

Social Welfare Careers

The Undergraduate Portfolio

Writing professional resumes for an effective portfolio



Introduction

This packet is a collection of tools, tips, and techniques intended to aid Social Welfare undergraduate majors in the development of a professional portfolio. Although this packet includes examples that can be useful in creating a portfolio, it serves as a foundational tool in which the assistance of a career counselor and more career exploration may be needed.

This packet includes:

- Social Work Skills Profile
- STAR Method
- Sample Resumes
- Resume Development Worksheet
- References Guide
- Cover Letter Guide
- The Job Search

Social Work Skills Profile

Social work addresses the barriers, inequities and injustices that exist in society. It responds to crises and emergencies as well as to everyday personal and social problems. Social work utilizes a variety of skills, techniques, and activities consistent with its holistic focus on persons and their environments. Explore with students how these common tasks, skills, areas of expertise, and *interventions* can be articulated to express their capabilities and the depth of their practice.

Common Tasks

- Counsel individuals, groups, families, or communities regarding issues including mental health, poverty, unemployment, substance abuse, physical abuse, rehabilitation, social adjustment, school progress, child care, or medical care.
- Educate clients or community members about mental or physical illness, abuse, medication, or available community resources.
- Interview clients individually, in families, or in groups, reviewing records, conducting assessments, evaluating mental/physical status to determine what services are required to meet their needs.
- Collaborate and consult with counselors, physicians and medical staff, courts, service providers, schools, and families to plan or coordinate treatment, serve as liaisons, and provide needs based services.
- Refer patient, client, or family to community resources for job placement, debt counseling, legal aid, housing, medical treatment, financial assistance, or substance abuse, following through to ensure service efficacy.
- Assist clients in adhering to treatment plans, such as setting up appointments, arranging for transportation to appointments, or providing support.
- Maintain case history records and prepare reports. Monitor, evaluate, and record client progress with respect to treatment goals.
- Address legal issues, such as child abuse and discipline, assisting with hearings and providing testimony to inform custody arrangements.
- Increase social work knowledge by reviewing current literature, conducting social research, or attending seminars, training workshops, or classes.

Areas of Knowledge

Therapy and Counseling

Psychology & Lifespan Development

English/Foreign Language

Sociology and Anthropology

Customer and Personal Service

Law and Government

Education and Training

Social Justice & Equity

Diversity Issues

Administrative and Clerical

Social Work Related Skills – Verb List

Administrative

Budgeted
Charted
Collected
Coordinated
Compiled
Documented
Managed
Organized
Planned
Prepared
Reviewed
Solicited
Supervised
Trained

Advocacy

Advocated
Arranged
Composed
Demonstrated
Developed
Implemented
Motivated
Organized
Participated
Utilized

Assessment

Attended
Assessed

Collaborated
Conducted
Defined
Diagnosed
Established
Gathered
Identified
Interviewed
Probed

Communication

Addressed
Arbitrated
Arranged
Authored
Corresponded
Developed
Directed
Drafted
Edited
Enlisted
Facilitated
Formulated
Influenced
Interpreted
Lectured
Mediated
Moderated
Motivated
Negotiated

Persuaded
Promoted
Publicized
Reconciled
Recruited

Counseling

Assisted
Co-facilitated
Counseled
Designed
Determined
Discussed
Educated
Explained
Facilitated
Fielded
Intervened
Linked
Located
Referred
Served
Supported

Management

Administered
Analyzed
Assigned
Attained
Chaired
Contracted

Consolidated
Coordinated
Delegated
Developed
Directed
Evaluated
Executed
Improved
Increased
Organized
Oversaw
Planned
Prioritized
Produced
Recommended
Reviewed
Scheduled
Strengthened
Supervised
Research
Analyzed
Collected
Designed
Developed
Interpreted
Presented
Published
Researched
Wrote

STAR: Situation, Task, Action, Results

The STAR Method is a meaningful and dynamic way of highlighting accomplishments on a resume. Addressing the situations, tasks, actions, and results of a past experience allows one to demonstrate the context in which skills have been developed and used, rather than simply listing duties or responsibilities.

Situation – beginning with a power verb, address the situation, problem, and/or individuals involved

Task – define the assignment, duty, or charge

Action – describe the skills, or primary functions, used

Results – include the outcome, product, or conclusion; quantify/qualify as appropriate

Examples

Before	After
Helped with planning employability workshops.	Coordinated curriculum development for more than 42 three-hour module workshops targeted to skills-building to enhance job search, career planning, and personal development
Led 20 college students in tutoring second grade at a local elementary school	Managed and trained a group of 20 college students in providing tutoring services to second grade students in effort to encourage an atmosphere of reading
Grant writing assistance	Assisted Fundraising Manager in the research, compilation, and writing of grants to fund the operations of Safe Passages programs
Located mental health, substance abuse, and housing resources for clients	Collaborated with a variety of San Francisco mental health, substance abuse, and housing providers to facilitate and advocate for appropriate levels of client care

Demonstration

Situation:

Task:

Action:

Result:

Final:

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SKILLS SUMMARY

- Direct Practice with children and families in low-income neighborhoods
 - Detection and counseling intervention strategies for domestic violence
 - Culturally responsive engagement, use of critical inquiry and advocacy
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EDUCATION

Bachelor of Arts in Social Work, California State University, Los Angeles, 2012

Course highlights: Social Work Practice in Minority Communities; Child Welfare; Strategies, Prevention and Intervention in Family Violence; Team Treatment and Child Abuse; Administration in Social Services and Agencies

SOCIAL WORK EXPERIENCE

Social Work Intern - Department of Children & Family Services, Los Angeles County, CA, 2011-2012

- Supervised and placed minors in need of protective services due to abuse, neglect, or exploitation
- Facilitated reunification and adoption planning meetings with children, birth parents, and adoptive parents
- Prepared detailed social studies on minors and their families which include recommendations to the court

Program Assistant - La Jolla Country Day School, Center for Talented Youth, La Jolla, CA, Summers 2010, 2011

- Planned and oversaw student activities inside and outside of the classroom ensuring a safe and enjoyable camp experience
 - Assisted classroom teacher with instructional preparation, aiding in classroom management, gathering anecdotal information for evaluations, and tutoring students
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LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

Co-Chair - Associated Student Social Workers, Cal State LA, September 2011-June 2012

- Led a team of five governing board members, gave presentations to students and campus community, and coordinated peer mentoring sessions

Communications Chair - Lobby Day Caucus, Cal State LA, August 2010-May 2011

- Launched an Outreach and Promotions Campaign to inform the community of social work policy initiatives and garner support
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ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE

Volunteer Living Skills Instructor, General Hospital, Glendale, CA, October 2009-present

- Assist individuals with daily living skills, social and recreational skills, and employment needs
- Conduct home visits and co-facilitate a support group; shadow a counseling supervisor in client sessions

Resume Development Worksheet

Skills – list any computer, technical, language, or other job-related skills/abilities relevant to your field

_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Unique characteristics – list any attributes or traits that may be helpful for employer to know (e.g. works well in groups, honest, compassionate, etc.)

_____	_____	_____	_____
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Summary – provide a synopsis of what can you do well that can help an employer; list what value, qualities, and abilities do you bring to the table?

Education – list places where you've attend school, participated in specialized coursework, or trainings

Where do/did you attend school?

(Expected) Graduation Date

Course of Study/Degree Program _____

SPECIAL COURSES/TRAININGS

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Experience

VOLUNTEER AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

Position held _____

Organization _____ Time Frame _____

What did you do?

Position held _____

Organization _____ Time Frame _____

What did you do?

CAMPUS ACTIVITIES

Position held _____

Organization _____ Time Frame _____

What did you do?

Position held _____

Organization _____ Time Frame _____

What did you do?

LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES

Position held _____

Organization _____ Time Frame _____

What did you do?

Position held _____

Organization _____ Time Frame _____

What did you do?

PAID POSITIONS

Position held _____

Organization _____ Time Frame _____

What did you do?

Position held _____

Organization _____ Time Frame _____

What did you do?

INTERNSHIPS

Position held _____

Organization _____ Time Frame _____

What did you do?

Position held _____

Organization _____ Time Frame _____

What did you do?

References

Unless instructed to do so, references should not be listed on your resume, but rather, prepared as a separate document and given to an employer upon request. A reference list typically includes 3-5 professional or academic connections that have the ability to provide a strong and accurate voucher of your qualities and skills. Types of references include: former supervisor, co-worker, former classmate, professor or instructor, counselor or advisor, or community leader. Personal references (i.e. family, friends, etc...) are not usually requested in professional settings.

Always ask before listing someone as a reference and keep your references updated on positions for which you will be applying. Always bring a list of references to a job interview.

References List

Name _____

Title _____

Organization _____

Email _____

Phone _____

How do you know them? _____

How long have you known them? _____

Name _____

Title _____

Organization _____

Email _____

Phone _____

How do you know them? _____

How long have you known them? _____

Name _____

Title _____

Organization _____

Email _____

Phone _____

How do you know them? _____

How long have you known them? _____

Cover Letters

A cover letter is to a resume what a preface is to a novel. It explains why you are sending your resume; what makes you a competitive candidate. A professional document, it persuades an employer to look at your resume by highlighting important elements in your background. It is targeted and individualized incorporating elements from the prospective job description as they relate to your experience. The letter has three parts: an Introduction, Body of Qualifications, and a Closing. The cover letter is also an opportunity to list salary requirements, indicate ways to reach you, and ways in which you will follow up. Make sure to include if you have been referred to the company by an employee or acquaintance of the company/organization.

This is an example of a generic cover letter format. Use your creativity to find a format that best fits you and the position.

Note: *If you don't know the recipient's gender, write Dear First Last. If a name is not provided, write "Dear Hiring Manager."*

Dear Ms. or Mr. Last Name:

Opening Paragraph: Introduce yourself to your reader (not, "Hi, my name is Sally Social Worker", rather something like: "I am a BASW candidate at University of California, Berkeley writing to apply for _____"). Specify the position for which you're applying. State where you saw it posted. Mention the contact that referred you – with their permission – if the employer knows them. You might briefly summarize your specific qualifications for or interest in the position.

Middle Paragraph(s): Use the position description/job announcement as your guide to focus on one or two specific examples from your resume that demonstrate you have the skills the employer seeks. Don't repeat long sections of your resume. Highlight the most relevant skills/experiences and emphasize accomplishments and results that relate to the position. Use terms and a language style to the field. Show you've researched the organization, but don't recite facts and figures from their website. Connect what you know about the organization to your experience.

Your goal with the letter is to show where the match is between you, the position, and this organization. What is it about their mission, clients, programs, services, and so forth that attracts you? By now, the recipient should clearly understand what you'd add to the organization, be convinced of your enthusiasm for the position, want to read your resume, and talk with you. Make your skills and qualifications obvious, not implied, to the reader.

Closing Paragraph: You might briefly summarize your qualifications and interest in the position, but avoid direct repetition from the above. Don't give a long list of skills; instead, you might mention the most important two or three. Offer a next step: Will you be calling to arrange an in-person or phone interview? Be in the area on a certain day and follow up to meet? Do you look forward to hearing from the employer? Thank the employer for considering your application.

Sincerely,

Note: *If postal letter, leave four spaces; sign your name in dark ink. If emailed, either double space between closing and name without a signature OR insert an electronic signature.*

Sally Social Worker

Note: *Not "Best", "Yours" or anything too casual*

The Job Search

What We Know

- Upwards of 85% of jobs are obtained through one on one connections—who you know. The rest are obtained through a combination of online postings, job boards, and placement agencies.
- Networking with family, friends, colleagues, and other professional contacts, in person and online, can provide insight to an industry and help generate job leads.
- More employers are using social networks to search for and evaluate candidates

A professional portfolio is imperative in presenting your qualifications. Build a brand that is professional online through displaying information relevant to work and offline by making good impressions in the way you connect with people. Using both online and offline resources make for the most successful job search.

Online Presence

Use technology like email, personal website, and social media outlets to provide a consistent message about your professional identity. Here are a few of the most popular social media networking outlets:

- LinkedIn: an online professional networking tool that allows you to connect with professional contacts and prospective employers, highlight your experiences, and search and apply for jobs.
- Twitter: a real-time information network that connects you with current news, stories and opinions, and conversations. Follow experts in your profession, get company updates and news, and apply for jobs.
- Blogs: information websites on which you can post discussions and multiple entries from multiple writers. Create a professional brand and demonstrate expertise through commentary and open discussion forums.
- Google: a web search engine. Create an online profile detailing professional information that is searchable.

Offline Presence

Finding a job is not a task that should be restricted to a desk and computer. Although the internet is very helpful in locating jobs and completing applications, the most successful job searchers are on the ground—volunteering time to a related cause, participating in industry specific events, and networking!

Quick Tips:

- Do your research: consider the type of career, organizations of interests, and services provided. Utilize the internet and personal connections to gather information that may be helpful during your

job search. You may get insight on trends, what to include in your professional portfolio, upcoming opportunities, or tips for the interview. Make sure to read the entire job posting and submit what is requested. Not following directions during the application process causes many candidates to be thrown out of the race even if qualified.

- Manage your time wisely: conducting a job search is not about sending out 100 hundred resumes a week. Be strategic and plan ahead! Make time to search online, network, and attend industry specific events.
- Follow-up: many job searchers falter by not following up. Track what information you are releasing - where are your applying? What did you send out? What communications have you had with prospective employers? Ensure to thank those who have helped you along the way by sending a thank you note and/or keeping in touch to provide updates.

Top Job Search Sites for Social Work Jobs

American Public Human Services Association: www.aphsa.org

Beyond, The Career Network: www.beyond.com

Career Onestop: www.careeronestop.org

Council on Social Work Education: www.cswe.org

Diversity Jobs: <http://diversityjobs.com/>

Government Jobs: www.governmentjobs.com

GuideStar: www2.guidestar.org

Idealist: www.idealists.org

Indeed: www.indeed.com

Learn How To Become: <http://www.learnhowtobecome.org/>

Linkup: www.linkup.com

Nonprofit Compensation Associates: <http://www.nonprofitcomp.com/>

O*Net Online: www.onetonline.org

Opportunity Knocks: www.opportunityknocks.org

Philanthropy New Digest: www.foundationcenter.org/pnd/jobs

The Riley Guide: <http://www.rileyguide.com/>

Simply Hired: www.simplyhired.com

The Social Service Job Site: www.socialservice.com

National Association of Social Workers: www.socialworkers.org

Social Work Job Bank: www.socialworkjobbank.com

USA Jobs: www.usajobs.org

Young Nonprofit Professionals Network: www.ynpn.org