

Thank you all for your wonderful suggestions and for your help! – Katie Newton

Based on the comments from the DWC members, we compiled this list of suggestions and help.

Tips for non-academics/why resume might be getting rejected

1. Issues related to the actual CV/Resume

a. Rework the CV/Resume to emphasize skills, not accomplishments alone. It's fine to have publications, but it's more useful to employers to emphasize what those publications entailed (SPSS, qualitative and quantitative skills, analytical skills, puzzle solving, writing and communication skills, organization, research design, etc.). Employers have a tough time inferring what a potential employee can do if they are just looking at the fact she's published or has earned a Phd.

b. Emphasize people skills, and in particular sensitivity to diversity. Give examples.

c. Any organizational skills, conference presentations, student activities, clubs should be mentioned.

d. The biggest thing for Federal jobs and I assume for state and county jobs is to match her resume and cover letter to the job descriptions. Use similar key words, etc.

e. For all of those systems, average up. If they ask how many years she has done something, pick the larger number. People get through because they are not very honest about their qualifications, but say she has 9 months experience with something---put 1-year experience. Make sure she includes her years of experience as a student if she was working as an RA.

f. Many organizations scan resumes through a program (there are several) that look for keywords in the resumes ... profit, achievement, team-building, team-player, etc. These programs serve to eliminate applicants that don't have such terms, or enough of such terms to minimize the time spent reviewing them all.

g. I'd assume that different industries would be interested in different terms. I'd also assume that there are plenty of articles online identifying such terms. Also, your career services program might well have lists of these for students to use.

h. they may be concerned that her experiences do not translate well to the world outside of academe

2. Other parts of application / things to consider

a. Cover letter

- 1) Talk about what the employee can do for the employer, but also what the employer can do for the candidate. I know this sounds counter-intuitive, but they want to know how they can further your career because you are an investment
- 2) cover letter may be too academic – get examples of application cover letters

b. Level of position vs education

1) Applicants may be screened out if their education is too high for the position (e.g. if a PhD applied for an analyst position)

2) the org might assume she is over-qualified or not intent on staying (e.g., sees her as seeking something that will do until something better in academe comes along)

3) the org might be afraid of hiring someone with more education/academic credentials than their executive director or other supervisor

c. Writing Samples

1) If there is a writing sample it may be too academic rather than in the form of a research report.

2) If she has to write any narratives such as knowledge, skills, abilities for jobs, re-use the same terms/language as the position description. The systems have a way of screening for matching words---it is very frustrating for applicants.

3. Reach out / Image

a. Call the HR contact person and see why the application was bumped. They may be able to give some idea.

b. google yourself. There may be something that pops up that gives people pause.

Helpful resources

1. The format for a scannable resume differs from other formats. Below is a link to the Purdue OWL section on scannable resumes.

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/547/1/>

2. <https://cheekyscientist.com>

Cheeky Scientist Association. You pay to access their modules which teach people with PhDs how to navigate the job market outside of academia. It has been an incredible resource for boosting my confidence in my ability to transition, should I want to, and has endless tips and suggestions for how to actually land a job, rather than send out resumes/CVs and never get a response. It also plugs you into an international group of PhDs all looking out for each other; it is a nice community.

NOTE: my student had already found this and she said she has not had to pay anything. So may vary for faculty versus students or could just be the options you select.

3. <https://versatilephd.com/>

There's also a web site providing lots of information about options for PhD's. NOTE: this one may require membership.

DWC members who offered direct help and provided contact information

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