

Resume Guide

What is a Resume?

A resume is typically a one-page* marketing tool designed to get you an interview. Your goal is to use the space on the page to, **at a glance**, communicate your value and provide evidence of your capabilities. Your resume will summarize your education, experience and accomplishments to present the skills that are relevant to your career objectives. It is up to you to make a connection between your skills and background to the requirements of the job.

*After acquiring at least five years of professional work experience, it would be appropriate to expand your resume to two-plus pages.

Resumes are:

- Focused on **achievements** and **accomplishments** rather than job responsibilities
- Tailored towards **job target**
- Shared with **networking contacts**
- Used by recruiters and hiring managers to initially **evaluate your qualifications for a particular position**

📌 **Note!** Your resume is **not** a chronology of everything you have done. It is an advertisement of your skills and abilities to do a particular job. **Make a decision to edit down or eliminate altogether anything that does not match your target.**

Getting Started

The MASTER Resume

As you start moving forward on your career path, you will want to have on file a comprehensive document of all of your experience. This includes all paid work, volunteer, academic projects as well as all the skills you have developed and all the knowledge you have acquired through any experience. **You will refer to this document whenever you will need to tailor a resume towards a particular role.**

The TAILORED Resume

The most successful resumes are tailored for specific roles. Before you start writing your resume, think about how you can relate your previous experience to the responsibilities outlined in the job description. Show how your skills and experience are just what the employer needs. Expect to have multiple versions of your resume if you are applying to very different types of jobs. **A generic resume that is too broad will not be as effective in selling you to potential employers.**

📌 **Note!** There is a difference between your co-op resume and one you will use for a professional job after college. One of the main differences is that your professional resume should be targeted to fit the jobs for which you are applying.

- Look at samples on the Employer Engagement and Career Design [website](#)
- Have your resume critiqued during drop-ins, Mon-Fri from 1:30-3:30 pm in Stearns, or make an appointment with a career counselor.

Basic Elements of a Resume:

Although resumes may have standard elements, there are many effective formats for presenting them (see samples). Leave out sections that do not relate to the kind of job you are applying for.

Design and Format - While all resumes will need to have certain sections, the way you present your information can vary. Although there aren't many rules to writing a resume, you should consider:

Color/Font– You may choose to use color or unique fonts (especially if you are in a creative field). Color can be used as minimally as just using it for your first name or a box to make something stand out as well as shading in sections. Use a standard font like Arial (no smaller than 11 pt).

Format - The appearance of your resume matters. The layout and style should be consistent. For example, if you bold one heading, bold them all. Balance white space and text. According to the latest trends, a recruiter will scan your resume in 6 seconds to determine if it will go into the “YES” pile for further review or the “NO” pile. Keep your layout neat and user-friendly.

Resume Sections

↳ **Heading**

Include your name, e-mail address, phone number and LinkedIn URL. **An address is no longer necessary.** Be sure your email address is professional; nothing cute or quirky. Make sure that you customize your LinkedIn URL. If you have a website, you would like the employer to see, include it here.

↳ **Education - Immediately after graduation, keep your education first.**

- List institution, degree, major and year of graduation. Institutions should be listed in **reverse chronological** order, most recent school first.
- **Optional:** Relevant Courses, Activities, Honors, Study Abroad
- Include a **GPA of 3.5 and above.** List your GPA in your major if it is better than your overall GPA.
- Include high school only on resumes for your **first or second co-op only.**

↳ **Experience or Professional Experience**

- Include **any** experiences, paid or unpaid such as: part-time work, full-time work, summer jobs, Co-op, internships, volunteer experience.
- Use **reverse** chronological format
- State the position held, employer, location, and dates of employment. *If you worked outside of the United States, include the country name, your job title and the month and years that you were there.*
- Begin each phrase with an action verb (see list on last page) and **avoid phrases like "responsibilities include."**
Quantify your accomplishments when possible, e.g., “surpassed sales quota by 15%,” “trained and supervised 5 employees”, “maintained average caseload of 85”.
- Summarize what you did in each experience and be sure to make each bullet point **results-oriented**
- Show how your skills and experience are just what the employer needs. Expect to have multiple versions of your resume if you are applying to very different types of jobs. Be careful not to send the wrong one and have all of them proofread.
- You can create another heading called Additional Experience to include those jobs that don't relate as well to your target but that you still want to keep on your resume.

📌 **Note!** If including unpaid positions the heading will be EXPERIENCE rather than PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE.

📌 **Note!** To highlight an experience a section called **Relevant Experience** to present those jobs related to your target in an organized and unified way, **especially if they don't naturally fall in chronological order.**

Bullet vs. Narrative Formats

Bullet formats are easier to read than narrative formats that are wordier and often less concise.

To write effective bullets, start by asking the following questions: Did you ever

- Improve or increase anything (traffic, revenue, etc.)?
- Save time or money?
- Create something that did not exist (product, program, process)?
- Identify a gap and created something that did not exist?
- Demonstrate exceptional leadership, communication or relationship building skills?

Examples of bulleted verb phrases:

- Recruit and screen students and coordinate ongoing evaluation of participants' progress
- Hired and trained 5 highly qualified, passionate people
- Provide guidance, support, and leadership to program staff
- Communicate program developments to Board of Directors

↳ **Skills**

- The skills section may include multiple categories such as software, instrumentation, language, laboratory or computer skills.
- For positions that require specific technical skills, you may consider putting this section after education.

🔗 **Note!** Save references to problem-solving, communication, team work and other "soft" skills for the cover letter and interview or include them in the Core Competencies section.

↳ **Activities and Interests**

- Include your current participation in clubs, other extracurricular activities or volunteer work.
- List student organizations, professional associations, and community groups, and indicate any offices you've held. *If these are school related, you may choose to put them in the Education section.*
- An Interests section at the end of your resume is optional. If you use one, list interests that demonstrate your uniqueness such as music, sports and the arts, or ones that relate to the job; there is no reason to repeat interests that are already obvious throughout your resume.

🔗 **Note!** Listing religious or political activities may alienate some readers.

Optional Sections

↳ **Summary**

A summary is a quick snapshot (three unique phrases) of yourself that connects to the role you are pursuing. The summary should highlight your most significant capabilities, achievements and personality traits.

🔗 **Note!** You want to avoid using common phrases such as: "Detail oriented, results driven team player with strong work ethic".

🔗 **Note to Alumni!** - Experienced professionals might use this section to quickly explain a change of career direction when at first glance their prior experience doesn't seem to be related to the new direction. To do this effectively, research job descriptions in your target market to find out what employers want, and make summary statements about what you have to offer that best fit the position description.

Here are some prompts to help you come up with content for the three phrases.

Adjective(s) that describe(s) you - Forward-thinking innovative and entrepreneurial

Job Function or Role - mechanical engineer

Experience or Skills related to position - co-op experience at iRobot, Amazon, and Philips.

Achievements or Accomplishments - Achieved 1st place in robotics competition by leading an interdisciplinary collaboration.

Something personal - Blends drive for excellence with humor and generosity.

Putting it Together

Forward-thinking and entrepreneurial mechanical engineer with co-op experience at iRobot, Amazon, and Philips. Achieved 1st place in robotics competition by leading an interdisciplinary collaboration. Blends drive for excellence with humor and generosity.

🔑 Core Competencies | Areas of Expertise

This is an optional section for those that want to highlight a few (6-9) of the relevant competencies (or soft skills) demonstrated through previous experience.

EXAMPLE - Areas of Expertise

Data Research and Analysis ~ Brand Management ~ Training
Vendor Relations ~ Program Development ~ Client Acquisition

Additional Tips

- 🔑 Do not use the pronoun “I” and minimize the use of pronouns (he, she, mine, my) when preparing your resume.
- 🔑 Use the first person form for verbs, i.e., organize rather than organizes.
- 🔑 Review your resume for unnecessary phrases such as “responsible for” or “duties include.”
- 🔑 Spelling errors, typos and poor grammar damage your credibility. *Use spell check, but remember it won’t catch every mistake. “Manger” is correctly spelled, but it means something very different from “Manager.”*
- 🔑 Proofread, Proofread, and Proofread Again
- 🔑 Make sure to have a friend, family member or a Career Services staff member read through your resume to catch errors you may have missed

🏠 **Note! VMock** - Use our 24/7 Resume Review resource to receive immediate feedback on your resume

Your resume is YOUR opportunity to capture the reader’s attention.

Applying for the “right” position is a more valuable investment of your time than applying for 5+ positions a day.

Follow these 3 steps to stay on track.

Step 1 - Identify your job target (What do you want?)

Step 2 - Inventory your qualifications (What do you have?)

Step 3 – Use the RESUME to present yourself as the best candidate for the job!

Action Verbs

COMMUNICATIONS

acted as liaison | advised | advocated | arbitrated | authored | commented | consulted | corresponded | counseled | demonstrated | displayed | edited | guided | informed | instructed | interpreted | interviewed | lectured | marketed | mediated | moderated | negotiated | notified | presented | promoted | publicized | published | referred | sold | trained | translated | wrote | recommended

ADMINISTRATION

administered | appointed | arranged | completed | conducted | consolidated | contracted | controlled | contributed | delegated | determined | directed | dispatched | dispensed | distributed | eliminated | executed | founded | governed | headed | implemented | initiated | instituted | issued | launched | led | managed | motivated | obtained | offered | ordered | organized | overhauled | oversaw | prescribed | presided | provided | recruited | rectified | referred | regulated | represented | revamped | reviewed | routed | supervised | supplied | terminated

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

broadened | created | designed | developed | devised | discovered | drafted | estimated | improved | initiated | invented | modified | planned | prepared | produced | proposed

ANALYSIS

amplified | analyzed | calculated | compiled | computed | detected | diagnosed | differentiated | evaluated | examined | forecasted | formulated | identified | investigated | programmed | researched | solved | studied | systemized | tested

FINANCIAL / MANAGEMENT

audited | allocated | balanced | catalogued | charted | classified | collected | condensed | documented | expedited | guaranteed | invested | inventoried | listed | logged | maximized | minimized | monitored | processed | procured | purchased | recorded | scheduled | tallied | traced | updated

TECHNICAL OR MANUAL SKILLS

assembled | built | constructed | delivered | installed | maintained | modernized | navigated | operated | repaired | replaced | restored | rewired | trimmed

GENERAL

accomplished | achieved | expanded | contributed | delivered | originated | increased | initiated | serviced | provided | served | performed | strengthened | transformed | completed