

What is a Resume?

A resume is a powerful tool in the job search process. It provides an employer with the first impression of you as an individual and provides an opportunity for you to “promote” yourself as a candidate. A resume is a professional document that demonstrates your ability to articulate yourself in a concise manner. Its purpose is to get you an interview-not a job.

A resume is a formal summary of your education, experiences, and skills. It should be simple, logical, and brief. A personalized cover letter introducing you to the potential employer, identifying the position you are applying for, and indicating how you learned of the opening, should accompany every resume. This letter should briefly provide one or two examples of your experience relevant to the position, and should convey the interest and enthusiasm for the position.

Points to Consider

During initial screening processes, your resume may be looked at for as little as fifteen seconds. Therefore, it is important to follow these guidelines:

Be Brief: In most cases, your resume should be only one page long. As a general rule, an additional page can be added for each additional degree and/or seven

years experience.

Be Conservative: Stylistic gimmicks should not be overused.

Be Logical: Prioritize and arrange your information knowing that we read left to right, top to bottom. The information you present should flow smoothly and sensibly.

Be Consistent: Make sure to keep the same format and style throughout your document.

Be Conscious of Image: Resumes should be visually appealing, printed on white paper and should never have errors.

Be Powerful: Emphasize your skills by using strong past-tense action verbs. Statements, which demonstrate results.

Making the Difference with your Resume

Proofreading and Editing: Have your resume and cover letter critiqued by several people, including experienced proofreaders. Do not be afraid to delete unnecessary words, sentences, and paragraphs. Make the appropriate changes and show the revisions. A good resume is always a work in progress. At least three revisions are usually needed to produce a solid product. The Career Center Staff is an excellent resource for resume reviews.

Printing your Resume and Cover Letter:

Your resume and cover letter should be printed on resume paper. Mail the resume and cover letter in an 8x11 manila envelope.

Unless your writing is extremely neat and easy to read, type your envelopes. Address it with the full name and title, to the person you identified in your cover letter, unless otherwise noted.

Follow Up:

Calling to check on your status or to verify that your resume and cover letter have been received may show the employer that you are motivated and very interested in the position. However, it is important to make good decisions concerning the degree of follow up. If, for example, 200 people apply for a position and 25% of them call, that is 50 calls for an already busy individual! In addition, calling if the employer has specifically requested no phone

calls can be interpreted as not being able to follow simple instructions. Your best judgment should guide you on this subject. If you have specific questions about a unique situation, consult the Career Center staff for advice on how to proceed.

Resume Resources:

While it is important to tailor your skills and experiences to specific opportunities, it can be extremely helpful to look at how others have presented their information. In addition to resume writing books located in the Career Center, we also have a binder with examples of resumes developed by other students and graduates.

Resume Construction

Format and Layout

Your experiences can be categorized in a number of ways. Select a format and layout that presents your qualifications as effectively as possible. Always keep in mind that reader of your resume and target your resume toward that person. Look at your resume through the eyes of the employer.

Would you hire you based on the information presented?

Format

Chronological: The most traditional format. A categorical listing of information in reverse order of occurrence allows the potential employer to quickly scan for pertinent information regarding your experience. This format is the most popular and excellent for demonstrating employment history.

Functional/Targeted: This format emphasizes your capabilities, skills, and accomplishments rather than job titles. The functional format is most effective if you are changing fields or seeking a different emphasis in your career.

Combination: This format combines the best features of the previous two. Experiences are listed in chronological order but organized under skills or topical headings. Because the combination resume allows you to highlight significant experiences without necessarily placing your most current experience first, it is popular with students and recent graduates.

Layout

Font: A simple, easy-to-read font is best. Use either a serif type (Times or Palatino) or a sans serif

type (Arial or Helvetica) in a readable size (no smaller than 10 point, no larger than 14 point). It is best to be conservative.

Margins: Half-inch margins for top, bottom, right and left are preferred. Use margin adjustments to create a symmetrical and appealing resume.

Bullets: The bullet function works wonderfully to aid the eye in quickly scanning for specific skills and accomplishments. Keep it conservative—solid circles and squares are best.

Underline/Bold/Italic/

Capitalization: Use these technique to emphasize consistency and to provide a visually attractive document. It is more appealing to read a document with some variation, but too much is distracting.

Resume Checklist

- ◆ Proofread, Proofread, Proofread.
- ◆ Grammar check & spell check.
- ◆ Don't make the employer work; use an inviting and easy-to-read format and font
- ◆ Font size should be between 10pt and 12pt.
- ◆ Utilize the whole page (8 1/2x11). Adjust your margins between 0.5 and 1.0 inches.
- ◆ Use light colored paper; it is usually perceived as more positive and professional.

Emailing Your Resume & Cover Letter

When applying for employment via email, copy and paste your cover letter into the email message or write your cover letter in the body of an email message. Make sure you include a signature with your email address and phone number. Include the title of the position you are applying for in the subject line of your message.

When and how do I indicate my salary history?

Trends are showing that many companies are requesting salary history. Usually this information can be stated in the cover letter.

Some people will list their previous and current salary range together. For example~ My previous and current positions have ranged from \$19k to \$24k annually.

Resume Template

HEADING/CONTACT INFORMATION

- Name, address (street address, city, state and zip)
- Telephone (and area code)
- E-mail address (if applicable, website (if applicable))

Make sure an employer can contact you or your answering machine by using a professional sounding message at the number you have indicated. If necessary, include both your current and permanent address and phone on the resume.

OBJECTIVE/SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

- One to three sentence summary of your area of expertise and career interest.
- Write as complete sentences or as descriptive phrases with minimal punctuation.
- Relate your existing skills directly to the job you are seeking. Demonstrate what you can do for the company rather than what they can do for you.
- Make the statement as specific as possible:

A position which allows me to apply my background in engineering and high performance computing to biological problems.

- Summary of Qualifications statement can replace or be used in addition to the objective statement.
- Write one short paragraph or a bulleted list of qualifications:

A Junior Mechanical Engineering Major with expertise in the following areas:

- * *Using CAD programs to support projects*
- * *Communicating with customers in project environments*
- * *Developing projects in conjunction with peers*

EDUCATION

- We put this section first because you are currently a student or about to graduate. In a few years, Experience will be more relevant and you can reorganize your resume to have the Experience section first.
- Name of institutions attended, city and state where school is located
- Degree awarded: major and/or minor
- Date degree to be awarded
- GPA, if 3.5 or above
- Course titles, if employer requests them or if they substitute for lack of work experience
- You do not have to include high school if you are in college

EXPERIENCE

- Position title, organization name
- City and state where organization is located, dates of service
- Description of skills used

Within this section include paid employment, internships and/or volunteer experiences that support your objective. Describe your experiences

using short phrases beginning with past tense verbs. See the *Action Verbs for Resume Page*. Do not use the first person (pronoun "I" or "my") on a resume. Quantify your experience where ever possible. (Example: Managed a \$5000 budget, supervised 15 people). A common way of presenting your experience is in reverse chronological order (**most recent to least recent**). You can also put group related experiences together under special titles: TEACHING EXPERIENCE, RELEVANT EXPERIENCE, VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE OR LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE.

AWARDS & HONORS (if you do not have any, leave this section off)

- Award title and organization, purpose awarded for, date awarded

ACTIVITIES (only if they are relevant to the job)

- Position title, organization name, city, state
- Dates of participation/ membership
- Description of skills used in position

Highlight activities and affiliations in which you have been active and developed your skills. Use past-tense action verbs as in the EXPERIENCE section. *Caution: Personal information has the potential to be used in a discriminatory way and can weaken a resume.*

SKILLS (if applicable)

- Specify relevant skills and describe your proficiency level: Fluent in French, Advanced Excel

References

References are an important part of the job-search process; employers expect them.

When you are choosing people to serve as references,

- Choose the ones who can best address your skills and can give specific examples of your accomplishments.
- Ask their permission before submitting their names as references.
- Send each of your references a copy of your résumé and the job description or advertisement for each position you are pursuing.
- If you are asking faculty members to serve as references for you, give them copies of projects you completed in their classes to help them remember the quality of your work.
- Let them know each time you submit their names as references.
- Keep them informed of your progress and send them thank you notes for their efforts on your behalf.
- References are not listed on your resume. They are to be provided upon request which is separate paper. Use the same contact information heading as you did on your resume to list your references.