

Postdoctoral Fellow: Writing a Resume



The best thing to keep in mind when writing a resume for a postdoctoral fellowship is how you and the skills and experiences you possess can be a perfect fit for the mold which is the open position and all that it entails. All educational and professional experiences you list should be either directly related to the position you are applying for or show off your capacity to perform duties representative of a postdoctoral fellow. In addition to including pertinent information, your resume should exude professionalism by being clear, concise, and organized and utilizing industry specific language.

When writing a resume intended to help you obtain a postdoctoral fellowship, the main focus is to summarize and highlight the expertise, experience and skills that will catch the interest of a potential employer. This can be done by highlighting the skill sets that are listed in the description and matching everything on your resume to everything they are looking for. In this way you can know what information is relevant and what is irrelevant.

The first step is to customize the resume to the position being applied for. Whether it is for academic research or industrial or federal laboratory work the items in the resume should be adapted to advertise a perfect match for the position being applied for. This can be especially important if just graduating and there isn't much experience past working with an advisor. This customization will give an edge over other applicants, something that could be the difference between landing the job and being turned away.

When building a resume for a postdoctoral fellowship, the key is to highlight your capability of performing research in the field that the position covers. Even if the field is outside of prior dissertation research, the capabilities, tools used, knowledge gained, and procedures learned can be used to demonstrate proficiency in the intended field. This information should be limited to a single page. The point is to quickly win over the attention of the interviewing party.

The myriad of useful skills, expertise and experience that can apply to a postdoctoral fellowship really emphasizes the need to convey the full depth of knowledge and skills you can bring to the job. This is true even if the skills are not necessarily directly related to the job under consideration. Being a postdoctoral fellow is less about the facts already known, and more about the knowledge that will be obtained as a result of the research that will be completed as a postdoctoral fellow.

The statements made should be targeted towards the value that will be gained by the organization or company. Action verbs such as "qualified" and "diversely experienced" will cause the resume to stand out, but phrases that are more specific, like "10 papers published," and "Fluent in five programming languages," will really give the potential employer a clear picture of what you have to bring to the table.

The education section of your postdoctoral fellowship resume should describe both undergraduate and graduate experience you have gained throughout your education. Not only should the full eight or more years of upper division education be described, but the advisor and specific coursework should be listed as well.

The work experience section of your postdoctoral fellowship resume should list any independent research done as well as job experiences for work done for other employers. The information you include should be pertinent and should

completely apply to the positions being applied for. Even if there are some skill that do not apply directly, they should be included if it demonstrates your capacity to take on difficult tasks and responsibilities.

Strong, concrete and definitive words are good to include as well as plenty of technical jargon and terms that correctly convey skill in the target field of research. Be careful to use terminology correctly, as misuse of terms can easily turn a winning resume into one that is rejected. Just as hurtful is overusing terms, which can make the resume appear too padded.

All in all, the well crafted postdoctoral fellow resume is a summary of the person that fits into the position being applied for. The most important points you should cover are:

- The capability to perform original research within the goals of the potential employer,
- The ability to adapt to changes in direction in the course of research, and to find positives results even in instances where negative results are reached, and
- The ability to add value to the employer and company you are applying to.

All of these characteristics are extremely important for postdoctoral fellows. The resume being submitted should reflect all of these facets in the skills, experience and expertise of the applicant. Every postdoctoral position is unique in the experiences that can be obtained, and the ability to adapt and apply yourself to the task at hand is paramount.