

CAMPUS EXCLUSIVE

Resume Tips and Strategy



How to create a flawless resume

Employers go through hundreds of resumes to pick the candidates they want to interview. In this section we discuss how to format and structure a flawless resume, and what employers look for when picking the resumes of people they decide to interview.

A good resume functions as an invaluable tool in your job search. As a summary of your pertinent experience and marketable skills, the resume is written to communicate your qualifications to potential employers. Your resume should present your goals and strengths in a manner that will elicit a positive response -- in other words, an invitation to interview. The resume can be used to apply for advertised jobs, to send to employers you discover through research and networking, and to bring to job fairs and employer information sessions.

Many employers typically spend less than a minute looking over a resume to determine if a personal interview is appropriate. To effectively communicate your qualifications, the key facts must be presented concisely, in a well organized format that is readable, visually pleasing and very easy to skim.

The following guidelines are offered to help you prepare your resume. You will notice that there are several ways to organize information, while allowing for flexibility of design. The resume should be a unique representation of your skills and interests, but should fit the culture of the industry you are applying to. Regardless of the format you select, the resume should be only one page in length.

There are several acceptable styles for organizing material in your resume. The order of the sections can be changed depending upon your own history and level of experience. Someone with significant full-time work experience might find it useful to present Experience before Educational Background. A senior or undergraduate with minimal work experience would usually not find it useful to present their work experience before their education. However, if he or she had extensive skills that were directly relevant to career interests, it would be a good idea to present the Special Qualifications/Skills prior to Experience. Resumes typically include the following sections:

Name and Contact Information

This section includes your name, address, phone number and email. There is no need to say "resume of" or "resume" at the top, as this is obvious. Many students who have two addresses, one for the academic year and one for summer and vacations (usually their family address) include both. It is important that employers be able to reach you. It is suggested that you include a cell phone number or work phone number where you can be reached during the day.

Objective

The Objective (sometimes called "Professional Objective,") is typically placed after your contact information and is optional. Some individuals choose to explain their career goals in a cover letter as opposed to in an objective. Although often one line in length, the objective is often considered the most difficult part of the resume to write. It serves as a "headline" for the rest of your resume and should give the reader some idea of your interests and career plans as they relate to the position. The objective may also outline the skills you have developed and wish to use in your position. If you have several unrelated or very diverse career interests, it is best to write more than one resume with varying objectives. The rest of the resume should support your objective. For example, if you are applying to investment banking and advertising jobs, it is important to have two resumes, each tailored to a specific industry. It is also important that the Objective sentence not be vague or generic.

Educational Background

The education section is a major section for most college or graduate students. Well-thought-out development of this area on your resume may answer a prospective employer's frequently asked questions regarding your academic program and performance, leadership/managerial capabilities, technical abilities and interests and general preparedness.

Your educational history should be listed in reverse chronological order, including the name of the institution, the specific college or school, city and state. It is essential that you emphasize educational experiences which illustrate your interests and ability to handle the position you are seeking. Pertinent advanced study or honors courses could be included as relevant coursework. A senior project, major paper, thesis, independent study, and/or research paper which substantiate your goals are welcome additions.

Although grades are important, they are not the only aspect of your educational background that should be highlighted. Employers look for well-rounded candidates as demonstrated by involvement in extracurricular activities including leadership positions, internships, research projects and personally financing college expenses. A semester or year of study abroad represents a unique experience to potential employers and should be included.

In deciding which experiences to include, choose those which demonstrate your strongest skills and support your objective. It is important not to list a significant number of unrelated activities, experiences, skills, and interests, as this often comes across as unfocused. If you are interested in a career in sales, for example, you need to show that you are people-oriented and persuasive. This may be indicated in several ways such as participation on a sports team, leading a relevant student organization, or helping with sales and marketing related activities on campus. However, if you are seeking a career in Market Research then you must highlight your analytical and quantitative skills and

interests. You might emphasize, for example, high academic achievement, related course work and relevant work experience.

Freshman, sophomores and juniors usually list high school, summer school, or other institutions attended before starting their post-secondary education. For seniors, it is considered optional to include high school (with the possible exception of well known schools), summer school, or other institutions attended before starting your post-secondary education. However, including high school details may present an opportunity to emphasize distinctions bestowed, class rank, activities, leadership profiles, or unique educational experiences. If space is an issue, or a resume becomes cluttered, this is usually the first section to omit.

Experience

The work-experience category can be titled "Experience," "Work Experience," "Professional Experience", "Finance Experience" or whatever is most applicable. No matter what you have done, whether it was working at your local mall, volunteering at a soup kitchen, helping a family business, or working at a large corporation, employers want to know that you have worked. Many students are hesitant to put down summer or part-time employment, work-study positions, internships, volunteer experiences, or a responsible college activity that may seem unrelated to their career objectives. The employer wants to know that you've been out there in the "real world" working, that you've held responsible jobs, and that you have had diverse experiences. Employers realize that many college students do not have, or are unable to find, directly relevant or career-related work experience. What they want to know is why you made the choices you did, what you learned from such experiences, and what specific skills you have developed. They are also looking for your potential to develop and do well in the role you are applying for, so showing that you have excelled in any position is a big plus regardless of the position's direct relevance.

Reverse Chronological Format

There are several formats you might use in the experience section of the resume. The most frequently used format is the Reverse Chronological Format which lists the most recent experience first. This style is well suited for candidates whose most recent experiences are also those which are the most related to the position(s) to which they are applying. Be sure to fully describe your accomplishments and responsibilities. Did you come up with a new idea? Implement a unique project? Save the organization money or contribute to revenue? Work in teams or help lead them? Write a financial report? Present a proposal? Be sure to write a concise description highlighting your specific role, and be prepared to talk about it in the interviews.

The typical reverse chronological resume includes the name of the company or organization for which you worked, the department or division (optional), the position you held, the location, the dates of employment and a description of the work including

duties, responsibilities, and accomplishments. Remember, whatever format you choose, be consistent throughout your resume.

Below is a list of action verbs to consider including, as appropriate, in your resume.

accelerated	eliminated	performed
accomplished	employed	planned
achieved	established	pinpointed
adapted	estimated	prepared
administered	evaluated	presented
advised	examined	preserved
aided	exhibited	processed
allocated	expanded	produced
amplified	expedited	programmed
analyzed	explored	proposed
answered	extended	proved
appointed	fabricated	provided
approved	facilitated	received
arbitrated	focused	recommended
arranged	fortified	recorded
assessed	founded	recruited
assisted	generated	rectified
assumed	guided	reduced
augmented	handled	re-established
awarded	harmonized	referred
began	headed	regulated
broadened	implemented	reinforced
built	improved	reorganized
calculated	incorporated	represented
catalogued	increased	researched
chaired	influenced	reshaped
compiled	initiated	restituted
completed	innovated	restored
computed	installed	revamped
conceived	instituted	reviewed
condensed	instructed	revised
conducted	interpreted	scheduled
constructed	introduced	selected
consulted	investigated	set-up
contracted	involved	simplified
contrived	launched	solved
controlled	led	specialized
cooperated	lectured	streamlined
coordinated	listed	structured
counseled	maintained	substituted
created	managed	suggested

delegated	mediated	supervised
demonstrated	modified	supported
designed	monitored	systematized
determined	motivated	taught
developed	negotiated	trained
devised	observed	tutored
devoted	operated	unified
diagrammed	ordered	used
directed	organized	utilized
displayed	oriented	volunteered
distributed	originated	widened
drafted	overhauled	worked
edited	participated	wrote

Formatting

- Keep in mind that it is very important that your resume be attractive to look at and easy to skim quickly. When you are preparing a resume the following points apply.
- Regardless of the style of resume you choose to write, be sure to highlight personal traits and abilities that will make you stand out, such as the following: leadership potential, technical skills, ability to work in a fast-paced environment, communication skills, mathematical abilities, ability to learn quickly, and teamwork. Describe how you contributed and how well you performed.
- Since many resumes today are electronically sent, make sure to write it in a popular word processing program such as Word to ensure the recipient can open your document. If possible, we suggest that you PDF your resume to ensure that the formatting remains consistent when viewed on different computers.
- When printing resumes to take to an interview, use standard size paper, 8-1/2" x 11" and purchase a heavier paper stock than what you might have at home.
- Be conservative in your choice of paper: white, beige, or light gray.
- Be sure to laser print your resume and cover letter. Try to use print that provides the most professional appearance.
- Use conventional spelling, omit abbreviations, and hyphenate according to the dictionary.
- Don't give anyone cause to question your attention to detail. Never have misspellings, typographical, grammatical errors or inconsistencies in formatting.
- Be concise, give interesting details, and use descriptive words and action verbs.
- Use visual techniques including "white space," indenting, spacing, italicizing, capitalizing, bold and sub-bold face printing to allow for easy skimming by employers.