North Central State College

Resume Writing

Hiring managers spend on average about 6 seconds scanning a resume. You need to have a clear, concise resume, and your skills and experiences need to stand out from the others in the stack. The information you choose to put on your resume will determine if you are selected for an interview.

Getting started is often the trickiest part: Make a list of all employment experiences, on-campus and off-campus activities, including leadership and volunteer experiences. Pay special attention to the skills and abilities you bring to your chosen field. Think of your past accomplishments and skills used in your successes.

These reflection questions will help you frame your history:

General:
- ✓ What are your three greatest accomplishments?
- ✓ What did you contribute to the organization?
- ✓ What does an employer most need to know about me?

Experiential Reflections:

- ✓ What leadership position(s) did you hold? For each position, what skill(s) did you utilize?
- ✓ Have you ever supervised or trained anyone? How many?
- ✓ What was your greatest accomplishment in this role?
- ✓ Did you choose to take on additional responsibilities? In what way?
- ✓ What community service projects did you undertake?
- ✓ Did you use organizational, managerial or marketing skills in any way? How?
- ✓ What ideas did you come up with to improve your organization?
- ✓ Did you handle money or budgets? If yes, in what amounts?

- ✓ In what ways did you exhibit interpersonal skills?
- ✓ Did you train, teach or orient new members/ employees? How many?
- ✓ Did you speak in public or write for an audience?
- ✓ Did you employ problem-solving, conflict resolution or mediation skills?
- ✓ Were you required to deal with the public?
- ✓ How did you demonstrate teamwork or individual drive and determination?

Academic Reflections:

- ✓ Did you design or create anything lasting?
- ✓ Did you achieve a superlative such as highest grade level? Best test score? Strongest essay?
- ✓ Did you have expertise in any research areas?
- ✓ Did you participate in any academic forums (presentations, conferences, publications, etc.)?

Content Categories

Content for your resume is determined based on the "selling points" relative to the position you are seeking. This could change for every different position to which you apply, particularly if you're applying to different types of jobs. The content is

also determined based on your own personal history and experiences. Here are categories normally included on a resume:

Identification Information: Name, current and/or permanent address, phone number(s), and professional email address. Professional email addresses typically contain your name and can be your current school email (i.e., jane.doe@email.com or doejp1234@ncstudent.net, NOT janeROCKS1987@email.com).

Career Objective: This *optional* statement should be tailored to the position to which you are applying and should identify your unique or most relevant characteristics. A good objective defines for the reader what your career interests and skills are and the setting(s) in which you would like to use your background. However, a poorly written objective can hurt your chances of getting an interview. More and more, employers are reporting they are unnecessary. A general rule is that if you need more content on your resume, add a quality objective; otherwise, it's alright to leave one off.

Education: Include institution, location, graduation date (may be pending), degree type (full name of degree, NOT "Associate's"), and area(s) of study (i.e., major). Make sure this section is in reverse chronological order.
- You may choose to list your GPA in this section. Always list out to two decimal places, and never round up or down (i.e., 3.56, not 3.6 or 3.5).
- You may list your honors and awards in this section, such as participation in the Honors College or Phi Theta Kappa. Or you could create a separate section for activities such as this.
- You may choose to include relevant coursework within or separate from the **Education** section. Remember, relevant coursework must actually be *relevant* to the job to which you're applying. List the course titles, not the course codes (e.g., Principles of Finance, NOT ACCT 2060)

Experience: This section can include both full-time and part-time work, as well as paid and unpaid internship/co-op/practicum/clinical experiences. Many times, individuals also include relevant volunteer work and extracurricular activities in this section, as well. Your resume can be tailored to your history, so make it fit to your experiences and to the positions to which you're applying. For each entry, list in reverse chronological order:
- The organization's name,
- The city and state where it is located (not the full mailing address),
- Your job title, and
- The date range of employment (using months and/or years, depending on your format)

If you're using a chronological or combined resume format, describe each experience in a bulleted list using action verbs and concise phrases. Descriptions

should emphasize skills and accomplishments, NOT tasks. When appropriate, quantify information about your accomplishments.

- If you have many experiences, both relevant and not, you can create two sections to add emphasis and focus to your resume: **"Related Experience"** and **"Additional Experience"**

Additional Sections

Depending on what experiences you have, you may want to add more/different categories to your resume to reflect your achievements. Here are some suggested categories, however you are not limited to these examples:

Certifications: This is particularly relevant to education, health, and technology majors. List your certifications and their respective dates, anticipated or received.

Honors and Awards: Consider academic, athletic, community, and/or campus recognition.

Extracurricular/Community/Leadership Activities: Your involvement in clubs, etc. indicate to an employer your interests, willingness to accept responsibility, and leadership abilities. This can be a significant factor when you are being considered for employment. Be sure to include offices or other positions of leadership you've been in. Avoid using abbreviations that may be unfamiliar to an employer (i.e., no acronyms).

Volunteer Experience: Include any experiences you have had with community service organizations or projects.

Special Skills: Include any expertise you may have in foreign languages, computer operation and programming, TV/Radio production, technical writing, engineering, or other areas of specialization.

Professional Affiliations: If you have joined any professional associations related to your career field, list dates of involvement. This can include conference participation.

Publications: List by title, any articles, books, stories, or poems you have written which have already been published or are selected to be published.

Research: If you have done extensive research on a topic, particularly if it relates to your chosen career field, you may wish to state the title of the paper or thesis and a brief description of your conclusions or findings. This could also be under the **Education** section.

Additional Training: List any significant seminars or other training which has given you background or knowledge which will be helpful in your chosen career field.

Avoid:
- **Personal information**, such as marital status, age, social security information, birth date, health status, children, race, religion, sexual orientation, and country of national origin do not need to be revealed during an application or interview process. It is illegal for hiring managers to ask you questions regarding and hire based on this personal information.
- **High school information**. At this point in your academic and professional career, you will want to start phasing out your high school information. Hiring managers will know you successfully completed high school requirements if you are currently enrolled in or have graduated from college. You will want to replace this information with more current college or post-high school experiences, such as jobs, internships, co-curricular activities, etc.
- **Political, Religious, or Social.** Activities that indicate affiliation with any of these types of organizations may unfortunately lead to hiring discrimination, albeit illegal. If you are not concerned with the effect of listing such affiliations, leave them on. If you are concerned, you could create a generic description for the activity or remove it all together.

Language
- ✓ The use of bullets is optional; however, many hiring managers report that **bulleted lists** are easier to scan and spotting key words/phrases is quicker than written paragraphs
- ✓ Use **short phrases** and clauses with **no subject**, rather than full sentences, in your descriptions (Experience, History, Skills, etc. sections)
    A good formula for putting together a bullet:
    Action Verb + Skill + Content = Achievement/Experience Statement
- ✓ The language of a resume is **action-oriented**. Bullets should begin with action verbs. See the **action verb handout** for examples.
- ✓ Eliminate extraneous words and irrelevant information. Remember, hiring managers only spend about 6 seconds reading your resume.
- ✓ **Avoid** phrases such as "My duties included…" and "Responsible for…"
- ✓ Do **not use personal pronouns**, such as "I…" and "My.."
- ✓ There is a fine line between describing your achievements and inflating or exaggerating your responsibilities. Be careful here.
- ✓ Check and re-check your spelling, grammar, and formatting consistency. **One mistake could get your resume thrown out.**
- ✓ **Quantify your achievements** whenever possible. Numbers can speak louder than action statements. You should prove your statements with data.

Skills Evaluation

Skills and knowledge are acquired:

➢ in the classroom;
➢ through paid work experiences/jobs
➢ through internships/co-ops, practicums/clinicals, and volunteer experiences;
➢ through participation in clubs, athletics, and even hobbies.

Assess your skills realistically and honestly. Your goal is to show employers what skills you have to offer and how you might apply these skills to the position to which you are applying and to their organization specifically. Work your skills into your resume through the bulleted experience descriptions in a S**kills/Qualifications** section or a **Job Experience** section. Do not simply list buzzwords on your resume, as hiring managers will not believe that you have skills unless you **use ACTION VERBS to describe how you attained such skills, why these skills are relevant to the job at hand, or what you achieved with such skill**, etc. There are different types of skills to consider:

- **Work Content Skills** include those skills which <u>**relate specifically to being able to do a particular job**</u>. These skills could be obtained on the job, in internships, or in hands-on classroom experiences.

> *For example:*
> □ Graphic arts   □ Computer programming
> □ Research   □ Sales/persuasion
> □ Marketing   □ Statistical analysis
> □ Human service   □ Engineering
> □ Emergency medical care □ Mechanical aptitude

- **Self-Management Skills** include <u>**personal strengths that are related to your personality and temperament**</u>. These skills could be obtained on the job, in the classroom, or in outside activities that you may or may not list on your resume but would still describe within a Skills/Qualifications section.

> *For example:*
> □ Make decisions   □ Patience
> □ Maintain confidentiality □ Enthusiasm
> □ Cooperativeness   □ Attention to detail
> □ Work under pressure   □ Flexibility
> □ Take initiative   □ Sense of humor
> □ Dependability   □ Orderliness
> □ Persistence   □ High energy level
> □ Self-confidence   □ Risk-taking
> □ Optimism   □ Communication
> □ Assertiveness   □ Collaboration

- **Transferable Skills** are general skills which <u>**can be applied in a wide variety of work settings and are likely to be especially interesting to hiring managers and prospective employers**</u>. These skills can be obtained in any setting.

For example:

Communication
- □ Writing
- □ Group presentations
- □ Persuasion
- □ Selling

Managerial
- □ Organization
- □ Attention to detail
- □ Planning
- □ Decision-making
- □ Time management

Creative
- □ Artistic
- □ Imaginative with things
- □ Imaginative with ideas

Numerical
- □ Budgeting ability
- □ Manipulating data
- □ Problem solving

Investigative
- □ Research
- □ Scientific inquiry
- □ Define problems
- □ Solve problems

Work with others/Interpersonal
- □ Supervise
- □ Instruct/train
- □ Coach
- □ Advise
- □ Work well with group
- □ Take criticism well
- □ Work well with group
- □ At ease socially

Resume Checklist

- □ The grammar, punctuation, and spelling are correct. **Proofreading errors are the #1 KILLER of resumes**. Don't let your resume get thrown in the trash!
- □ **Formatting is consistent** regarding font, spacing, layout, bullets, etc.
- □ Your resume looks original and represents YOU. Are you unique in a pile of 100 other resumes?
- □ This **resume was reviewed by several people**, including the Career Counselor.
- □ Someone can scan this resume in **under 30 seconds** and obtain the most important information that relates to the job. Formatting is clean, easy to read.
- □ **Contact info**: name, address, email (professional), and phone at top of page.
- □ **Career objective (optional)** is at the top of page and is as specific as possible, guiding the hiring manager to career goals.
- □ All **meaningful activities** related to my career/internship goal that assisted in developing my skills, whether or not they were paid experiences, are listed!
- □ For **each experience listed**, I have included: position title, employing organization, location, and date range worked. Formatting is consistent.
- □ For extracurricular activities (clubs, organizations, volunteer work, honors and awards, etc.), each includes: organization name, location, and date range of involvement.
- □ My resume is **one page**. A two page resume is acceptable for certain majors or if you have extensive related experience. Margins may be as small as .5 inch. Traditional font is 12 point, but can be 11 or 10 as long as it is legible.
- □ The final resume is an **accurate representation** of my abilities. Do not lie.
- □ My resume **does not** contain any **personal information**, such as height, weight, date of birth, social security number, marital status, health, etc.
- □ My resume **does not** include **high school information**, unless it is relevant.
- □ **Abbreviations are used sparingly**, spelling out my degree, the name of all colleges, and the organizations to which I belong.
- □ Ample **white space** for readability is included; however, there is not wasted space on my resume. Fine line.
- □ If seriously considering several career areas, a **different resume has been developed for each career area**. Not only are the objectives (optional) different, but the content areas and the way I've worded my skills and described my qualifications to reflect the career area/position are different.
- □ The resume is printed on **quality resume paper**, using white, cream, or ivory.
- □ Use the same paper for cover letter as resume.
- □ Electronic versions of your resume are in PDF format to preserve formatting, unless otherwise specified by the hiring employer.

Created from Ithaca College's Career Services resources:
http://www.ithaca.edu/sacl/careers/docs/Guides/CareerServicesGuide.pdf