

GEOSCIENCES ADVISORY COUNCIL

Recommendations to Applicants in Search of Geoscience Positions

The following were compiled from recommendations made by experienced geoscience professionals who often review job applications and who hire geoscientists for their organizations.

- Free templates for the preparation of a resume can be found online. Use a simple format, left justified, and a business font, e.g., Times New Roman, Calibri.
- Read the job ad carefully, noting key words, and tailor your career objective accordingly. Human resource departments often filter resumes based on key words.

Write a resume with the points noted below, and in the same relative position in the document (numbered for emphasis):

1. Put contact information into a header.
2. State career objective(s) concisely in two or three lines.
3. Include your education, degrees received, and the year(s) you received your degree(s).
4. Include proficiency in pertinent software programs such as Surfer, Res 2D, Earth Imager, SurfSeis, Excel, Petra, Modflo, etc.
5. Include **only** applicable work history and skills.
6. Additional language competency, if more than one.
7. Emphasize your ability to work as part of a multi-disciplinary team.
8. List any volunteer work, honors, and professional awards at the end of the resume.
9. Briefly list outside interests, if there is room.

Additional Recommendations:

- Note whether or not you are willing to relocate. If you are unwilling to relocate, it will limit your opportunities. There is a very good chance you will relocate at some point.
- Technical speaking and writing skills are important. Work diligently to develop them.
- A resume should be succinct, grammatically correct, properly punctuated, and letter perfect. Do not use slang or contractions.
- Overall, the shorter, the better. Be clear and precise.
- Rather than using constructions such as: “I am...,” “I have...,” just say “Worked as a...”.
- If a resume is to be submitted on paper, use high quality paper.
- Try to limit the resume to one page, at least no more than two pages.
- If sending an electronic resume, use a .pdf format whenever possible. This makes it less likely that it can be tampered with.
- Some companies require electronic “fill-in-the-blank” resumes. Remember to include key words from the job posting.

What not to include in a resume:

- References to your age, marital status, children, race, religion, or any personal information, etc. If personal information is specifically requested, consider declining.
- Do not put your resume in a table or Excel format. Use a standard word processor.
- If you are sending a paper resume, do not send a copy. Always print out an original.

Where to look:

- Check out websites such as Indeed.com, jobrapido.com or Monster.com. Search by geographic area(s), state, federal, etc. Other job resource sites will pop up with the same posting, but it is good to cross check. LinkedIn.com does not seem to be very useful.

- Check local classifieds in newspapers around the country.
- Check ads in professional publications such as the *Oil and Gas Journal*, *Petroleum Technology*, *Oil World*, *AAPG Explorer*, etc. Most professional publications are looking for experienced applicants, but it is worth a try, particularly if they promote from within and need a lower level candidate after the posting.
- Local geological societies such as, the Dallas Geological Society, Houston Geological Society, Michigan Basin Geological Society (MBGS), etc., often maintain files of locally available jobs. Check out the local GS in a city that interests you, and make a call. Ask if that society maintains a list of job opportunities, and if so, ask for the name and phone number of a contact person.
- Also check American Institute of Professional Geologists (AIPG), local state chapters.

Preparing a cover letter:

- Read the job description carefully looking for key words, and tailor the cover letter for each job using the key words.
- Learn as much as you can about the company to which you are submitting the letter.
- Always adjust your resume to emphasize qualifications for the specific job being applied for. DO NOT use one general cover letter for every job.
- In your cover letter, state that references are available on request, and be sure that your references have agreed to provide a positive recommendation.
- Try to make the reader want to meet you.

Preparing for an interview:

- Learn as much as you can about the company you are interviewing. A general knowledge of the company and its operations will impress interviewers, and will give you an edge over those that are not as well prepared.
- Dress properly for an interview. A coat, nice shirt, necktie, and slacks for men are preferred. Women should dress professionally. Do not wear sneakers or flip-flops.
- Use good hygiene and keep the after-shave or perfume to a subtle minimum. Too much can be a distraction to the interviewers.

During the interview:

- Answer questions as concisely and directly as best you can. Try to relax, i.e., try not to be nervous. It shows.
- Be mindful of your body language. Sit up straight. Slumping in a chair, looking around the room, or being too casual can be detrimental. Little things do matter.
- DO NOT even think of bringing a cell phone, I-pad, etc., into an interview. Leave it in your vehicle.
- Smile!!!

Follow up:

- As a professional courtesy, consider sending a note of thank you to the interviewers. It gets your name in front of them one more time.

Finally, you are the pride of the Western Michigan University's Department of Geological and Environmental Sciences. How you present yourself is a reflection on you, on the WMU Geological and Environmental Sciences Department, and on the geosciences alumni. How well you succeed is a measure of our success as well as yours. You are knowledgeable, and are trained for success. Bring pride to your university, your department, and your fellow alumni.