



Office of Career and Professional Development

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Résumé Writing Guide

There is no one way to construct a résumé. The focal point of your résumé will establish what contents to include and how to organize the headings. You may receive many different ideas from people and from samples. Ultimately, it's your resume and you must decide the best way to communicate this information. The résumé outline that follows will review typical headings and contents. It is highly recommended that you get feedback from potential employers prior to your job search.

Résumés styles: Chronological, Functional and Combination

Chronological is the most traditional style and is most preferred by employers. Those that might choose the chronological style are: new college graduates, those with an impressive work history in their field, people staying within the same field or moving up the career ladder. Chronological resume focuses on employment history and education. Experience and education are listed in reverse chronological order.

Functional résumé focuses on skills you have developed rather than on when, where or how you acquired them. Functional résumé may be chosen by those with limited work experience in their field of interest, career changers, or people returning to the work force with employment gaps. Functional résumé focuses on skills developed through academic, volunteer and unrelated work experience; stresses transferable skills.

Combination is becoming more and more popular and is preferred over the functional style. Combination résumé may be appropriate for those with limited or non-related job objective. Used by new college graduates with relevant leadership/work/internship experience. A combination résumé highlights transferable skills by summarizing strengths at the beginning of the resume. A combination résumé is a mixture of chronological and functional résumé styles. Show crucial experience in reverse chronology, after the summary section.

Prepare, Research

Before you begin, think about how your skills, knowledge, education and values relate to the qualifications required for the position you seek. Write this information down on a paper before your begin your résumé and cover letter. Research employers and develop accomplishment statements that match the job specifications that the employer seeks. Think about transferable skills that are your strengths, how you have used them and relate these experiences to the position.

IDENTIFYING INFORMATION

- Your name should appear at the top of page and should stand out, use **BOLD CAPS** if desired. You may consider making your name as large as 30 font if desired. (Avoid nicknames)
- Your address does not stand out. Use small font but, no smaller than a size 10
- You may include your campus address (if applicable) and permanent (home address)
- Include your email, appropriate for job searching
- Include your phone numbers and cell number
- You may include your web site address (if it's professional and relevant to your objective)

CAREER OBJECTIVE – PROFESSIONAL OBJECTIVE

- Career Objective statement clarifies career direction and goals
- Objective should be clear, focused and current; it should reflect your immediate pursuit of employment
- Describe the type of work you desire (job title) and show the skills you can offer (i.e. Entry-level position in banking or financial services that will capitalize on education, strong interpersonal and organizational skills)
- Avoid using vague statements (i.e. A challenging position in a growing company)
- You may omit a career objective on your resume and as an alternative, discuss your career interests in your cover letter.
- Information included in your resume should support your objective statement

EDUCATION

- New graduates without a lot of work experience should list their educational information first. Alumni with two to two and one-half years of experience should list their EXPERIENCE before education
- List in reverse chronological order
- Include undergraduate, nothing before
- Include school, location, degree, and the date your degree was or will be received
- Bachelor of Arts OR Bachelor of Science, not BA or BS
- Include your major (s), minor (s), track or concentration
- Include GPA if it is favorable (3.0/4.0 or above)
- Include your academic honors or scholarships. If you have several, consider a separate heading for HONORS
- Include Senior Written and Oral Comprehensive Exams, date of completion
- Teachers – include certifications (include states, grade levels, subject, and special areas certificated in)

EXPERIENCE

- List experience in reverse chronological order
- Include full-time, part-time, volunteer, campus and/or community activities, internship experience relevant to your field
- Include: job title, company name, city, state and dates of employment or participation
- Always state the full dates: June 2001 – July 2003
- List main duties, highlight skills that are most relevant to your objective
- Consider using bulleted phrases rather than full sentences and paragraphs. Bullets are easier to scan
- Begin statements with action verbs (see list of action verbs and dynamo list)
- Always explain in past tense except for the experience you are currently involved

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES, PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

- Include activities such as membership, leadership in clubs and organizations, sports involvement, community and volunteer activities
- Activities can also be listed under "Experience" if relevant to objective

SKILLS

- Computer Skills
 - languages, operating systems, software applications, hardware, Internet experience
- Foreign Language fluency
 - level of speaking, reading, and writing fluency
 - Illustrate as basic, intermediate, proficient
- Other skills that are relevant to the job targeted (i.e. laboratory skills)

HONORS, ACHIEVEMENTS

- Honors may be listed under a separate heading or included under the Education section
- List honorary societies, etc.
- Special Awards, Scholarships, Dean's List
- Include Senior Written and Oral Comprehensive Exam (once completed)

REFERENCE

- NEVER include references on your resume. Include the line "References available upon request," centered at the bottom of your resume
- You may include a separate reference sheet. Include your heading, identical to your resume. List the names and contact information for your references
- Always receive permission before listing references

HIGHLIGHTS

Content -

- Your résumé should be appealing to the eye, simple structure, un-crowded and easy to read
- Your résumé should be well-organized
- Use single spacing within listings and double line spacing between sections
- Consider including a career objective to show direction
- Include information that is most relevant and support your career goal
- Use strong action verbs to highlight skills
- Avoid abbreviations
- Avoid the use of personal pronouns, i.e. "I"
- Spell out numbers under and including ten; use numerical form for numbers over and including 11
- Use words specific to your career field (buzz words) to maximize the number of matches between what the employer is looking for and what you have to offer.
- Keep your format consistent: type font, verb tense, spacing, ordering of information, boldface
- Spelling, grammatical, punctuation or typographical errors are inexcusable. Have several people (Career Office, faculty, employers) proofread your résumé to offer feedback

Font -

- Use sans serif fonts (Helvetica, Arial, etc.) Choose a font that is clear and simple to read. Pick one font and stick with it.
- Avoid fonts larger than 12 and smaller than 10 (name is an exception)

Margins –

- All margins should be 1"

Length –

- Limit entry-level résumés to one typed page, if possible. Be concise. Two pages are acceptable if you have enough relevant experience. If you must go to two pages always include your name at the top left hand side and Page 2 at the right. Never staple, always use paperclips. And, never print front and back.

Paper -

- Use 8 ½ x 11" paper
- Print on a laser jet or high quality ink-jet printer on white, light grey or cream/buff résumé paper
- Photocopying is not advised

Envelope –

- Neatness counts. Type directly on the envelope when possible or use type labels. If large envelopes are available, use that rather than folding your résumé. If folding is unavoidable, do not fold on a line of text

Resume Templates –

- Many times templates are difficult to work with and may be constricting. Begin with a document on Word or any similar type of program