

RESUME WRITING- Tip Sheet

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RESUME WRITING TIPS

The resume is often the first impression an employer receives about you as a candidate and serves as your marketing tool. You are encouraged to carefully write resumes that clearly and concisely describe pertinent information about skills, experiences, and career goals. This process may include creating a few versions of your resume that are tailored to specific career areas. Since a resume is made up of sections that help employers learn about the candidate, be aware that some sections are essential, while others are considered optional. Even though you can obtain ideas from many people and many samples, you must decide what best communicates your most important qualifications to an employer. Getting feedback from your career coach and potential employers prior to the job search is strongly recommended.

Content:

- Keep it to one page in length if you can; advanced degree students and candidates who have worked for several years may require more than one page. Include items that are most relevant to and supportive of your career goal.
- Consider including a career objective to show self-awareness and commitment to a field.
- Order items so that the most relevant items appear first.
- A resume need not contain your entire work history or all job responsibilities. Include main responsibilities, transferable skills (related to the job you are seeking) and accomplishments/results.
- Use action verbs and highlight achievements, quantifying results if possible.
- Avoid abbreviating names of organizations, titles, and descriptors.
- Include both campus and permanent address, if applicable, so employers can easily locate you.
- Include your email address. Be sure that your email address conveys a professional image of yourself. You may also include your website home page address if showing sample work, but be certain all aspects of your website are suitable for viewing by an employer. In addition, if you have a strong LinkedIn profile, include your LinkedIn URL.

TYPES OF RESUMES

You will likely need to have several versions of your resume, depending on its purpose and how it is sent when applying for a position. Following are the recommended versions and advice to prepare them:

USE OF PAPER RESUMES:

➤ **Print Version:**

This format would be used for the following purposes:

- Mailing your resume to an organization: a cover letter should also be sent when mailing a resume.
- Going on an interview: several copies should be taken because you may meet with more than one person.
- Attending job fairs and networking events: multiple copies of the resume should be taken because you will meet with many employers.

Format:

- Be sure it is easy to read, with clean, simple lines and reasonable use of white space on the page.
- Use standard 8 1/2 x 11, light-colored (white, ivory, light gray), 24 or 28-pound bond paper.
- Print only on one side of paper if a two-page resume. If more than one page, make sure your name and page number are at the top of the second page.
- Use a font size that is readable, typically no smaller than 10 point or larger than 14 point (name can be up to 32 points, if desired.)
- Use formatting, such as boldfacing, underlining, and italicizing sparingly. Do not use two special formats in one phrase.

SENDING RESUMES ELECTRONICALLY:

Most employers now request that resumes be sent initially via the internet. They may request your resume in an email, as an attachment, or as a posting on a website. This task is seemingly quick and easy, but you must consider some formatting techniques to avoid common mistakes.

- Keep your resume simple. Choose a basic font such as Times New Roman or Arial.
- Always follow formatting and display style guidelines recommended by the employer. If a preference isn't stated, try to find out. Some recruiters may prefer a resume in the body of an email message instead of sent as an attachment. If you are unable to determine their preference, consider sending the resume as an email attachment.
- Always include a cover letter with the resume, unless the employer specifies otherwise.
- When emailing the resume, use a specific subject line that will identify the position for which you are applying. For example: Subject Line: Amy Smith Resume for Programmer Analyst 2. If a code number is assigned to the job, you may use the number, but be aware that some systems may filter out a series of numbers as a spam email.

➤ **Resume Sent as an Attachment:**

- Create your resume using a common word processing program, preferably Microsoft Word 2010. (If a newer version is added, the employer may not yet have it and would, therefore, be unable to open it.) You may want to save your resume as a PDF file to ensure its readability and formatting remain intact. Also, a PDF format rather than a Word document is easier to read on a SmartPhone, which many employers now use to view resumes. However, if the employer uses an applicant tracking system (ATS) (as described below), a Word document may be preferred. Follow instructions if provided.
- Don't give your document a generic name such as "myresume.doc." Make sure the recruiter will associate the file with you, as, for example, "AmySmithResume.doc."
- Before sending to the employer, send an identical email to a friend to make sure it will open correctly on a different computer.

➤ **Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS):**

Many employers today use an electronic tracking system to filter resumes. This type of system has two purposes: to manage high volumes of applications for positions and to screen out candidates who lack the

required skills for the job. It also allows them to select candidates in compliance with the law and to maintain applications in a database for government review purposes.

However, with this system, if the jobseeker's resume is not formatted to match the ATS system, the resume can easily be overlooked for consideration for an interview.

While these ATS systems are constantly evolving, following are some important tips for developing an ATS-compliant resume as quoted (with permission) from the online article 'Preparing Job-Seeker Resumes for Applicant Tracking Systems: Checklist and Critical Do's and Don'ts' by Dr. Randall S. Hansen (<https://www.livecareer.com/quintessential/applicant-tracking-system-resume-checklist>)

Checklist for ATS resumes:

My job-search resume:

- Is saved in an approved format — resume is submitted as a .doc, .docx, or .txt (PDF, RTF, and JPG formats may not be ATS-friendly).
- Does not use fancy templates, borders, or shading
- Is in a single column format (no tables, multiple columns, or text boxes)
- Uses simply formatted text of a reasonable size (10 point size or above)
- Includes standard fonts (Arial, Georgia, Tahoma, Trebuchet, and Verdana are all “safe” choices)
- Does not contain complex formatting (condensed or expanded text) — that is, don't use extra spaces between letters, because the ATS can't “read” it
- Includes a few, clearly defined sections: Summary, Work Experience, and Education
- Does not contain images or graphics — or, if they do appear, they do not affect the single-column formatting (Be warned, however, that the simple inclusion of any graphics may be enough to “choke” some applicant tracking systems.)
- Does not include any information in the headers or footers of the document (if saved in Microsoft Word format)
- Has been thoroughly edited and spellchecked and contains no errors. (The ATS will not recognize misspelled words)
- Does not include any special characters or accented words
- Contains proper capitalization and punctuation. Both of these can affect how information is parsed and assigned within the ATS database
- Uses the full, spelled-out version of a term in addition to abbreviations and acronyms [i.e., Certified Public Accountant (CPA)]
- Incorporates relevant, targeted keywords and phrases for the type of position being sought (Have you included specifics — i.e., “Photoshop” instead of “image-editing software”)
- Has been customized for the position being sought. “One-size-fits-all” does not work with applicant tracking systems

Critical Do's and Don'ts Related to Applicant Tracking Systems

- When applying for a specific position, do use that job title on the resume.
- Do include the descriptor “phone:” and “email:” in front of the phone number and email address so the ATS can identify this information.
- When listing dates for employment or education, do list dates to the right of the information.
- Do consider including section headers in ALL CAPS to make it easy for the applicant tracking system to categorize the information.
- If you are working toward a degree or certification that is a requirement for the position, do include it on the resume — but make sure you include a phrase such as “Pursuing (name of credential)” or “Degree anticipated (date).”
- Do check your email after applying for a position online. Some applicant tracking systems acknowledge submissions, but these automated responses may be diverted to your spam folder.

- Do be mindful of special characters and accents you use on your resume. Some words and phrases can be misinterpreted by an applicant tracking system — for example, accented words. The word “résumé” itself is not ATS-friendly. The ATS does not recognize the accented letters. Instead, it reads it as “r?sum?”
- Don’t list your credentials (MBA, CPA, etc.) next to your name. Include that information on a separate line.
- Don’t include skills you don’t possess on the resume as an attempt to “trick” the applicant tracking system into selecting you. (Remember, the resume will eventually be reviewed by a human.)
- Don’t mix different fonts and sizes in your resume.
- Don’t submit multiple resumes to the same company. Applicant tracking systems have a memory — all those previous submissions remain in the system. You can apply to multiple, related positions, but make sure the resume information is consistent (i.e., the number of years in a particular job, for example), because the hiring manager will have access to the other versions too.

Please keep in mind that the suggestions given are guidelines only. The type of system and software versions may impact the preparation of your resume. When the type of ATS system being used is evident, you may want to research the technology to specify appropriate guidelines.

INTERNET RESOURCES

CareerBuilder	http://careerbuilder.com
CollegeGrad.com	https://collegegrad.com/resumes
Forbes	www.forbes.com/sites/nextavenue/2016/02/09/8-critical-ways-to-improve-your-resume/#395c587878a2
Job Star Central	www.jobstar.org/tools/resume/index.cfm
Monster.com	http://career-advice.monster.com/resumes-cover-letters/resume-samples/jobs.aspx
Quintessential Careers	www.livecareer.com/resume-builder
Resume Help	www.resume-help.org
Susan Ireland Resumes	www.susanireland.com
The Riley Guide: Resumes & Cover Letters	www.rileyguide.com/eresume.html

WRITING A CAREER OBJECTIVE

This is usually the hardest part of resume writing. A well-written objective can give you an edge over the competition. A poorly written one can make you appear either indecisive or too specialized. You'll hear many different opinions on how to write an objective or whether one is even necessary. (Describing your objective in a cover letter is often cited as an alternative). As with the entire resume, it is a personal decision and should be based on your job search situation. You don't need to know exactly what you want to do in order to write one. A good objective simply reflects knowledge of your intended field, self-awareness, and some preferences in job functions.

Considerations Regarding Career Objectives

- It makes the employers want to read the resume. You - hopefully more than other candidates - appear committed to the field.
- It can improve the body of your resume. By having a goal on your resume, you can make better decisions about which courses/projects to list, how to order experiences, and what to highlight in descriptions.

- It forces you to make some career decisions and focus your search. Indecisiveness may cause you to want to "keep your options open;" often what that reflects to the employer is "I'll take anything-please!"
- Not including an objective forces the employer to do all the work of decision-making for you.
- If you include an extremely vague objective because you are pursuing too many career goals simultaneously, you can't focus your search enough to really go after what you want. Instead, you get a little bit of everything that happens to come your way.
- Preparing a targeted resume can help you prepare for your interviews. With this approach, you are more than writing down dates, employers and descriptions; you are beginning to analyze your skills and market yourself.
- If an objective is not typical for your field or you are unsure of your target audience, a strategically located skills section may better serve you than using an objective.

Elements to Avoid in the Objective

- It is not what you want out of the position, but what you can offer to the employer. Avoid phrases like "an opportunity to develop my skills..." or "to gain experience in the field of..."
- Avoid what is too general or vague. How do you want to "work with people"... collaborating, servicing customers, public speaking? Even "management trainee" by itself is vague. Do you prefer to manage data or supervise people? What type of industry, product or service interests you?
- Leave out clichés such as "challenging work," "position of responsibility," and "opportunity to grow."
- Listing a string of diverse fields in one objective can reflect indecision or desperation. It is acceptable to have two or more resumes with different objectives. You may find that the content even changes in order to better support the objectives. You are probably spreading yourself too thin, however, if you have more than three resumes with vastly different objectives.
- It should not reflect long-range goals, particularly if the goal is not a common next step in the career ladder of the employer. Otherwise, the employer will unnecessarily anticipate a move out of the organization, or think you are hoping for your potential supervisor's job.

Elements of a Good Career Objective

The key to a good objective is to find the delicate balance between being so vague or diverse that you show indecision and being so specific that you eliminate good options. The most specific term that exists is a job title: what one particular employer labels a specific job. Another employer may label the same tasks or functions differently, so make sure the terminology you use is general enough that it has meaning to several potential employers. A good career objective should contain a few of the following elements:

- **Job Function** - Whether you work for an arts, service, financial or scientific organization, the tasks performed will involve some of the following basic functions:
 - Production of Goods or Services
 - Research and Development
 - Management/Administration
 - Finance and Accounting
 - Sales and Marketing
 - Technical Services

These are general types of activities, and are often reflected as different departments in an organizational structure. The important question is "What will you be doing with your body of knowledge or skills?"
- **Occupational Field or Title** - A more specific label of what you want to do that communicates something about the content of the work. Examples: biologist, writer, illustrator, banking, public relations, social work.
- **Specialty Areas** - A specialized function within an occupational field (i.e., advertising is made up of creative, media, research, and account services subfields); or it can describe a specialized body of knowledge that you want to use in your field (i.e., examples of areas in which an accountant could specialize are cost, tax, and managerial).
- **Type of Organization** - Small, medium, large, local, national, international, corporate or non-profit, private or public sector.

- Industry (products or services) - Computer equipment and software, education, electronics, entertainment, government, health and medical services, insurance, printing and publishing, social services, telecommunications, etc.
- Functional Skills - An ability or expertise that is significant to the career. Examples are supervisory skills, creativity, attention to detail, knowledge of HTML, familiarity with statistical packages, communication skills, analytical skills, etc.

Sample Objectives

The following are sample objectives you can use as guidelines in preparing your unique statement:

- Full-time position in the management information systems field. Areas of interest include applications programming and systems analysis and design.
- To work in the field of software engineering specializing in new product development.
- A position in the health field using experience in organizing groups, clarifying ideas and problems, making public addresses, and writing reports and newsletters.
- Research responsibility in a public affairs area of a corporation.
- To obtain a position as an accountant in the field of tax or financial accounting.
- A position as an assistant in product marketing, development or general research.
- Seeking a summer internship in the tourism industry.

Need Help?

Deciding on career goals involves matching your interests, abilities and values to a work function. If you are having a difficult time writing an objective, perhaps you need to obtain more information about the world of work or to clarify your career goals. Consider meeting with your career coach at the Career and Professional Development Center to seek further information and inquire about taking an interest inventory.

SAMPLE RESUME FORMAT

Contact Information

Resumes traditionally include your name, address (home and campus/local if applicable), telephone number (including area code), and email address. However, for privacy purposes, full addresses may not be warranted on your resume. Consult your career coach to discuss what option may be best for you. In addition, you may want to include your website home page address (if applicable) and your LinkedIn URL.

Job Objective

Describe briefly and clearly the type of work you are seeking and the skills you are offering.

Education

- Name and location of institution (include city and state)
- Month and year of graduation or expected graduation
- Degree awarded or to be awarded (degrees may be abbreviated or, preferably, written out)
- Field of study (include major, concentration, track, minor, etc.)
- Relevant courses (can also be listed as a separate section)
- Any special training in addition to formal education
- Thesis topic and description, if applicable

Experience

Name and describe paid employment, internships, summer jobs, field study, and/or project work.

(Projects can also be listed under "Education" or under a separate section such as, "Academic Experience" or "Project Work.")

Traditional resume formats begin with most recent position and proceed in reverse chronological order.

However, your most important and relevant experiences should ideally appear first. If you have had non-relevant work experience after a more relevant experience, try creating more specific categories such as

"Relevant Experience, Writing Experience, Computer Experience, Additional Work Experience" and list experiences accordingly. Usually, listing experiences in these types of categories will naturally result in a reverse chronological order within each category. Include the following:

- Employer Name, City, State/Location
- Job Title/Position, Dates (months and years)
- Responsibilities, Accomplishments, and Recognitions

Skills

Refer to any distinct skills specific to your field. List computer skills and foreign language proficiencies.

Honors

Include special awards, Dean's List, and scholarships.

Achievements

List and describe any significant and relevant achievements such as shows, exhibits, and publications. (Publications can also be listed in a separate section.)

Activities

Include campus/community activities, leadership and volunteer positions (can also be listed under "Experience" if relevant to objective), and hobbies/interests (optional).

References

It is optional to indicate that references are available upon request. If relevant, mention that items such as a portfolio or writing samples will also be furnished upon request.

SAMPLE RESUME HEADINGS

Contact Information: Current Address, University Address, Local Address, Telephone Number, Email Address, Homepage Address, Home Address, Permanent Address, Forwarding Address

Career Objective: Professional Objective, Job Objective, Professional Goal, Objective

Education: Educational Background

Relevant Course Work: Relevant Courses, Selected Courses, Course Work, Project Courses, Projects

Employment: Work Experience, Full-Time Employment, Part-Time Employment, Professional Experience, Experience, Work History, Related Experience, Summer Work, Career History

Skills: Special Skills, Capabilities, Abilities, Special Training, Language Proficiency, Artistic Skills, Computer Skills, Technical Skills

Achievements: Accomplishments, Scholastic Achievements, Exhibits, Awards

Honors: Awards, Honors/Honoraries, Scholarships

Activities: Campus Leadership, Extra-Curricular Activities, Volunteer Work, Community Service

Professional Organizations: Professional Affiliations, Memberships

Projects/ Project Experience/ Research Projects: Class Group Projects, Publications, Presentations

References (optional): Furnished Upon Request, Available Upon Request

ACTION VERBS FOR RESUME DEVELOPMENT

Accelerated	Discovered	Intensified	Prompted
Accompanied	Edited	Interpreted	Proposed
Achieved	Enacted	Invented	Proved
Acquired	Encouraged	Justified	Provided
Administered	Engineered	Keyed	Recommended
Affected	Enhanced	Launched	Reconciled
Analyzed	Established	Led	Reduced
Arranged	Evaluated	Located	Regulated
Aspired	Exceeded	Maintained	Reinforced
Assembled	Executed	Managed	Reorganized
Assisted	Exhibited	Manufactured	Researched
Budgeted	Expanded	Marketed	Revamped
Built	Expedited	Mastered	Reviewed
Clarified	Experienced	Mediated	Revised
Commanded	Facilitated	Monitored	Scheduled
Completed	Finalized	Motivated	Secured
Composed	Financed	Negotiated	Served
Conceived	Formalized	Nominated	Serviced
Conducted	Formed	Normalized	Simplified
Constructed	Formulated	Obtained	Solved
Controlled	Founded	Officiated	Sparked
Converted	Generated	Operated	Stimulated
Cooperated	Governed	Ordered	Streamlined
Coordinated	Handled	Organized	Structured
Created	Headed	Oriented	Succeeded
Decided	Helped	Participated	Supervised
Delegated	Hired	Perfected	Supported
Demonstrated	Implemented	Performed	Taught
Designed	Improved	Piloted	Trained
Detailed	Increased	Pinpointed	Transferred
Determined	Influenced	Pioneered	Transformed
Developed	Initiated	Placed	Troubleshoot
Directed	Inspired	Planned	Unified
Displayed	Installed	Prepared	Used
Doubled	Instituted	Presided	Utilized
Earned	Instructed	Procured	Verified
Eliminated	Insured	Produced	Won
Devised	Integrated	Promoted	Wrote