

## **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](http://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:

#### **Office of Career Services**

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](mailto: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