RICHARD M. FAIRBANKS
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Submitting Application Materials

Once you have solidified the content of your application materials (see Résumé Writing Handout, Cover Letter Construction Handout and References and Letters of Recommendation Handout) the next step in the job application process is to be sure you are submitting those materials correctly. Every employer will have a different expectation when it comes to application submissions. Some may require you to submit your materials in paper form, either in person or through the mail. However, submitting materials in paper form is very rare in today's job search process. Often employers will ask that you submit your materials either via e-mail or through an online application system. Whatever the submission process, it is imperative that you follow all instructions provided by the employer. Only include documents that are specifically requested and be sure to provide those documents in the format requested (i.e. Word, PDF, etc.). If the application instructions ever conflict with information provided in this handout, it is strongly suggested that you follow the application's stated instructions.

SUBMITTING MATERIALS IN PAPER FORM

The most important part of submitting application materials in paper form is the type of paper on which you print your materials. A cream or white colored résumé paper should be selected. Parchment paper, heavy cardstock, and bright colors should all be avoided when selecting your résumé paper. Résumé paper can be purchased by the ream at stores that sell office supplies. If you do not want to invest in a full ream of paper or do not have access to a printer, another option is to save your materials as separate PDF documents and have them printed at a printing center such as FedEx or a UPS Store. If you have your materials printed at such a store, you should be provided with a booklet of paper options. Be sure to select a cream or white résumé paper option. Also, be sure to inspect the materials that you have had printed for smudges or errors before leaving the store.

The following are additional helpful tips for submitting materials in paper form:
- Never staple materials together (paper clips are a nice alternative)
- Ship materials flat (never folded) in a large envelope
- When shipping materials, it is best to have the address printed directly onto the envelope or onto a label
- Place your materials in the following traditional order: cover letter, resume, references, any additional materials requested

SUBMITTING MATERIALS VIA E-MAIL

Submitting application materials via e-mail is a very popular method in today's market. The most important aspects of applying via e-mail are the attachments you include. All of your materials should be saved as separate PDF documents each titled with the position title, your name, and the type of document (i.e. HealthEducator_Lucy Myers_Resume). PDF documents are best because they freeze the formatting on your application materials. Word documents do not freeze formatting. If documents are created in one version of Word and opened in another version they will often appear different from what you intended.

There are two acceptable approaches to the text of the e-mail itself. The first, more traditional, approach is to copy and paste the text of your cover letter into the e-mail. Therefore, when the employer opens your e-mail they are reading your formal cover letter. If you utilize this approach, be sure to include your cover letter as a separate PDF attachment. This allows the employer to print your materials easily.

The second option is more modern and concise. It involves writing a very brief e-mail stating the position you are applying for, asking if there is any additional information needed, and thanking the employer for their consideration. If you were referred to the position by someone, you always want to be sure to include that name in the text of the e-mail. Please see the sample below:

> Dear Mr. Smith,
>
> Please find attached my application materials for the Health Educator position with Community Health Network. I learned about this opportunity through Megan Fields, one of your current Health Educators. Please let me know if there is any additional information I can provide. I am very excited about this opportunity and look forward to hearing from you. Thank you for your time and consideration.
>
> Sincerely,
>
> Lucy Myers
> Richard M. Fairbanks School of Public Health
> myersl@gmail.com |(555) 555-5555
> www.linkedin.com/in/lucymyers/

The following are additional helpful tips for submitting materials via e-mail:
- Include the position title in the subject line of your e-mail (i.e. Health Educator Position Application)
- Send yourself a test e-mail to be sure your attachments are there and the content is formatted correctly
- Be sure to spell check and proof your e-mail text for any mistakes
- Include an e-mail signature for yourself at the bottom of the e-mail that includes your name, e-mail address, phone number, and a link to your LinkedIn profile (see LinkedIn Handout)
- Send from an e-mail address with a professional tone

SUBMITTING MATERIALS ONLINE

The most common application submission format is web-based. The vast majority of large organizations require all candidates to submit their application and materials through robust online systems. These systems all vary so it is essential that you read all instructions throughout the application process. In addition to reading instructions, it is also essential that you tailor your materials to the job description when applying online. These large systems may run application materials through keyword finders and only the materials that match the required qualifications for the position will be considered. To ensure that your materials have the essential keywords, be sure to utilize the language from the job description.

Some online application systems will be straight forward and simple to navigate. These systems typically only ask you to fill out a brief form and attach your materials. However, other systems may be far more complicated. These systems might require lengthy forms related to your past work experience and past education. If you are applying through one of these more complicated forms you will likely be tempted to copy and paste information from your résumé or other documents into the fields.

See the following tips to help you navigate a more complicated application system:

- Create a past job history document in plain text format that can easily be copied and pasted into fields (document should include: chronological list of past employment, beginning and ending titles at each organization, supervisor's name and contact information for each organization, your beginning and end salary for each position, your beginning and end dates for each position and your reason for leaving each position)

- Create an education history document in plain text format that can easily be copied and pasted into fields (document should include: name and address of each school you have received a degree from, GPA, months and years of attendance, and degree/certifications attained)

The following are additional helpful tips for submitting materials via an online application system:

- Fill out all fields within the application process
- Allow at least an hour to complete each online application process (some will take even longer)
- Check for errors throughout the process
- Use basic formatting on your résumé to be sure your content is easily understood (e.g. easy font formats, no graphics, basic text only formatting, no symbols, etc.)
- Update the content of your résumé for every job to be sure your materials will make it through keyword searches
- Always take the opportunity to upload additional documents such as a résumé, cover letter, and reference sheet when available
- Avoid using the back button which might erase earlier entered text
- Use the "Save Draft" button whenever possible
- Review your entire application before submitting
- Maintain just one candidate profile per company (keep track of your profile usernames and passwords for each company)
- Keep track of the positions you have applied for and the date of each submission