

Résumés are a marketing tool used to show your qualifications for a specific position and to persuade an employer to interview you. You should create a new résumé for each position you are applying for and demonstrate how you meet or exceed the specific requirements. Try to think like an employer: What would you want to see if you were hiring for this position?

## MASTER LIST

A *master* list can be very helpful, because it enables you to collect information about your experiences, skills, education, etc., in one document. Unlike a résumé, a master list is **never sent to an employer**, needs no specific formatting, and will have much more detail. Then when you tailor your résumé for a specific position, you can pull items from this master list to include in your résumé.

The master list will include—

- Entire work history
  - Address/phone numbers of employers
  - Names of supervisors
  - Salary information
- Accomplishment statements
- Education, certificates, licensure,
- Class projects and contributions to those projects
- Volunteerism
- Activities
- Anything else that might be relevant to an employer

This master list can be used when filling out applications, since you will have all employer information in one place, saving you time and energy. If you continue to update the list throughout the year, it will make tailoring a résumé much easier as well! Simply copy and paste the most relevant information into a résumé format, and you will never have to worry about losing information.

## FORMATTING AND APPEARANCE

### THE BASICS

No matter what type of résumé you use, the same basic formatting applies:

- One page for every 7-10 years of experience; no more than two pages. If a second page is needed, include your name and page 2 at the top of the page and **DO NOT** staple
- .7"-1" margins around entire document
- 11–12-point professional font (Times New Roman, Arial, Calibri) for body with your name in 14-16 font
- Use basic bullet pointed lists (▪ or ●) instead of paragraph
- For emphasis, use **bold**, *italics*, and CAPITALIZATION and stay consistent (e.g., If you use bold for degree title, use bold for job titles); avoid underlines
- Balance the text to avoid too much text or too much white space
- Black ink only, no color, and print using a high-quality printer
- Templates must be avoided to ensure skills and qualifications are highlighted; fill white space of page
- Print using white or ivory résumé paper (typically 100% cotton/linen) on the correct side of the paper with the watermark readable. See Career Services for printing on résumé paper.

The urge to get creative with the résumé format to stand out is natural, but employers consistently report a preference for easy-to-read, basic formatting. Would you rather be remembered for your fun bullet points or your experience and skills?

## ARRANGEMENT

The first-time employers review résumés, most will spend no more than 10-25 seconds reading each one. For this reason, it is crucial that they see the most important information as quickly and easily as possible. Since we read from top to bottom and left to right, it is most beneficial to put the most important and relevant information toward the top of the page and on the left. The less important information should be at the bottom of the page.

## TYPES OF RÉSUMÉS

### Chronological

This is the most common and widely accepted résumé type. The experience section will be listed in **REVERSE** chronological order with bullet statements demonstrating contributions and accomplishments.

### Functional/Skills

Those who are going through a career change will often find themselves needing to focus on functions or skills as opposed to work experience. This résumé type emphasizes skill sets with bulleted statements that demonstrate these skills. Work experience will still be listed but will not include bullet points.

### Combination/Hybrid

This résumé type is a combination of chronological and functional styles. Work experience is shown with bullet statements and skill sets are listed.

## SECTIONS

### CONTACT INFORMATION

Use one of the following formats in Figure 1 for your contact information. Make sure that your email address and your voicemail message are professional. The top of the page should include—

- full legal name
- street address (optional), City, State, Zip Code
- phone number
- email address

#### FIGURE 1

#### Full Legal Name (First & Last)

128 Garfield Ave.  
West Plains, MO 65775  
Grizzly@missouristate.edu  
123-456-7890

OR

#### Full Legal Name (First & Last)

128 Garfield Ave., West Plains, MO 65775 | Grizzly@MissouriState.edu | 123-456-7890

## EDUCATION

Displaying your education is crucial. As shown in Figure 2, start with the degree you are currently working toward or recently earned.

You must include—

- accurate degree title and option (check transcript or catalogue on your degree audit for accuracy)
- university name
- location of university (city, state)
- graduation/expected graduation date (month year)
- GPA

**FIGURE 2** (Note: Bullet Points=Accomplishment Statements)

### EDUCATION

**Associate of Science in Nursing**                      Expected Graduation: May 20xx  
*Missouri State University–West Plains; West Plains, MO*

GPA 3.54/4.00

- Admitted into Bachelor of Science in Nursing program at MSU
- Chancellor’s List Fall 20xx

**Associate of Arts in General Studies**                      May 20xx

*Missouri State University–West Plains; West Plains, MO*

GPA 3.45/4.00 while working 30-40 hours per week

If your GPA is not listed, the employer will assume it is low, which will work against you. Use the same format when listing previous degrees & certificates awarded from other universities and technical schools. You will **NOT** list your high school diploma on a résumé, nor will you list information from institutions that did not result in a degree or certification.

## EXPERIENCE

This section can be titled Work Experience, Professional Experience, Relevant Experience, Sales Experience, or any other appropriate description (Figure 3). It is not necessary to include all work history on the résumé, only the most relevant positions or those that used the most transferable skills. The positions should be listed beginning with the most recent and working backwards.

Each position needs to include—

- job title
- employer name
- location (city, state)
- range of employment (months, years)

**FIGURE 3** (Note: Bullet Points=Accomplishment Statements)

### RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

**Licensed Practical Nurse**    August 20XX–Present  
*Healthcare Facility; Any City, MO*

- Aid three patients in the intensive care unit on rotation
- Maintain charts for patients to remain up to date on patient care given

**Certified Nursing Assistant**    May 20XX–August 20XX  
*Healthcare Facility; Any City, MO*

- Responded to patient calls, signal lights, or intercom to assist patients
- Provided physical support to patients during bathing, dressing, getting out of bed, walking

## ADDITIONAL SECTIONS

To ensure the employer sees all your qualifications, additional sections can be included on the résumé (Figure 4). If a skills section is used, it is important to provide proof of the skills instead of simply listing them.

Some options include–

- Academic/Internship/Clinical Experience
- Activities
- Certifications
- Community Service
- Computer Skills
- Honors & Awards
- Lab Skills
- Language Skills
- Leadership Experience
- Military Experience
- Objective Statement
- Professional Organizations
- Publications
- Service Projects
- Summary of Qualifications
- Athletic Experience

**FIGURE 4** (Note: Bullet Points=Accomplishment Statements)

### CLINICAL EXPERIENCE

#### Student Nurse

Spring 20xx

*Healthcare Department; Hospital Name*

- Led a team of 5 nursing students during clinicals
- Met with RNs and LPNs to better understand patient and clinical needs to assess patients

### COMPUTER SKILLS

- Proficient at Charting Software and Pharmacy Software (list specific software name used)
- Expert in Microsoft Office Suite: Word, PowerPoint, Excel, Outlook

### VOLUNTEERISM

#### Philanthropy Chair

Spring 20xx-Present

- Worked with a team of 150 peers to raise over \$20,000 for research

## ACCOMPLISHMENT/CONTRIBUTION STATEMENTS

Bulleted statements demonstrating skills, contributions, and accomplishments are the most important elements of the résumé but are also the most challenging.

These statements should–

- focus on the skills/contributions/accomplishments that are relevant to the job
- explains how you used skills in previous positions/activities–think about your transferable skills
- be concise– no longer than one-to-two lines bullets per section.

Start with a list of skills or qualifications needed for the new job then build your résumé to display how you have used these skills and how you meet the qualifications. Reviewing the job posting and using resources like O\*NET (<http://online.onetcenter.org>) can be helpful in learning which skills are needed for the position. See Figure 3 and Figure 4 for examples.

Each statement will–

- begin with an action verb (see Action Verb handout), using appropriate verb tense
- show what you did using industry-specific terminology
- explain why you did the task
- identify the result using statistics (dollar values, numbers, and percentages) if possible

## ACCURACY

All information in a résumé should be reviewed by multiple people to ensure it is free of errors, misspelled words, or grammatical errors as spell check does not catch all mistakes.

## THINGS TO AVOID INFORMATION

Every country has a unique standard for what to include or not to include when applying for a job. In the United States, certain items are always left off the résumé:

- disabilities
- gender
- height/weight
- manager information & references
- marital status
- pictures
- political affiliation
- reasons for leaving jobs
- religion
- sexual orientation
- salary requirements
- social security number/ITIN

Some of this information will be requested on an application, but not on the résumé. If applying outside the United States, follow the standards for that country to ensure you are providing all needed information.

## GRAPHICS AND COLORS

Using graphics, clip art, pictures, or colors is a common mistake on résumés. Typically, students do this to make their document stand out to employers, but it will do the opposite. Scannable résumé devices employers use will not recognize your qualifications due to formatting errors.

## REFERENCES

References are an important part of the job search but should be left off the résumé. These belong as separate documents and will not accompany the résumé unless the employer specifically requested them. The reference page will have the same header/contact information as the résumé and will include the job title and contact information for each person who has agreed to serve as your reference. Be sure to ask permission to use someone as a reference, supply that person with a copy of your résumé, and send a copy of the job posting if he or she will be contacted. These simple steps will help ensure a higher quality reference, since the person will be more prepared to highlight the most relevant information to the employer. See Recommendations handout for more information.

**Before sending your résumé to an employer, bring it to Career Services for critiquing or schedule a résumé review appointment via Handshake, the Career Services' career services management platform.**