on a "references" page
- ☐ The resume is **tailored** to the position and has been proofread for errors
- ☐ Headings, font and format of resume, references and cover letter are consistent with each other
- ☐ Submit as a pdf to a human, as a .doc to an applicant tracking systems (ATS), assuring user-appropriate arrival
- ☐ Inclusion and description of controversial content has been thoroughly thought through

COVER LETTER *Paragraph One/Introductory Paragraph*
- ☐ Starts with your most relevant information and why you are interested in the stated position for which you are applying
- ☐ Describes how you became aware of the position (especially if by a notable referral)
- ☐ Does not include "My name is …"
- ☐ Includes why you are interested in the position and the organization, such as: A connection to their company/product, people you've talked to at the company, how it's a good fit with your values or unique skills

Paragraph Two/Body
- ☐ Describes and provides examples of several (3-4) skills that match the requirements on the job descriptions
- ☐ Explains how they are relevant to the employer's needs
- ☐ Uses key words from the job description or industry
- ☐ Include notable/relevant accomplishments

Paragraph Three/Closing Paragraph
- ☐ Summarizes qualifications
- ☐ Indicates hope for an interview or requests a future conversation enthusiasm and appreciation of their consideration
- ☐ Gives times you are easily reached and telephone number or email address
- ☐ Indicates if/when you will follow up (only if you have contact info to do so)
- ☐ Shows enthusiasm and appreciation of their consideration

Overall
- ☐ Cover letter is clearly tailored to the specific position and organization
- ☐ Letter is addressed to a specific person whenever possible
- ☐ Highlights a few key skills (does not restate entire resume) and their relation to the position
- ☐ Is written engagingly; sentences do not all start with "I"
- ☐ Uses correct grammar and syntax (have someone proofread your letter)
- ☐ Uses assertive phrases like "I will" instead of "I hope"
- ☐ Tells employer what you will do for them, not what they will do for you
- ☐ Letter has been edited to remove vague, general or inessential language that does not add to your message

Format
- ☐ One page
- ☐ **Use standard business letter format** OR exact heading of your resume (same style, font, size)
- ☐ Cover Letter is typed, has same font and letterhead as resume
- ☐ Electronic signature

REFERENCES
- ☐ Heading, font, and format of resume, references and cover letter are consistent (they are a matched set)
- ☐ Font size on references page is no more than one size larger than on the resume (white space is expected)
- ☐ Content for each reference is consistent with the others
- ☐ Name, title, employer (and division or dept if relevant), phone number and email are required.