Résumé Guide

Purpose

Your résumé makes you stand out to employers by succinctly highlighting your education, experience, and skills. It's not a simple work history—it's a marketing tool that shows you as the best choice per their job description. There is no one way to formulate a résumé, but there are best practices and basic principles to note. Rise above the crowd with tailored content, clearly written—free of spelling, grammar, or formatting errors. As a first impression, ensure that you command the busy employers' attention with your work results. You must be interviewed!

General Layout and Formatting

CONTENT: Typical sections should include (but are not limited to): summary, education, skills, experience, and achievements/honors/volunteer/ involvement.

LENGTH: When possible, keep your résumé to one page. Typically, a two-page résumé is only necessary when one has more than five years of full-time, relevant work experience.

MARGINS: Make your résumé visually attractive. Use some white space to allow the reader's eye to rest. Using .5-inch to 1-inch margins is recommended.

FONT: Choose a font that looks professional and legible (e.g., Garamond, Cambria, Arial). Keep your font size between 10–12 points.

CONSISTENCY: Keep the formatting consistent throughout your résumé. For example, if you choose to bold a job title, make sure that you bold every job title. Also, make sure that all of your bullet points, section headers, dates, etc., align neatly on the page.

ACCURACY: Your résumé, and all other career related materials, must be 100 percent error free. Be sure to carefully proofread your résumé, checking grammar, spelling, and punctuation. It is a good idea to have at least two to three people proofread it as well. Some employers will not consider a job candidate if they see even one typo on the résumé.

BE ACCOMPLISHMENT-ORIENTED: Employers hire you for your skills and want to read about examples when you have successfully utilized the skills they are seeking. Describe achievements rather than listing duties; quantify outcomes whenever possible; be sure to honestly highlight your proficiency in technical skills (both industry or job function-specific); and do not exaggerate your experience.

General Layout and Formatting:

USE ACTION WORDS: Strengthen your bullet points in the experience section by beginning each with an action verb that includes the skill to be described in the accomplishment statement. Try to match work experience with the job requirements.

MAKE IT CLEAR: Eliminate the pronouns "I, my, me" at the beginning of each bullet point as this is assumed. Avoid introductory and wind-up phrases such as "My duties included…" and "My responsibilities were…."

OVERALL APPEARANCE: Ask yourself and others if your document is easy to read and professional looking. Also, consider that the average recruiter may scan your résumé for 10–20 seconds. Make sure that your most important information stands out. If a hard copy is required, use white bond paper.

APPLICANT TRACKING SOFTWARE: ATS platforms vary widely across companies. Candidates can never know which type of ATS the company is using. Keywords have more value in any section name with experience (i.e., Work Experience or Project Experience), as opposed to listing them in a different section.

Contact Information

Include your name, city/state, phone number, and email address **at the top of your résumé**. Additionally, include a hyperlink to your LinkedIn profile, and any other professional websites you have (GitHub, About.me).

Note: Avoid entering anything in the header of your document; it may not be read correctly by applicant tracking software.

Example:

Ludwig Mies van der Rohe

Chicago, IL | (312) 567-6800 | lrohe@hawk.iit.edu | linkedin.com/in/miesrohe

---

Summary Section

This section is **optional**. There are circumstances where it can add more value (i.e., making a significant career transition or looking for opportunities that don't necessarily align with your degree, etc.). Rather than including a generic objective statement, consider writing a professional summary to outline your expertise and experiences. Depending on the outline you follow, the summary statement may still include an objective, either specific or general, but the key difference is that you start off writing about yourself, which puts you on a stronger footing both as a writer and a job applicant. It also allows the recruiter to learn more about you with the limited time they have to review your résumé.

Your summary statement should include the following components:

1. **INTRODUCE YOURSELF,** leading off with your main credential PLUS core competence AND/OR area of greatest experience. For example, a Master of Science in Chemical Engineering who has held multiple positions as a lab assistant and completed several successful group projects, might write something like the following:

> Master of Chemical Engineering with competence in recommended laboratory procedures and productive experience in collaborative projects.

2. **ADD YOUR SPECIALTY,** which can either be established from experience and formal training or aligned with your career development goals:

> Specializes in petro-chemical process engineering.

Summary Section:

Or perhaps:

> Pursuing specialization in process efficiency and sustainability best practices.

3. STATE THE OBJECTIVE. Now that you've pushed off from a strong footing by beginning the summary with your best-known subject—yourself—you can include your immediate career goals.

> Seeking position as process engineer with Acme Products Ltd. [specific position]

Or:

> Seeking an opportunity to contribute to an organization using superb project management skills. [general career development goal]

Examples:

Summary (1)

Master of Chemical Engineering with competence in recommended laboratory procedures and productive experience in collaborative projects. Specializing in petro-chemical process engineering. Seeking position as process engineer with Acme Products Ltd.

Summary (2)

Versatile, highly technical, customer-centric engineer with passion for customer and business objectives: supported customer challenges with skilled communications and crafting solutions for packaging/licensing to export (32) project-critical materials one month ahead of time. Led business and technical solutions in Baker Hughes Sub-Sahara Africa geo-market to effectively add $300,000 (U.S.) in revenue, decreased downtime by 40 percent in nine months amidst corporate austerity. Led execution of $10 million (U.S.) binational campaign, delivered superior tool quality with one week average turnaround (vs. typical 2.5). College academic coach and self-motivated team player seeking an engineering role at an innovative, diverse company.

Education

Your education section should include any degrees or certifications you have earned or are in the process of completing. List your degrees in reverse chronological order, with the **most recent listed first.**

Include the full name of the school you attend(ed) (e.g., Illinois Institute of Technology), city and state where the school is located, **full name** of the degree (e.g., Bachelor of Science, Applied Mathematics), and your expected graduation date (month/year).

Include your cumulative or major GPA if it is above 3.0/4.0. If your GPA from a past institution is not on a 4.0 scale, **convert it** using the World Education Services conversion chart: www.wes.org/gradeconversionguide. Make it as easy as possible for the person reading your résumé.

Relevant coursework is sometimes listed to highlight additional knowledge gained. It's not required, but if there is space on your one-page résumé, and it will add value when there is lack of experience and extra space, then include it.

Example:

Education

Illinois Institute Of Technology, Chicago, IL   May 2022
Bachelor Of Science, Mechanical Engineering, GPA 3.6

Skills

Your skills section should be listed after your education. Include technical, computer, programming, and scientific skills, proficiencies, and certificates, as well as languages spoken.

Transferrable skills (organizational, time management, communication skills) and personal qualities (outgoing, team-player, detail-oriented) should not be listed in this section. Instead, these competencies should be demonstrated throughout your experience section inside the description bullets.

Include only skills that you feel comfortable using upon starting a job. If you have basic knowledge of a certain skill, but do not feel confident using it upon beginning a job, do not include it on your résumé.

Example:

Skills

Programming Languages: Python | Java |Javascript | C++, C
Frameworks: Django | AngularJS
Technologies: HTML/CSS | jQuery |IndexedDB |Git |LaTeX

Experience

Your experience section can include any relevant work, volunteer, academic, project, or leadership experience. You can create multiple sections, each with different headers, to highlight various categories of your experiences. Each section should be listed in reverse chronological order, with the most recent experience listed first.

▶ Include the name of the company or organization, location, your position title, and dates of involvement (month/year). See example below.

▶ Describe your role using bulleted phrases, in an active voice. Each bullet point should begin with an active verb that highlights the skill you are demonstrating (organized, developed, led). Vary the list of verbs you use to show your range of skills. See the list at the end of this document.

▶ Focus on your accomplishments and outcomes, not only your job responsibilities. Consider why your role was important—what value did it have to the organization?

▶ Write between two and four bulleted descriptions of your role for each experience.

▶ Frame your experiences around the accomplishments that future employers in your field will find beneficial. Order your bullet points with the most relevant accomplishments first.

▶ Review the PARS method of writing bullet point descriptions: What was the problem you addressed? What were the actions you took? What were the results? What skills did you use or develop?

▶ Demonstrate your transferrable skill set through part-time jobs, volunteer experiences, and co-curricular involvement. If the experience is not directly related to your career field, you can still include it to highlight your communication, leadership, or time-management skills, for example.

▶ Format academic projects, list each project in the same manner as your work experience, with the name of the organization/school and dates.

▶ Avoid using any personal pronouns.

▶ Include any self-directed or personal projects in your experience section, or in a section of its own. Employers like to see that you are interested and motivated enough to teach yourself a new skill.

▶ Consider a "relevant experience" section above your work experience if you have a wide range of experiences.

Example:

Experience

Position, Department, or Division   Month/Year–Month/Year
Name Of Company, City, State/Country
Describe achievements in results-oriented style, impact on the organization
Developed…
Performed…

Experience:

Achievements/Honors/Volunteer Experience:

If you have room, include any volunteer work, service projects, or co-curricular involvement. Highlight your transferrable skills here, or simply list experiences to demonstrate your involvement beyond school and work. Include dates where appropriate in the same format as above.

Full Example

Ludwig Mies van der Rohe

Chicago, IL | (312) 567-6800 | lrohe@hawk.iit.edu | linkedin.com/in/miesrohe

Summary

A specific outline of your core credentials, competencies, specialties, and objective in submitting this résumé. Should be no more than three lines long.

Education

Illinois Institute Of Technology, Chicago, IL   Expected May 20XX
XX Degree, Specialization/Minor, GPA: 4.0

Skills

This would include technical | programming | scientific | certificates (bolding plus descriptive text)

Work Experience

Name of Role/Title

Name of Company, City, State/Country   Month/Year–Month/Year

- Describe achievements in results-oriented style, impact on the organization
- Developed…
- Performed…

Project Experience (Or Research/Publications) (Optional Based On Experience)

Title Of Project, City, State/Country   Month/Year–Month/Year

- Description…
- Skills applied…
- Implemented…

Honors and Achievements

- Community Service   Month/Year–Month/Year
- Professional memberships and/or designations   Month/Year–Month/Year
- Other activities, unique interests, etc.   Month/Year–Month/Year

List of Action Verbs for Résumés

Management/Leadership Skills

administered	delegated	incorporated	prioritized
analyzed	developed	increased	produced
appointed	directed	initiated	recommended
approved	eliminated	inspected	reorganized
assigned	emphasized	instituted	replaced
attained	enforced	led	restored
authorized	enhanced	managed	reviewed
chaired	established	merged	scheduled
considered	executed	motivated	streamlined
consolidated	generated	organized	strengthened
contracted	handled	originated	supervised
controlled	headed	overhauled	terminated
converted	hired	oversaw	
coordinated	hosted	planned	
decided	improved	presided	

Communication/Interpersonal Skills

addressed	debated	interpreted	proposed
advertised	defined	interviewed	publicized
arbitrated	described	involved	reconciled
arranged	developed	joined	recruited
articulated	directed	judged	referred
authored	discussed	lectured	reinforced
clarified	drafted	listened	reported
collaborated	edited	marketed	resolved
communicated	elicited	mediated	responded
composed	enlisted	moderated	solicited
condensed	explained	negotiated	specified
conferred	expressed	observed	spoke
consulted	formulated	outlined	suggested
contacted	furnished	participated	summarized
conveyed	incorporated	persuaded	synthesized
convinced	influenced	presented	translated
corresponded	interacted	promoted	wrote

Research Skills

analyzed	evaluated	interpreted	solved
clarified	examined	interviewed	summarized
collected	experimented	invented	surveyed
compared	explored	investigated	systematized
conducted	extracted	located	tested
critiqued	formulated	measured	
detected	gathered	organized	
determined	identified	researched	
diagnosed	inspected	searched	

Technical Skills

adapted	designed	printed	specialized
assembled	determined	programmed	standardized
built	developed	rectified	studied
calculated	engineered	regulated	upgraded
computed	fabricated	remodeled	utilized
conserved	installed	repaired	
constructed	maintained	replaced	
converted	operated	restored	
debugged	overhauled	solved	

Teaching Skills

adapted	enabled	instilled	trained
advised	encouraged	instructed	transmitted
clarified	evaluated	motivated	tutored
coached	explained	persuaded	
communicated	facilitated	set goals	
conducted	focused	simulated	
coordinated	guided	stimulated	
critiqued	individualized	taught	
developed	informed	tested	

List of Action Verbs for Résumés:

Financial/Data Skills

administered	balanced	estimated	projected
adjusted	calculated	forecasted	reconciled
allocated	computed	managed	reduced
analyzed	conserved	marketed	researched
appraised	corrected	measured	retrieved
assessed	determined	planned	
audited	developed	programmed	

Creative Skills

acted	developed	illustrated	performed
adapted	directed	initiated	photographed
began	displayed	instituted	planned
combined	drew	integrated	revised
conceptualized	entertained	introduced	revitalized
condensed	established	invented	shaped
created	fashioned	modeled	solved
customized	formulated	modified	
designed	founded	originated	

Helping Skills

adapted	collaborated	facilitated	rehabilitated
advocated	contributed	familiarized	presented
aided	cooperated	furthered	resolved
answered	counseled	guided	simplified
arranged	demonstrated	helped	supplied
assessed	diagnosed	insured	supported
assisted	educated	intervened	volunteered
cared for	encouraged	motivated	
clarified	ensured	provided	
coached	expedited	referred	

Organization/ Detail Skills

approved	filed	prepared	set up
arranged	generated	processed	submitted
cataloged	implemented	provided	supplied
categorized	incorporated	purchased	standardized
charted	inspected	recorded	systematized
classified	logged	registered	updated
coded	maintained	reserved	validated
collected	monitored	responded	verified
compiled	obtained	reviewed	
corresponded	operated	routed	
distributed	ordered	scheduled	
executed	organized	screened	

More Verbs for Accomplishments

achieved	resolved (issues)
completed	restored
expanded	spearheaded
exceeded	succeeded
improved	surpassed
pioneered	transformed
reduced (losses)	won