

Resume Review feedback

I met with Ian Smith, Senior Personnel Librarian from La Trobe University. As I was about to move interstate and apply for positions at the University of Wollongong, the timing was excellent and I came away from the session feeling much more confident about what my resume would convey to my future employer.

Main tips from my session ...

- Online applications: Convert your documents to PDF if you can. Email your resume to yourself, then view it and print it (preferably on a different computer). This way you can see if anything strange is happening during the transmission – before your potential employer does. These things may not show up when you print the original document.
- Academic achievement: If you're applying to work in an academic library, include a brief indication of your university results, such as an average mark over a course. Success at university is valued by academic library recruiters, so don't be afraid of it being seen as an attempt to disguise a lack of practical experience.
- Professional development: Include a brief description (preferably one line) of any short courses you've undertaken. This can convey a fuller meaning of the skills you gained than the title alone.
- Community activities: These are important to show that you're a rounded person, even going back a few years (still be selective, though). In a recent interview, I was asked about my community experience in coordinating events and people.
- Referees: Only include a list of referees if requested, but add a sentence or two for each referee which explains the working relationship and aspects of your work on which they can comment. This helps ensure maximum value from your potential employer's contact with your referees.

My biggest tip ...

Get some independent feedback about your resume!

Recruiters are ideal, and recruiters from the field you're interested in are even better. It can get really confusing when tips, strategies, pointers and guidelines seem to contradict and someone in the field you're aiming for can help you sift through which ones apply to particular types of organisations. An independent reviewer can also see gaps which your familiarity hides from you.

Having said that, I have to admit to being quite nervous about the whole process initially because somehow it seemed like getting a grade sitting face-to-face with the marker! My discomfort quickly subsided however, as Ian was incredibly helpful and encouraging. I also came out with invaluable feedback and a confidence that my resume really could help me to be competitive.

Thanks to Ian and the NLS2 Committee for coordinating the Resume Review. I can highly recommend it and hope to see it again at NLS3. As for me, I'm now working as Assistant Faculty Librarian – Engineering/Science at the University of Wollongong (after successfully applying for a totally different position!).