A Quick Guide to Resume Writing

WHAT IS A RESUME?

The resume you submit with a job application summarizes everything you want your potential employer to know about you professionally. The average employer only spends 15-20 seconds reviewing each resume, so you need to ensure that yours is targeted, error-free and easy to skim. This packet provides general guidelines to help you create a resume that will portray you as the ideal candidate.

RESUME FORMATS

There is no one right or wrong way to create a resume and you'll most likely get different feedback from everyone you ask. In the medical and health sciences field most applicants will have similar formats. Does that mean you should create a resume that is totally different than everyone else's? It would be a gamble to use such a different layout. Most recruiters are extremely busy and have to look at a large number of applicants. If they get used to seeing the same information in the same area on a resume it makes it easier for them to compare to others. On the other hand, making your application different from others could help your chances of standing out. Most creatively styled resumes should be reserved for those students applying to jobs in graphic design etc.

Chronological

The most common format is a chronological resume. This type of resume organizes experience in reverse chronological order (most recent first). It easily depicts your work experience and how you have grown professionally such as taking on more responsibility. It helps recruiters easily track your progress and see where you have worked. The disadvantage to using this resume is that it you have large gaps in your employment history it will be very noticeable and you will have to potentially explain that.

Consider a chronological resume if you:

- Are applying to a job in which you have experience in the field
- Want to accentuate the institutions you have worked at

To draw attention to the most relevant experiences you can break your experience section into parts, such as "Relevant Experience" and "Additional Experience". The chronological example included in this document breaks the experiences up in this way. You may also find you have enough of a specific type of experience to warrant an additional section.

Federal

If you have been looking at jobs with the Federal Government you may have noticed some differences in the hiring process, including requiring a federal resume. The federal resume require much more detail than your average resume. You should write down every little thing you did in your previous jobs. These resumes are also not limited to just one page. In fact, for an entry level position your resume could be around 5 or so pages! USA Jobs (www.usajobs.gov) provides more insight into how your resume should look and you can even build your resume from scratch on their website.

Curriculum Vitae

A curriculum vitae (CV) is a document that lists your educational and professional accomplishments. This includes but is not limited to your work and educational history, publications, presentations, awards/recognitions. Unlike a standard resume in which you limit it to the most current information, a CV should list everything and therefore is naturally going to be longer than your standard resume. A CV is usually a required document for all academic and research positions. Depending on what field you enter and what position you're applying for, the job advertisement will usually specify either a resume or CV to attach to your application. As a reminder, make sure your publications are cited correctly and in the format respective to the discipline you are applying.

➔ Tailor your CV to the type of job you are applying for. For example, if you are applying to be a faculty member you will want to highlight your teaching and research experience. Make sure you give those two parts a prominent space on your CV which is usually in the beginning.

◆ If you are applying to a hospital, you want to highlight any medical related work such as your clinicals and any relevant research you did.

RESUME CONTENT

You want your resume to speak for you. This means that you don't want to leave the recruiter reading your resume to feel as though they did not learn anything about you. Your resume is what gets you through to the next step of the hiring round. Know that you can expand upon certain things if and when you make it past the initial screening and talk with them in person or over the phone.

Identifying Information

At the top of your resume create a header that includes the following information:

➔ Name – Should be the biggest text on the page so that it stands out. Don't make it too big that it looks awkward.
➔ Address/location - The current trend is to just include the city and state in which you reside. The less people that know your exact address the better.
➔ Phone number – include the best number to reach you and ensure your voicemail greeting is professional and not full so that they will be able to leave a message.
➔ Email address – Make sure you include a professional email such as name@gmail.com. It may be helpful to create an email just for job applications so it is easier to keep track of correspondence.
➔ Professional Website URL(s) – include the link to your LinkedIn, portfolio, or other professional websites.

◆ If your LinkedIn or other profiles are not completed and professional then do not include the link. Keep in mind the employer will Google your name so make sure in addition to your professional profiles being completed, your social media pages have the correct privacy settings enabled and you have an appropriate profile picture.

*Note: Never put your social security on your resume. The only exception is if a federal job asks specifically for it to be on the document

Sample Header: There are many ways to format your header. This is just one of many.

Martha Washington

Washington, DC, 20052 • MWashington@gwu.edu • 202-555-6789 • linkedin.com/in/MarthaWashington

Summary of Qualifications or Professional Summary (optional)

This brief explanation will frame the rest of your resume. The recruiter will keep this statement in mind when reviewing the rest of your qualifications. There will be times when a recruiter may only look at your summary if they have a large amount of applications to go through so make sure it promotes the key qualities you want to highlight. The professional summary will define what you would bring to the organization. Think of this part as a mini resume.

Sample Summary of Qualifications:

Board certified Microbiologist with significant experience conducting numerous isolation techniques. Trained in using specific molecular protocols to aid in diagnosing various diseases. Skilled communicator in addition to creating solid working relationships throughout a hospital setting including nurses, ER doctors and image service technologists.

Education

Important note: Your education should be the first thing under your header if that is what you want emphasized. Traditionally students who have not had much work experience will put the education at the top. If you've been in the workforce for a while that is what you want to highlight. Thus your educational information should be moved towards the bottom of your resume.

Beginning with your most recent, list all institutions from which you obtained a degree. If you transferred schools at some point, do NOT include the school you transferred from. Only include those that you actually received a degree from. Unless you went to a prestigious High School or are using it for a specific reason such as networking, you should not include it on your resume beyond your second year of undergraduate studies.

For each institution listed include the following:

➜ Name and location of the institution
➜ Type of degree(s) and year earned – always write out your degree (e.g. Bachelor of Arts, not B.A.)
   ◆ The year your received your degree or the anticipated year you will receive it.
➜ Major and any minors, concentrations, and certificate programs, etc.

If you have the space, you might want to highlight some of the following options depending on your situation.

➜ Cumulative GPA: Include if your GPA is at least a 3.0. If it is below, do not include it.
➜ Relevant coursework – list course titles (mainly used for high school and beginning of undergrad students)
➜ Scholarships and honors (Dean's list)
➜ Study abroad

Sample:

> **The George Washington University - Washington, DC**
> *Bachelor of Science in Health Sciences, Global Leadership in Disaster Response- May 20xx*
> Minor: History
> GPA: 3.5 (optional)
> Study Abroad: Cairo, Egypt, Fall 20xx (optional)
> Relevant Coursework: Infectious Diseases & Bioterrorism, Leadership Concepts, Pathophysiology (optional)

Experience

Think of all your experience that would be relevant to the position you are applying to and include them beginning with the most recent. Your experience can come from a wide range of things such as FT/PT employment, internships, volunteer work, clinicals etc.

For each experience you choose for your resume, create a header that includes the following information:

➜ Your position title
➜ Name of the organization
➜ Location of the organization (i.e. city, state or city, country if abroad)
➜ Dates you participated (e.g. August 20xx-July 20xx, Summers 20xx-20xx, if still participating replace the date with the word Present)

Beneath the header, include concise statements in bullet format explaining what you did in each position. Be mindful of the tense that you are using. If you no longer work there, everything should be in past tense. If you are currently employed at the institution you may use present tense.

➜ Begin each bullet with an action verb and never with a pronoun.

➜ Place the greatest emphasis on your accomplishments and what is most important to the job you're applying for.

➜ Be careful when using jargon. If you have to include a few words in parenthesis to explain a term then do so but be mindful of space.

➜ Use the S-A-R (Situation- Action- Result) method as a guide. 1) Write down the task 2) Match task with skill your potential employer is seeking. 3) Expand by explaining the SAR (further SAR explanation is included later in this packet)

➜ Quantify: To show the scope of your experience it is helpful to include actual numbers and percentages. For example, rather than saying you managed a group of several therapists, it stands out more if you say you managed 4 therapists and hired an additional two which helped improve appointment capacities by 30%.

Sample Experience:

> **Back on Your Feet Physical Therapy, Physical Therapist**
> *Washington, DC, May 2009 – August 2011*
> - Utilized new Aquatic therapy in elderly patients to help improve mobility and manage pain levels
> - Implemented group physical therapy sessions to build patient to patient relationships as well as demonstrate how friends/caretakers can assist in therapy after completion of treatment
> - Documented and evaluated entry to exit of patients using PTtracker software

Skills

This should be a separate section on your resume so that you can draw specific attention to your unique skill set. Keep in mind the job description of the position you're applying to. What skills have you acquired in your previous jobs, education or volunteer experience? Which of them would best assist you in doing the job? This section on your resume can really help you stand out among the rest of the candidates.

- **Language skills** – Include any foreign languages you know as well as your proficiency level in them. If you only have a beginner level understanding of a language **do not** include it on your resume.
- **Computer/technical skills** – Software, database, computer programming languages
- **Specialized skills** – Project management, knowledge of certain tools or equipment relevant to the job being applied for etc. You may also include skills ranging from video production and photo editing to using a miter saw as long as it is relevant to the job you're applying to.

Hobbies/Personal Interests

DO NOT INCLUDE THEM. This is a common mistake. Your potential employer does not need to know that you enjoy cooking and rock climbing or collecting stamps. Not only does this take up unnecessary space on your resume but also does not make you any more valuable.

Headings

It is completely up to you how and what headings to use. Use the job description as your guide. Perhaps you should include a section on your publications and/or research. It may be best to highlight your language and computer skills in which case those headings should be used.

References

If the institution you're applying to asks for references it usually specifies the number (usually three) and what kind (professional or personal). It may get as specific as one of the references be a former supervisor. You should ask the intended references if they would be willing to serve as a reference before putting down their information. **Do not write on your resume anything regarding references.** If applying online there might be a section where you input their contact information and therefore will not need a separate document listing your references. If this is not the case, create a separate document using the same header you have at the top of your resume. **Take a look at our references example sheet on our website**

RESUME APPEARANCE

Formatting Guidelines

Everything should be uniform and consistent throughout. Do not use more than one type of font (stick to Times New Roman or Calibri...don't be fancy) and keep sizing consistent. Normally text size should be between 10-12 size fonts with the exception of your name at the top which can be around size 18.

➔ Those who are undergraduate students or have very little experience should have a resume no longer than 1 page. If you happen to have had clinicals or related experience and are close to graduating from undergrad you may go on to use two pages. If you cannot fill up 80% of the second page then do not use the second page. For graduate students and those who have had years of experience you should have at least two pages or more.

➔ To make the dates easier to read you can align them all the way to the right. The last digit of the year or the "t" in present should all line up.

➔ Section headers can be bold to make them easier to read. Spacing between sections should be consistent throughout.

➜ Small details such as using a period at the end of a bullet should also be consistent. Either use a period or don't. Although this might seem like it won't matter...it does to a trained recruiter. It shows attention to detail.

➜ Use **bolding** strategically to make your resume more readable. If you are limited on space and find that you are unable to include a skills section, the way around that is to **bold** keywords/skills throughout your resume to make them pop. Some companies use software that doesn't let bold text show up when they view resumes so please be mindful of this.

➜ Margins should be no bigger than 0.75 inches and no smaller than 0.5 inches.

➜ When submitting your resume, cover letter and reference list, always submit them as a PDF with a professional file name (e.g. MarthaWashington_Resume.pdf).

➜ If you are going to print out the resume, do not use any type of colored or tinted paper. A regular sheet of computer paper is absolutely acceptable. There is also no need to print it out on special resume paper either.

Online Resume Templates

Don't use them. Yes, it is very tempting to have a layout already done for you but it simply does not compare to creating one from scratch. This document is all about you and therefore you should have a say in every little detail that goes into it. Additionally, everyone is unique and brings different skills and experiences to the table. Headings and subheadings on a template may not have anything to do with the job you are applying for.

RECAP/TAKEAWAYS

*Always read the job description thoroughly and use as much of the language it in your resume. This will ensure that if the recruiter is using software to filter through the applications before even reaching their desk, your resume will get through. Keep in mind recruiters can input specific language into the software to scan through resumes.

*Consistency is key: Make sure margins, text size(headings, and description scan each have their own) spacing, punctuation, font etc. are the same throughout.

*Highlight your best attributes that will assist you in succeeding in the position you are applying for as well as making you stand out from the rest of the applicants.

*Come across as professional: Google yourself and see what comes up and how outsiders can view your profiles including all social media. Your email should be professional and all profile pictures on **everything** should be appropriate.

*Your resume should go through several drafts before it is ready to be sent out to employers. One resume does not fit all. Even if you are applying for the same position at different companies there may be different things you want to emphasize or even take off of your resume.

*Always submit your documents (Resume/CV, Cover Letter, and Reference Sheet) as PDF's. This will prevent your documents from becoming distorted if the job coordinator opens up your application using different software.

Writing Bullet Points as Accomplishment Statements:

Situation - Action - Result (SAR)

SITUATION - ACTION - RESULT

Bullet points under each position should tell a mini-story and are more effective when written as Accomplishment Statements in the Situation-Action-Result (SAR) format. By using the SAR model, you will ensure that a reader understands *in detail* **what you did, why you did it, and what happened as a result of your actions**.

Providing specific quantifiers and qualifiers will make your work and its results even more clear.

- ***Bullet point without SAR:*** *Worked with business owners to increase sales among university students.*
  This describes your job responsibilities only. It doesn't show *exactly* what it means to "work" with business owners, what skills you developed, and the results of your work.
- ***Bullet point with SAR:*** *Developed and implemented an in-person marketing strategy with business owners around target universities that resulted in achieving the highest sales record in the last 38 years of $119,385.*

QUANTIFY RESULTS

As often as possible, use statistics, percentages, or numbers in your bullet points to demonstrate the scope of your accomplishments. This is especially important for students pursuing careers in quantitative-based fields such as finance, economics, and data analysis. Examples:

- *Completed competitive and strategic due diligence for a venture capital firm that led to acquiring $25,000 in initial funding.*
- *Strategized an effective marketing plan to promote Rent The Runway on campus, resulting in a 100% increase in sales for the Inaugural Ball with over 60 dress rentals in January 2013.*

QUALIFY RESULTS

Sometimes results aren't quantifiable, but can be illustrated with a qualitative outcome. Examples:

- *Created a training curriculum and led 20 workshops to teach chapter members how to properly recruit women for the chapter, enabling the chapter to collectively reach annual recruitment goals for the third straight year.*
- *Developed a pitch using advisory and assurance fact sheets to convince a hypothetical client that PwC offers the most effective services for the client's needs. Received positive feedback from PwC partners on presentation skills and pitch methodologies.*

Questions to ask yourself when creating S-A-R Accomplishment Statements:

Use the following questions to reflect on your past positions & what you achieved in each one.

- Did the work you performed positively impact the organization as a whole? If so, how?
- Who, or how many people, will ultimately benefit from your work?
- Did you identify any problems or challenges?
- Did you resolve or minimize any problems?
- Did you discover and take advantage of any opportunities?
- Did you target a need for a product, service, plan, program, system, method, procedure, technique?
- Did you reduce costs, waste, time, or effort?
- Did you produce reports whose recommendations were well received by senior management, and whose suggestions were incorporated into their strategic planning?
- Did you uncover accounting errors and correct them, saving the organization money?
- Did you reduce the liability for the company by suggesting safety improvement, improved security?
- Did you create any original works: reports, brochures, newsletters, guides, manuals, proposals, contracts?
- Did you develop or design a new program, plan, service, product, process, project, system method, strategy?
- Did you improve (*redesign, streamline or reorganize*), administer, or implement any projects, plans, programs, processes, services, products?
- Did you develop new markets, territories, clients, accounts?
- Did you increase or participate in increasing sales, profits, market share, volume, distribution, production, revenues, and cash flow?
- Did you formulate or participate in formulating any management decisions, policies, goals, organizational changes, acquisitions, recruitment?
- Did you make any recommendations that saved money, made money, increased efficiency or productivity?
- Did you improve employee morale?
- Did you open or establish a new office, department, branch, facility?
- Did you improve quality or standards for hiring, products, services?
- Did you make a technical contribution?
- Did you facilitate or improve communication among employees, with clients, or with the community?
- Did you improve customer satisfaction or service?
- Did you train, coach, or mentor team members or clients?
- Did you complete deadlines ahead of time?
- Did you increase social media engagement? By what percentage or number of followers/likes/clicks?

ACTION VERBS by category (in CAPS)

ANALYZED	Consulted	Experimented	Promoted	Shared	Motivated	Cared	Exercised
Abstracted	Cooperated	Facilitated	Provided	Spoke	Negotiated	Catered	Expedited
Anticipated	Enlisted	Fashioned	Reduced	Stimulated	Persuaded	Delivered	Explained
Assessed	Ensured	Financed	Restored	Strengthened	Promoted	Dispensed	Facilitated
Ascertained	Facilitated	Fixed	Saved	Substituted	Reconciled	Entertained	Fostered
Audited	Fostered	Formulated	Stimulated	Supported	Resolved	Facilitated	Governed
Briefed	Handled	Founded	Strengthened	Sustained	Solved	Furnished	Guided
Calculated	Helped	Generated	Upgraded	Taught	ORGANIZED	Helped	Handled
Clarified	Located	Improved	COUNSELED/	Trained	Accumulated	Led	Headed
Compared	Participated	Increased	INSTRUCTED/	Tutored	Arranged	Listened	Hired
Computed	Preserved	Influenced	LEARNED	Validated	Assembled	Maintained	Implemented
Concluded	Protected	Initiated	Adapted	OPERATED/	Balanced	Motivated	Instructed
Conceptualized	Referred	Innovated	Advised	MAINTAINED	Budgeted	Performed	Maintained
Correlated	Represented	Instituted	Advocated	Activated	Built	Prepared	Met
Critiqued	Served	Integrated	Aided	Adjusted	Catalogued	Procured	Mentored
Debated	Strengthened	Introduced	Applied	Adapted	Clarified	Provided	Monitored
Defined	Summarized	Invented	Assessed	Changed	Classified	Raised	Motivated
Detected	Supported	Launched	Briefed	Clarified	Collated	Recommended	Navigated
Determined	Sustained	Marketed	Cared	Corrected	Collected	Represented	Ordered
Diagnosed	COMMUNICATED	Modeled	Clarified	Continued	Completed	Responded	Organized
Discriminated	Addressed	Modified	Coached	Edited	Compiled	Satisfied	Oversaw
Dissected	Advertised	Navigated	Comforted	Eliminated	Composed	Served	Planned
Estimated	Answered	Originated	Communicated	Executed	Coordinated	Stimulated	Prepared
Evaluated	Briefed	Perceived	Conducted	Expedited	Copied	Supplied	Presided
Examined	Corresponded	Performed	Consulted	Facilitated	Correlated	Supervised	Prioritized
Figured	Debated	Pioneered	Coordinated	Fixed	Detailed	SOLD	Promoted
Graded	Explained	Planned	Demonstrated	Implemented	Developed	Advertised	Regulated
Identified	Expressed	Prioritized	Educated	Installed	Displayed	Auctioned	Reinforced
Indexed	Facilitated	Produced	Emphasized	Modified	Edited	Bartered	Resolved
Inspected	Interpreted	Promoted	Enabled	Navigated	Facilitated	Enlisted	Retained
Integrated	Interviewed	Proposed	Encouraged	Ordered	Filed	Facilitated	Reviewed
Interpreted	Lectured	Recommended	Enlightened	Oversaw	Gathered	Generated	Scheduled
Interviewed	Listened	Restored	Established	Performed	Graphed	Improved	Selected
Inventoried	Marketed	Refined	Exercised	Prepared	Identified	Led	Set
Investigated	Prepared	Revamped	Explained	Piloted	Indexed	Maintained	Solved
Judged	Presented	Set	Facilitated	Preserved	Inspected	Marketed	Strengthened
Maintained	Printed	Shaped	Familiarized	Prioritized	Inventoried	Motivated	Supervised
Mapped	Programmed	Simplified	Fostered	Produced	Kept	Negotiated	Taught
Monitored	Publicized	Solved	Guided	Programmed	Located	Persuaded	Trained
Observed	Quoted	Styled	Helped	Promoted	Maintained	Promoted	Updated
Perceived	Recorded	Streamlined	Implemented	Protected	Mapped	Raised	COLLABORATED
Predicted	Reported	Substituted	Improved	Ran	Met	Recommended	Coproduced
Projected	Responded	Visualized	Influenced	Reduced	Obtained	Recruited	Cooperated
Qualified	Rewrote	IMPROVED/	Informed	Regulated	Organized	Stimulated	Engaged
Ranked	Spoke	INCREASED	Inspired	Replaced	Planned	LED/MANAGED	Organized
Read	Taught	Achieved	Interpreted	Saved	Prepared	Allocated	Partnered
Reasoned	Wrote	Accomplished	Investigated	Screened	Prioritized	Approved	Met
Related	CREATED/	Acquired	Lectured	Serviced	Processed	Arranged	Participated
Researched	DEVELOPED	Advanced	Led	Set	Programmed	Assigned	Shared
Reviewed	Acted	Assured	Listened	Sustained	Ranked	Authorized	Strategized
Screened	Activated	Attained	Maintained	Transported	Recorded	Chaired	Synchronized
Scanned	Adapted	Completed	Manipulated	Upheld	Reorganized	Clarified	Worked
Solved	Assembled	Conserved	Mastered	Utilized	Reproduced	Coached	
Studied	Authored	Continued	Monitored	NEGOTIATED	Retrieved	Conducted	
Summarized	Built	Eliminated	Modified	Advised	Revamped	Consulted	
Surveyed	Clarified	Encouraged	Motivated	Advocated	Reviewed	Contracted	
Symbolized	Composed	Enlarged	Observed	Arbitrated	Revised	Controlled	
Synthesized	Conceived	Expanded	Perceived	Bargained	Scheduled	Coordinated	
Tabulated	Constructed	Facilitated	Persuaded	Closed	Set	Decided	
Verified	Corrected	Fostered	Prescribed	Concluded	Simplified	Delegated	
Visualized	Designed	Guaranteed	Programmed	Consolidated	Solved	Directed	
ASSISTED	Devised	Inspired	Promoted	Dealt	Streamlined	Dispatched	
Advised	Discovered	Maximized	Read	Expedited	Structured	Distributed	
Brought	Drafted	Minimized	Reduced	Facilitated	Synthesized	Educated	
Chartered	Eliminated	Motivated	Reflected	Handled	Systemized	Encouraged	
Collaborated	Established	Obtained	Reinforced	Lobbied	Tabulated	Enforced	
Contributed	Expanded	Overcame	Related	Mediated	SERVED/ AIDED	Evaluated	
Consolidated	Expedited	Perfected	Restored	Merged	Attended	Executed	

*Parts of this packet have been adopted from GW Career Center and The Catholic University of America