



ICAN Employment Services – Cover Letter & Resume Templates  
Eamonn O' Loughlin Irish Canadian Immigration Centre  
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**ICAN EMPLOYMENT SERVICES  
COVER LETTER & RESUME TEMPLATES  
DEVELOPED BY GERRY O CONNOR**

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**1. INTRODUCTION**

This material is designed as supplementary reading material for New Arrivals from Ireland.

New Arrivals have a broad range of qualifications, knowledge and experience in many functional disciplines. Certain guidelines may fit your profile, others may not. Ultimately, it is your choice to select the guidelines that best suit your situation and to design a cover letter and/or resume that best represents you in the marketplace. Note that employment processes in Canada may be different than what you have experienced in the past.

**2. RESUME GUIDELINES**

- Normally, resumes are two pages in length. Exceptions may be:
  - Construction Worker, Office Entry: 1 Page
  - Chartered Accountant/CFA: 1 Page
  - Ph.D./Master's Degree: can be 3 pages with thesis information
- Change your computer dictionary to "US English" or "Canadian English". Canada uses the "z" spelling rather than "s" spelling as in the word "organized"
- If your resume is circulated in Word, change your computer print format to "letter" rather than "A4". A4 does not work in Canada. Your A4 resume will not format correctly for the employer. This problem does not apply to resumes circulated as a pdf.
- The first major section in your resume is the "Career Objective" section. Canadian employers and recruitment firms want you to define what kind of position you are looking for. This goes beyond a general statement of your educational qualifications and work history.
- Make sure that your postal address code is correct. If your address is not permanent, try to use the address of a reliable friend who will accept your mail. If you do not have a permanent address, simply insert your phone number and email address.
- If you provide your phone number, make sure that you activate your voicemail. Employers may want to leave an important employment message. In recording your voice-mail message, speak slowly and deliberately.
- Canadian employers are generally not interested in employment gaps in your resume. They respect gaps caused by the economic downturn in Ireland plus the desire to travel plus requirements to take care of an ill parent. Their focus is "how effective will you be in this future role".
- Assume that your resume will be read by a recruiter that has little or no knowledge of Ireland. Locations should be identified as "Cork, Ireland", not just "Cork".

**Career Objective Section**

- Using the sentence included in the example, list 5 to 8 key examples of key areas that you are interested in working. As in the example provided, a person with a degree in journalism might list journalism, public relations, internal and external communications, web design and management, social media and creative writing as examples.
- List your areas of interest in priority order.

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- If you have difficulty developing your list, or if you are not sure what you want to do, use areas identified in advertised positions in which you are interested.
- Alternatively, meet with a consultant in a well-established and reputable search firm, and seek "any long-term career opportunity with an employer that may be a good fit for my qualifications, experience". You may be surprised that search firms have good long-term career opportunities that you are not currently aware of.
- If you are interested in multiple career options that are very different e.g. "teacher" and "business", do not include both areas on the same resume. This will confuse employers as to what you want to do. In this scenario, develop separate resumes, one for a teacher role and a different resume for a business role. In the teacher resume, expand your teacher qualifications and experience and minimize your business elements. In the business resume, maximize your business profile and minimize your teacher profile.
- Make your list as broad as possible to capture employer interest.
- Your list may be used by search firms when they enter your information into their search databases. If you miss a key area, you will not be included in their search.
- Your list is not restricted to areas where you have prior experience. You can include areas in which you are really interested but do not have prior experience. Canadian employers will consider you for functional areas in which you have a passionate interest and will provide training.
- If your work interest is regulated by a professional body (e.g. Engineering. CPA, Human Resources) include a reference to indicate that you have contacted the regulator for qualifications assessment with the intention to complete accreditation courses, as required.
- Your overall resume (qualifications and work experience) should support matters included in your "Career Objectives" section. In the past, if you worked in unrelated temporary positions (e.g. worked in a bar or restaurant; pumped gasoline), there is no need to include these positions as career chronological history, particularly if they distract from the overall nature of your career goals. On the other hand, such positions might impress an employer particularly if you worked hard to earn money to graduate. Your call.
- Some New Arrivals make the mistake to email their resume to anybody and everybody, hoping for the best. You may be lucky to land your resume with the right employer at the right time. However, job-search emails work well in Ireland and Australia, but not necessarily in Canada. Canadian employers want to meet you personally to make sure that you are a good "fit" within the organization. With this understanding, keep sending emails but don't hold your breath. **Keep the focus on personal inter-face contact with employment leads.**

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**Prioritize Education Section or Work Experience Section?**

- The best approach is to decide if your Education or your Work Experience is the stronger asset that will appeal to an employer in relation to your Career Objective.
- Some candidates have excellent Education credentials e.g. CFA/CA/MBA/First-class honours degree and/or very specialized technical education but may be light in employment experience gained to date. In this instance, the recommendation is that you insert your Education section first before the Employment section.
- Other candidates have stronger Employment experience rather than Education (e.g. education limited to a non-specialized undergraduate degree or high-school graduation or a Certificate program). In this instance, the recommendation is that you insert your Employment section first before the Education section.
- Recruiters read many resumes – you want to catch their attention early with your strongest asset.
- Remember, this is your resume so structure it in a manner that you are most comfortable with.

**Education Section**

- Avoid abbreviations for educational institutions e.g. "UCD", "NUI"; "UCC" "DCU". Some recruiters may not know what you mean. Spell out the name in full.
- Highlight 5-8 key modules in your educational qualifications that support the employment areas of interest identified in the Career Objectives section.

**Work Experience Section**

- If you worked for a small organization in Ireland, consider including the web address for that organization so that the recruiter can obtain more background information. Alternatively, copy a few sentences from that organization's website and include this information beside the organization's name.
- If you worked for a multi-national in Ireland, highlight your experience working on matters outside Ireland.
- List your duties starting with an action verb in the past tense e.g. Developed operations reports for management to facilitate company operating performance.

**Skills and Abilities Section**

- Highlight your technology skills including work-specific databases e.g. drafting, accounting, payroll etc.
- Highlight your managerial and intangible skills e.g. project management, communications. Everything is classified as "excellent", not "very good".

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**Hobbies Section**

- Optional insertion.
- Provides recruiter with broad information about you personally, including your interests. Can provide excellent background information to determine your “fit” within the organization with other people already working within the organization.
- Your participation in team sports activities can emphasize that you are a “team player”, an important component in building the organization team. If you are not an active sports participant, claim strong interest in watching team sports – your best claim to be a team player.
- Never cite “travel” as a hobby area – implies that you are travelling though Canada on your way back to Ireland at some point in the future.
- Highlight any volunteer work you have been engaged in. Avoid organization name abbreviations that will not be understood by a Canadian interviewer. If not well known, refer to volunteer organization as a “national” or “regional” organization. Volunteerism is not limited to recent volunteer activity – claim any volunteer activity that you have done in the past.

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**3. COVER LETTER GUIDELINES**

- Use a cover letter when writing directly to an employer. Cover letter can be sent by email.
- A cover letter is not necessary if registering with an employment agency.
- When writing a cover letter, try to personalize it with the full name, title, company name and address of the recipient. If you do not have this information, a reference to "Dear Sir or Madam" or "To whom it may Concern" is appropriate.
- **Do not include any reference to your IEC Working Holiday visa in your cover letter.** Your cover letter should focus on your qualifications and experience. Your objective is to secure the interview as a primary objective. Your visa status is a discussion item after you have secured the interview, when asked.
- Canadian cover letters are short. The following is a sample structure:

**Paragraph One**

- Please find attached a copy of my resume for your consideration.

**Paragraph Two**

- If you are responding to an advertised position, acknowledge the position requirements and match your qualifications and experience directly against each requirement.
- If you are not responding to an advertised position and are simply making a general inquire, insert a profile paragraph highlighting your qualifications and experience.
- In both cases, use 3-4 sentences.
- Never state that you are interested in the position because it will provide you with good experience. The employer wants to know what you will contribute to the organization, not what the organization will do for you.

**Paragraph Three**

- Highlight your personal attributes – "hardworking"; "diligent"; "desire to make a significant contribution to the organizations success"; "strong commitment to customer service" etc.

**Paragraph Four**

- I would welcome an opportunity to meet with you at your convenience to discuss my application in greater detail. Please note that I am available to commence employment immediately. [This may provide you with a competitive advantage to start quickly because you do not have to provide Notice to a current employer].

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**4. SAMPLE COVER LETTER**

**To Whom It May Concern / Their Name**

Re: Advertised Reference

I am pleased to submit my resume for consideration with respect to the subject posting (advertisement).

In relation to your defined role and candidate requirements, please note that I hold a bachelor degree in business studies combined with diversified experience in several key functional areas including recruitment, selection and training; people management; business development and client retention; project management; customer service and E-Commerce. (match your qualifications and experience with advertised requirements) I am currently in discussions with HRPAO with a view to completing courses required for the CHRP professional designation.

In terms of personal qualifications, I am very results-achievement oriented; hard-working and diligent with excellent problem-solving and communication skills. I particularly enjoy a role in organization management; managing and interacting with customers and staff and related problem-solving; time management. I am particularly strong in managing teams.

I would welcome an opportunity to meet you at a convenient time in order to discuss my application in greater detail.

Please note that I am available to commence employment immediately.

Respectfully submitted,

Name  
Email  
Phone-number

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**5. SAMPLE RESUME TEMPLATE**

**James Sixpack M.A.  
14 Cameron Street  
Toronto, Ontario  
M5T 2H2  
416-123-4567  
[joesixpack@gmail.com](mailto:joesixpack@gmail.com)  
(Insert linkedin address, if applicable)**

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**CAREER OBJECTIVE**

To secure a long-term career growth opportunity with a high-quality employer consistent with my qualifications and experience. Key areas of interest include:

- journalism
- public relations
- internal and external communications
- web design and management
- social media
- creative writing

**EDUCATION**

**Master of Arts Degree in Journalism, Dublin City University, Dublin, Ireland 2009-2010**

**Bachelor of Arts Degree, Dublin Business School, Dublin, Ireland 2005-2009**

**Modules:**

- |                                 |                      |                        |
|---------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| • Public Relations              | • Journalism         | • Editing/ Sub Editing |
| • Multimedia/ Internet          | • English Literature | • Researching/ Writing |
| • Layout, Design and Production | • Social Media       | • Interviewing skills  |

**WORK EXPERIENCE**

**ABC Newspapers, Dundrum, Dublin, Ireland March 2009 – January 2012**  
**Sports Journalist**

Specify duties and responsibilities

Start with a verb e.g.

- Managed.....
- Supervised.....
- Monitored.....
- Analyzed.....
- Produced .....

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**XYZ Newspapers, Cork, Ireland  
Sports Journalist**

**March 2007 – January 2009**

Specify duties and responsibilities

Start with a verb e.g.

- Managed.....
- Supervised.....
- Monitored.....
- Analyzed.....
- Produced .....

**123 Newspapers, Limerick, Ireland  
Sports Journalist (Internship)**

**March 2004 – February 2007**

Specify duties and responsibilities

Start with a verb e.g.

- Managed.....
- Supervised.....
- Monitored.....
- Analyzed.....
- Produced .....

**SKILLS AND ABILITIES**

- Exceptional Excel, PowerPoint, Word, Outlook and related computer skills
- Excellent project planning skills
- Excellent communication skills
- Excellent team player
- Fully committed to excellence in my work

**HOBBIES**

- Active participation in team sports e.g. soccer, rugby, field hockey
- Swimming, long-distance running
- Reading
- Cooking

**Excellent references available upon request**