Governors State
U N I V E R S I T Y

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Resume Guide

Your resume is a relatively short profile of your experiences that showcases your skills, talents, achievements, and any other relevant abilities. The resume serves as your "calling card" in the world of job seeking. You will use it for job and internship applications as well as for networking purposes. While a number of standard formats exist for resumes, ultimately, you will have to determine which works best for you. Networking and informational interviewing can help you see what type and style of resume is typically used in your (future) profession. The office of Career Services offers Resume Workshops regularly during the academic year; please attend a workshop for a fully developed discussion on your resume.

Uses for the Resume

You will most likely use your resume for job applications, but it also serves many other functions including the following:

1) Provides a "snapshot" view of who you are and what you can do
2) Allows you to share information with anyone who may assist you in your search for employment
3) Supplements basic information on job applications
4) Serves as a record for potential employers and an indication of your interest in their organization (the "calling card" mentioned above)
5) Facilitates employment interviews by supplying the interviewer with a quick reference guide to your experiences and gives you a means of pointing out some highlights of your background and skills

Formatting/Style Notes

Length

Undergraduate students or recent alumni should limit their resumes to one page; if you are a graduate student or have significant work experience, you might consider a two-page document. Most people will generally have a one page version ready for job fairs and other networking events. Two pages might cover more terrain, but you want to be sure that the information is essential in representing yourself; if you compose a two page resume, make sure that the most vital information appears on the first page.

Writing and Language

Probably one of the most significant ways to impress an employer is by having a well-written, mistake-free resume. To ensure that you do not have any mistakes on your resume, show it to several people, share it with friends and family members, and visit the Office of Career Services to have it reviewed. Always remember to PROOFREAD! PROOFREAD! PROOFREAD! We cannot emphasize the importance of having a document that is perfect in terms of the language, lack

of typos, and style. Remember: a resume with mistakes is an indication that you do not pay attention to detail, and all employers are seeking people who are detail-oriented at some level.

Use your own style of writing in the resume, but take care to use strong action verbs—a list of action verbs appears at the end of this handout. In addition, you should provide brief summaries of your skills related to your particular experience and where possible (or relevant), you should highlight your accomplishments. You want to demonstrate what you have achieved through your various experiences. Do not take credit for accomplishments of others or for achievements of the organization. If you were part of a team or work group that accomplished something notable, then indicate that you collaborated with others to reach or go beyond that goal.

Finally, you will want to use clean, crisp language. Avoid redundancy; for example, do not overuse a particular action verb or a descriptor for your experience. Stay away from clichés and trite terms/phrases. Do not refer to yourself in the text; you are the implicit actor on your own resume. Also, to save room, do not use the articles (a, an, the). Demonstrate that you are excited about the position, and tailor your resume for different types of jobs.

Types of Resumes
Most resumes follow the chronological format, which is actually a listing of experiences in reverse chronological order, starting with the most recent experience back to the oldest. A functional resume is a grouping of skill sets with brief descriptions of the skills under each heading. Job changers sometimes use functional resumes, but recently, employers have been leery of the functional style because they fear that candidates might be trying to hide certain factors about their background. A third alternative that allows you the strengths of both, especially if you are someone who is changing career paths, is the hybrid resume that contains functional categories and then includes your experiences in reverse chronological order within the categories. (Sample resumes are included at the end of this handout.)

Appearance
Even for the most radical of work, you will probably want to keep the look of your resume fairly conservative and traditional—perhaps the job of circus performer will differ, but for most careers, employers are seeking resumes that they can read easily. Use white, heavy bond paper in 8-1/2" X 11" size. Avoid the use of text-heavy descriptions; opt for bulleted points that are easy to read and draw your reader into the document. Use different styles to highlight the various categories or sub-headings on your resume, and always ensure that the finished product is easy on the eyes and inviting. Balance text with enough white space. Stylistically, you can use underlining, different fonts, and a variety of type sizes in order to break up a monotonous page. Just make sure you keep all categories the same e.g. headings such as Education, Experience, or Awards all look the same, and then subheadings are uniform as well.

Elements of a Resume
Contact Information
Include your name, address, phone numbers, and email addresses. You may also include a permanent or alternative address if you will be moving during your job search. Home pages are acceptable BUT only if they are professional and NOT of a personal nature. For example, you don't want pictures from your last wild party or of your pets and family on the site. Be careful that a potential employer couldn't just drop a part of the web address and still access your personal site. For example: www.webcompany.com/Smith/jobsearch; if an employer drops the "jobsearch" part

of the address will she or he find those wild party or pet pictures? Make sure they don't. Finally, verify all of your contact information to ensure that it is correct. If someone cannot reach you, how will you land that important interview?

Education
Unless you have significant work experience or are making a career change, your education section generally appears near the outset of your resume. Include your most recent degree first followed by other degrees prior to that degree. Remember: this part of the resume is always in reverse chronological order (most recent first). You will want to list the institutions where you received your degree(s) from, their location (city, state), and the month and year when you received your degree. Many other options often appear in this section of the resume including: your GPA (major, cumulative), study abroad experience, training courses or certificate programs, theses, academic honors, etc. If you are unsure about including something specific, please check with the Career Services staff.

Experience/Activities
The most important part of any good resume, this section details your skills and accomplishments. We recommend that you think carefully about how your various experiences match the job to which you are applying and then select the most relevant experiences. Sometimes, you might choose to include activities here if you were actively engaged; you could also create a separate heading for activities.

What is your career goal, and how do your experiences and skills fit into that goal? Think beyond traditional jobs you may have held unless they are directly relevant to the work you want to do. Do you have any volunteer experience? How about major projects in your course work? Have you participated in any activities that you've spent your time on outside of work and classes? Remember: how you derived the skills is less important than the fact that you have the skills and can illustrate to an employer that you have them. Do not discount the importance of non-work experiences!!!

You will be making statements and describing your skills, and then you must support your claims. If you know how to perform certain tasks, make sure you prove it to an employer on your resume. If performing a task with certain time restrictions or in a certain environment is key, include that information on the resume. Quantify where possible; for example: Managed monthly student newspaper with a circulation of five thousand, and supervised an editorial staff of eight.

Finally, avoid jargon unless you are sure that a potential employer will understand it. You might consider placing job-related skills under a skill section such as your ability to use certain software programs or your capacity to perform lab techniques or statistical methods. In this way, you will create more space in the experience section, and you can provide appropriate terminology (jargon) in the skills section of the resume.

Skills
This section generally includes your computer, language, and other skills such as scientific lab work or research methods. For computer skills, list operating systems and software packages where you have skills. Many students take their computer skills for granted, but an employer might not assume you can use Microsoft products unless you tell them. Foreign languages should include your level of proficiency, often broken down by written and oral capabilities.

Affiliations

If you are a member of relevant professional organizations, you might include them on the resume. You should list your level of participation in the organizations or merely mention that you are a member.

References

Employers expect you to provide references; mentioning that "references are available upon request" is not necessary. However, you should have a list of 3-4 references available during interviews and for follow-up thereafter. Such a list should be in the same style as your resume and should include each individual's full contact information: their name, title, address, phone number, and email address. You may also include a very brief description of your relationship with this person: advisor, supervisor, colleague, supervisee, etc.

If you have any further questions you can always contact:

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Room A1120, Governors State University
One University Parkway,
University Park, IL 60484-0975

Telephone: 708-235-3974
Fax: 708-534-1173
E-mail: career@govst.edu

Resume Word List
Action Words That Describe Your Functional Skills

Accelerated	Accomplished	Achieved	Acquired
Addressed	Administered	Advised	Allocated
Analyzed	Arranged	Articulated	Assembled
Authored	Briefed	Budgeted	Built
Calculated	Catalogued	Centralized	Chaired
Collaborated	Collected	Combined	Communicated
Coached	Computed	Compiled	Composed
Conducted	Consolidated	Constructed	Conceived
Coordinated	Counseled	Crafted	Cultivated
Defined	Delivered	Demonstrated	Designed
Directed	Distributed	Documented	Developed
Earned	Edited	Elicited	Eliminated
Enforced	Engineered	Established	Executed
Expanded	Expedited	Facilitated	Fashioned
Financed	Focused	Forecasted	Founded
Gathered	Generated	Guided	Handled
Headed	Helped	Hired	Identified
Implemented	Improved	Increased	Initiated
Instructed	Interpreted	Investigated	Judged
Launched	Located	Managed	Marketed
Mediated	Minimized	Mobilized	Motivated
Negotiated	Networked	Obtained	Organized
Participated	Performed	Persuaded	Piloted
Pioneered	Promoted	Publicized	Proposed
Recommended	Recorded	Recruited	Reorganized
Reshaped	Resolved	Responded	Restored
Served	Solved	Staffed	Stimulated
Streamlined	Strengthened	Structured	Supervised
Transformed	Translated	Tutored	Uncovered
Unified	Upgraded	Utilized	Verified
Visualized	Vitalized	Widened	Wrote

Checklist of Transferable Skills

Transferable skills are skills that you can take with you from one situation to another, from one job to another. The skills below are important to employers.

- Communicate: Speak and/or write well and get your ideas across to other easily.
- Interpret: Look at things and make sense of them, figure out what makes things work, why there is a problem, etc.
- Analyze: Break a problem down to see what is really going on.
- Creativity: Use your imagination to come up with new ideas or to solve problems.
- Order Goods/Supplies: Keep track of items and how to order them.
- Decision Making: Make good judgments about what to do in a difficult situation, even when the supervisor is not present.
- Adapt to Situations: Learn a new task and/or work in a different area with different co-workers.
- Explain: Tell others why you do certain things the way you do or why you think the way you do.
- Think Ahead: Plan your day and keep problems/accidents from happening.
- Calculate Numbers: Use a calculator, cash register or computer to answer numerical questions.
- Operate Equipment: Turn equipment on and off as well as how to use it safely and wisely. (If you don't know how to operate certain things, you always ask for help.)
- Record Data: Write thorough and accurate notes/numbers.
- Set Goals: Set goals for yourself to achieve and plan ways to achieve them.
- Learn Quickly: Do new things and carry out new responsibilities easily by watching other or by following instructions.
- Confident: Believe in and feel good about yourself.
- Pleasant: Nice person for others to talk to and be with.
- Energetic: Lots of energy to use at work and at play.
- Helpful: Enjoy helping people solve their problems.
- Trustworthy: Can be trusted to get the job done, to look after things or keep secrets that are very important to other people.
- Efficient: Perform tasks in the fastest and simplest ways that they can be done.
- Organize: Arrange people/plan events/put things in order so that they run smoothly.
- Delegate: Assign tasks to others to complete.
- Assemble Products: Put things together with your hands.
- Take Instructions: Follow instructions well, ask questions when you do not fully understand instructions.
- Motivate Others: Help keep others' spirits up and encourage them to do their best.
- Service Customers: Be friendly, patient and polite with customers and try your best to service their needs/wants.

- Dependable: Can be counted on to do what you said you would do (i.e. show up for work on time, do your job duties well, etc).
- Flexible: Can carry out many different responsibilities, sometimes with very little advanced notice.
- Self-assured: Feel very confident and positive about yourself and your abilities.
- Supervise: Watch others to make sure that everything is ok and/or that they are doing their jobs well.
- Time Management: Plan your time so that you don't forget to do things, you're almost always/always on time, and you know how to prioritize and give yourself enough time to do the things that you need to do.
- Trouble-shoot: Figure out what the problem is, why there is a problem, or prevent a problem before it happens.
- Handle Complaints: Deal effectively with complaints made by customers or constructive criticism from your employer.
- Listen: Listen/pay attention to what others are saying, without daydreaming or forming judgment about them.
- Considerate: Always think about how others may feel about things, especially before you say or do things that my affect them.
- Punctual: Always on time for things.
- Loyal: Committed and devoted to things/people that mean a lot to you (i.e. your best friend, your job/supervisor).
- Precise: Make sure that things are done accurately, correctly and exactly.
- Resourceful: Thing of new, creative and different ways to do things when there are no obvious solutions available.

More Transferable Skills to Consider
http://careerplanning.about.com/od/careerchoicechan/a/trans_skills_ex.htm

- Plan and arrange events and activities
- Delegate responsibility
- Motivate others
- Attend to visual detail
- Assess and evaluate my own work
- Assess and evaluate others' work
- Deal with obstacles and crises
- Multi-task
- Present written material
- Present material orally
- Manage time
- Repair equipment or machinery
- Keep records
- Handle complaints
- Coordinate fundraising activities
- Coach
- Research
- Build or construct
- Design buildings, furniture, etc.
- Manage finances
- Speak a foreign language (specify language)
- Use sign language
- Utilize computer software (specify programs)
- Train or teach others
- Identify and manage ethical issues