

Quick Reference Guide: Resume Writing

Heading/Contact Info

- Put your **name in the largest size font** (up to 16 pt.), in bold, at the top of your resume.
- Use a current address where you can be reached.
- Include a current phone number where a message can be left (with a professional outgoing message).
- Include a professional-sounding email address that you check regularly.
- Include the URL of your (LinkedIn) website, if you have one AND content is appropriate for viewing.

Summary - *the summary replaces an objective, focus on what you can offer and not what you want.*

- Positions you for your next job (tailor it to the specific type of job you seek next).
 - Support your summary claims throughout the rest of your resume.
- Consists of no more than 3-4 sentences written in paragraph form.
- Avoid using "I"
- Components include occupational focus, hard skills, soft skills, and special characteristics.

Education

- List current degree/major and any postsecondary degrees obtained in reverse chronological order (most recent first).
- Appropriately name degree and major (i.e. "Associate of Applied Science in Nursing" or "Pursuing Associate of Applied Science in Nursing" not Associate Degree in Nursing or AAS Nursing.)
- Emphasize **degree and school name** by placing it in bold.
- List only the month and year of graduation (Put "Expected Graduation" date, if currently attending school).
- Include GPA if 3.0 or higher.
- List relevant coursework – up to six - that directly relate to the job you seek next.

Employment History

- List experience in reverse chronological order (most recent first).
- Include your **organization, job title**, location (city, state).
- Include the years (no abbreviations) of employment.
- Use strong action verbs (supervised, oversaw, designed, etc.) to describe responsibilities and accomplishments. Avoid passive phrases such as "responsible for" and "duties included". Should be in paragraph form (1-5 sentences).
- List accomplishments with bullets instead of writing them in paragraph form.

** Use S-A-R success stories (Situation, Action, Result statements)*

- Provide specific/quantifying information (numbers, dollars, percentages) where possible.
- Use appropriate verb tense. Use past tense action verbs to describe all past experiences; use present tense action verbs for your current position
- Emphasize skills/experience that support claims made in your summary.

Optional Skills

- Include technical skills and name the software programs in which are you proficient.

** MS Office is a suite that includes Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Publisher, Outlook, etc.*

- Training and Professional Development
- Certifications / Licensures
- Memberships / Associations
- Volunteer or Community Service
- Language – list level of fluency other than English.
- Military Service
- Award and Honors
- Special Projects or Presentations
- Technical Addendum (i.e. expertise with computer applications, hardware, software, programming).
- Publications

**Do not include high school activities/awards unless you are in high school, you just graduated, or you have no work experience. Only include those things that support the job you want next.*

Proofread, Proofread, Proofread

Your resume should contain honest and accurate information and be free of personal data such as age, date of birth, race, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, religion, political affiliations, and photos.

Appearance/Format

- Use an appropriate format for your skills and experiences. While most employers prefer a chronological resume, sometimes it is better for you to deviate from that formula based on your circumstances.
- Keep margins even – no smaller than ½” and no larger than 1”.
- Use bold, italics, capitalization, and spacing to produce a visually attractive, easy-to-read document.
- Treat all sections consistently (i.e. all section heading are centered, bold, in all caps).
- Use only one easy-to-read font style (Arial or Times New Roman).
- Use an appropriate font size (no smaller than 11 pt. for body, no larger than 16 pt. for your name).
- Arrange sections so that the most important information is listed first (top to bottom, left to right).
- Keep the length of your resume appropriate to your experience level. One page is typical for those less experienced in their field; two pages maximum.
- Do not staple a two-page resume, and make sure your name and page number are on any additional pages.
- Print your resume on good paper; white or off-white is preferred (and best for scanning).
- Have your resume proofread by one or two people who have expertise in writing resumes or who make hiring decisions within your career field (i.e. a Career Centers staff member, faculty advisor, company Human Resources representative).

Keywords

- Use keywords related to your career field. Keywords can be nouns or phrases that highlight your distinctive technical and professional areas of expertise and can include industry-related jargon (i.e. Curriculum Development would be a good keyword for a teacher). Keywords should not be vague or over-used phrases (i.e. Multi-tasker).

Grammar/Spelling

- PROOFREAD carefully so that your resume contains NO typos or misspellings. Do not rely on spell check!
- Use language that is descriptive, clear, and organized.
- Avoid personal pronouns such as “I” and “My”, abbreviations, jargon and incomplete sentences.
- Utilize capitalization and punctuation consistently.

Submitting/Saving

- For electronic submission of your resume, employers often prefer Word, PDF, or Plain Text formats.
- Save your resume electronically to a jump drive for easy access and online submission.
- When saving your resume include your name, include “resume” and leave out version numbers.

References

- Include a separate reference page that has a heading/contact information that is identical to your resume.
- Remove “References available upon request” from your resume.

*Use the Quick Reference Guide for References for more details.

The staff at The Career Centers will review your resume with you. Schedule an appointment for a one-on-one coaching session and/or attend the free Resumes That Get Results workshop on any campus.

