

# The Resume

## How to Organize Your Resume

Your resume is a summary of your educational background, work-related experience and achievements. Its purpose is to encourage an employer to invite you for an interview. It highlights the educational background, experience, and skills you have developed that are necessary in your chosen career field. Your resume should contain brief, but specific descriptions of those activities, responsibilities and accomplishments you select for inclusion, based on your research into the employer's needs.

### How to get started

Since a resume will be used to show what you have to contribute, you'll want to spend some time reflecting on your experiences. What educational opportunities and experiences have you had that make you unique? What skills have you developed from your summer jobs, internships and campus activities? Take some time to think about where you have been and where you'd like to go. Be sure to think about the skills that you can transfer to and develop in a workplace.

Resumes are more effective if they demonstrate a clear career focus. So after you have taken a closer look at yourself, it's a good idea to begin learning more about your target career field. The more you know about an industry and an organization, the better you'll be able to tailor your experience to the field.

### What to include

Before you get started, brainstorm all of your experiences first, then start to organize items under headings. Some common headings in resumes include education, experience (volunteer, leadership, intern, salaried employee), activities, skills, professional affiliations and interests. You should choose headings that help the reader skim your resume efficiently. If you have had several internships in one employment

sector, group them under a label, such as "Business Experience" or use functional categories, such as "Research Experience."

Since you will be working within one page, you will want to include your most relevant items and omit items that might be less related to the employer's needs and your career goals. Seniors seeking full time employment should focus on experiences during the college years, while freshmen and sophomores may still list high school experiences. Even if your experience is limited, be sure to highlight the skills you have started to develop. Use action verbs (p.3) to describe projects completed, your accomplishments. Verbs signify full engagement!

### How to format an electronic version

Technology has changed the face of the resume. While you will still prepare a paper version, you will probably find yourself using an electronic resume as well. Your paper version should be one page in length and should be printed on white or cream bond paper. Many employers scan paper resumes into a database so it will be important that your resume is scannable, which means it should be free of italics, underlining, shadow print, unusual fonts, etc. Even if you apply to an organization electronically, you will need to bring a hard copy to the interview. You will also find it useful to distribute hard copies of your resume at career fairs and other networking events.

When submitting your resume electronically, you may find yourself uploading, cutting and pasting or emailing it in plain text. Be sure to carefully read instructions when applying to organizations that ask for electronic applications. Give them exactly what they want. For further fine-tuning see <http://www.distinctiveweb.com/elecresum.htm>

## Sections of a Resume

### Objective

On occasion you may see a resume with an objective statement on top. Objective statements are rarely necessary because you will write a cover letter to accom-

### Qualities & Skills employers seek in candidates

- Communication
- Motivation/initiative
- Teamwork
- Leadership
- Academic achievement
- Interpersonal ease
- Flexibility/adaptability
- Technical competence
- Honesty/integrity
- Work ethic
- Analytical/problem solving



## CAREER CENTER AT DUKE UNIVERSITY

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pany your resume. Your cover letter will discuss your objectives—what position you are interested in pursuing and why you would be a good fit for the position and the company. For more information regarding cover letters, please see the Cover Letter handout available in the Career Center.

### **Education**

Education is usually listed first on your resume in reverse chronological order. Listing your high school diploma is optional. Include if relevant to the employer. Your college, its location and your degree should be included, as well as your major, minor and certificate program if applicable. Many employers prefer to see a GPA and a list of selected courses listed under this section. If you have studied abroad, you'll include the name of the institution/program and location.

### **Experience**

Your experience section should illustrate the skills you have developed. You will want to list not only your paid jobs, but also internships, any related volunteer work or class projects/independent studies. Remember you want to demonstrate the skills you have that the employer is seeking. Use action verbs to describe your work, like this:

Duke University, Durham, NC  
First-Year Advisory Council

Fall 2000

Freshman Advisor—Assisted new students with the transition to college by serving as a mentor. Planned small group discussions for new students to discuss transition issues. Served as a role model and resource person. Referred students to campus resources.

### **Activities**

Activities on your resume will show the employer what it is you chose to spend your time on outside the classroom. Any leadership positions you held should be listed and if extensive, described. Keep in mind that many valuable skills are gained from extracurricular activities, including leadership, delegation, teamwork, etc.

### **Skills**

Listing your skills on your resume is very important. Language and computer skills should be included.

### **Interests**

While interests won't necessarily make you qualified for a particular job, employers like to know about interests you pursue during your leisure time.

### **Additional Resources**

- Printed resources are available in the Career Center Resource Room.

- Valuable resume links can be found on the Career Center Web site at <http://career.studentaffairs.duke.edu>.
- Resume samples are available in the Career Center Resource Room and on the Career Center Web site.

### **The Finished Product**

Upon completion of your first draft, be sure to visit the Career Center for a resume critique. The Career Center staff reviews resumes daily from 2:00-3:00 pm on a first come first served basis or by appointment. Appointments can be made by calling 660-1050.

#### **Effective Resumes Are...**

- **Brief/Concise**
- **Logical, consistent and readable**
- **Contain career focus**
- **Reflect knowledge of the target industry**
- **Illustrate skills**

### **Things to Keep in Mind**

- Employers may only spend a brief moment viewing each resume received, so organize clearly and use action verbs to describe your experiences.
- When applying for a specific job, analyze the description and try to address all the qualifications the employer seeks within the text of your resume.
- Your resume is never a finished product, so refine the document often.
- A typo can be fatal on a resume; be sure to have several people take a look at it and utilize the drop-in hours at the Career Center for feedback. While spell check is a good resource, do not count on it. Words like "their" and "there", "list" and "lust" and "for" and "fur" can slip by spell check.
- Be concise with your wording. Eliminate non-essential phrases like "responsibilities included..."
- Give concrete examples and quantitative information (Eg: "Increased club membership by 25% while Chairman of Recruitment Committee.").

## Action Verbs

accelerated	compiled	examined	launched	represented
accepted	composed	executed	learned	reproduced
accommodated	conceived	exercised	lectured	researched
accomplished	conceptualized	exhibited	listened	resolved
accounted for	concluded	expanded	located	responded
achieved	conducted	expected	managed	restored
acquired	confronted	expedited	manipulated	retrieved
acted	consolidated	experienced	marketed	reviewed
adapted	constructed	experimented	mastered	scheduled
added	consulted	explained	measured	screened
addressed	continued	expressed	mediated	searched
adjusted	contributed	facilitated	merged	secured
administered	controlled	financed	memorized	selected
adopted	conveyed	focused	mobilized	separated
advertised	cooperated	followed through	modeled	served
advised	coordinated	forecasted	moderated	serviced
affirmed	corrected	formed	modified	shaped
allocated	corresponded	formulated	monitored	simplified
analyzed	counseled	found	motivated	solicited
answered	created	founded	negotiated	solved
anticipated	criticized	functioned	nominated for	sought
applied	dealt with	gathered	observed	specified
appraised	decided	generated	obtained	staged
arbitrated	defined	grouped	operated	stimulated
approved	delegated	guided	organized	streamlined
arranged	delivered	handled	originated	strengthened
articulated	demonstrated	headed	oversaw	stressed
ascertained	derived	honed	participated	stretched
assembled	designed	identified	perceived	structured
assessed	described	illustrated	performed	succeeded
assigned	detected	implemented	persevered	suggested
assisted	determined	imposed	prioritized	summarized
assumed	developed	improved	processed	supervised
attended	devised	improvised	produced	supplied
audited	directed	incorporated	programmed	supported
authorized	discovered	increased	projected	surveyed
balanced	discussed	influenced	proposed	tested
bargained	displayed	informed	protected	trained
briefed	distributed	initiated	provided	transferred
budgeted	drafted	inquired	publicized	transformed
built	earned	inspected	published	translated
calculated	edited	inspired	qualified for	transported
challenged	educated	instituted	quantified	treated
changed	effective	insured	raised	trimmed
checked	empathized	integrated	recognized	turned
clarified	employed	interacted	recommended	tutored
classified	empowered	interpreted	recorded	understood
coached	enabled	intervened	recruited	updated
collaborated	encouraged	interviewed	reduced	united
collected	enforced	introduced	referred	used
comforted	enhanced	investigated	regulated	utilized
committed	enlisted	involved	related	validated
communicated	ensured	joined	remembered	verified
compared	established	judged	rendered	volunteered
	estimated	justified	reorganized	withdrew
	evaluated	kept	reported	

Your Name  
your.name@duke.edu

Permanent Address  
City, State Zip Code  
Telephone Number

School Address  
City, State Zip Code  
Telephone Number

## EDUCATION

Duke University, Durham, NC

List the degree you expect to receive as well as your major(s), minor(s) and certificate(s). List the month and year you expect your degree.

GPA: if you elect to include it. Keep in mind that omitting it may trigger the employer to make some assumptions about your grades.

Courses: you can list significant and/or relevant courses in this section, which is particularly helpful when you would like to show courses you have taken outside your major or upper level classes related to your career target.

You should also include study abroad experience. Varsity athletes may indicate their sport here, specifically mentioning the time commitment required per week.

By the time you are a senior, in most cases, it is not necessary to include high school information. However, prior to your senior year you should include it along with the activities and honors you received in high school.

## EXPERIENCE

Think about all your paid and unpaid summer jobs, internships and extracurricular activities. Highlight those that the employer will value most. Within sections use reverse chronological order. Put combined items in one section labeled appropriately, e.g. Marketing Experience, Arts Experience, Research Experience, Technical Experience, etc. List less relevant, but important experience in an Other Experience or Additional Experience section.

The organization, subdivision, its location, dates of employment/experience, your job title and job description are necessary in each listing. Use action verbs to describe your accomplishments. Give them specificity by using topics of meetings, titles of supervisors, numbers, percentages, dollar figures, etc. e.g. "Wrote 60-page report for distribution to all senior officers."

## ACTIVITIES

This section shows your ability to manage your time. Valuable skills are gained from extracurricular activities including leadership, delegation, teamwork, etc. If you have held an office, be sure to include it with the activity.

## SKILLS

Computer, technical and language skills are, in general, important strengths you bring to a position. Indicate your level of competency. Be prepared to demonstrate your skill level in an interview.

## INTERESTS

While listing your interests won't necessarily make you qualified for a particular job, some employers like having information about how you use your leisure time.

**Resume samples are available in the Career Center Resource Room in 217 Page  
or on the Career Center Web site at <http://career.studentaffairs.duke.edu>**