

Crafting a Tailor-Made Resume

Some Things to Consider Before Getting Started:

- Writing one single, all-purpose resume for multiple employers will do little to get you noticed.
- Creating a resume that is customized to the qualifications an employer is seeking and focused on the positive impact you made during your class projects, activities, past jobs, & other experiences will help make it stand out among others.
- Employers typically spend 4 to 6 seconds to scan resumes during the initial screening phase. Your resume is your personal marketing tool and how you present yourself is key.

Tips:

- ✓ Throughout your experiences, set some performance goals for yourself so that you have some results or significant contributions to showcase on your resume.
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- ✓ Keep a record of your experiences & the positive impact you made to help keep details fresh as you prepare for interviews.

Great Resumes Have Three Important Features:

- *Attractive Style*
 - ✓ Your resume should be visually appealing and easy to read. Keep it clean and legible. Avoid fancy fonts, text colors, graphics, and large blocks of text. Use adequate white space. The resume samples included in this Course Site can give you some good tips on attractive style features.
- *Relevance*
 - ✓ More than just providing a history of where you have been, each resume you write should, as clearly as possible, demonstrate how your background and skills are a good match for a given opportunity. Your related experience, education, and skills should be easy to find at-a-glance.
- *Results*
 - ✓ Include the results of your efforts as you write your experience descriptions. Employers not only want to know what you did, but also how you added value. How did you make a positive difference?

Planning Your Resume

1. Target Opportunities

What do you want to do? If you are uncertain about the specific kinds of opportunities you would like to pursue, you will most likely find it difficult to write a resume that will stand out and get you noticed. If you find yourself in need of direction, work with the Center for Career & Professional Development staff and engage in the process of career exploration.

2. Generate a List of Your Experiences and Contributions

Create an inventory of class projects, volunteer work, student club and organization activities, internships, externships, & full & part-time jobs. Determine the skills you had the opportunity to demonstrate. What kinds of results did you achieve? What can you say about your skills & involvement that shows you did more than just go through the motions?

3. Determine What Your Target Employers are Seeking

Study position announcements, web sites of target employers, and even social media profiles of professionals engaged in the types of opportunities of interest to you. Identify position and industry-specific key words such as skills, abilities, personal qualities, and qualifications. Include these important key words and qualifications on your resume.

Resume Style

Your resume should not contain your photo or personal information such as date of birth or religion. Avoid boxes, shading, tables, and resume templates.

Use consistent spacing, font, font size, and use of bold and italics among similar items.

Choose a font that is easy to read with a size between 10 and 12 point. Some nice fonts for resumes include Times New Roman, Garamond, Calibri, Tahoma & Tw Cent MT.

All margins can be ½ to 1 inch in size, depending on your space needs.

Use bullet point lists to describe experiences. Employers prefer bullet point lists to small paragraphs.

For printing, choose 100% bond paper in a conservative color (white, off-white, or light grey).

Always use a professional email (like your Lehigh email address). KaptainKarl@, hotpants27@, burgers&fries@ or BeerGut@ etc. are NOT good addresses to use for a job search!

Content

Use language that is concise, unambiguous, and focused on the information that will sell you best. Avoid personal pronouns (I, me, my, mine).

Content areas may include a professional summary, education, skills, experiences, leadership, & professional affiliations.

Ph.D. students applying for industry positions in research and development should include sections listing publications, presentations, and conferences.

Refer to your thesis or dissertation as a “project” on your resume for industry, so as not to sound “too academic.”

Quantify your accomplishments, when possible.

Length: one or two pages. Wall Street firms expect a one page resume. Otherwise, do not delete relevant information or cram text to keep your resume to one page. A second page should be at least half-filled.

Information most important to the employer should be placed toward the top of the resume. If you have strong relevant experience, lead with experience. If not, lead with education.

If you are making a transition in your career path to an area more related to your current degree program than your past experiences, list education first

Objective statements on resumes are passé. Begin your resume with a summary statement, instead. See the resumes that follow for examples. View the resume e-workshop for a deeper dive on this topic.

Experience Sections

As you generate your list of experiences and contributions, draw from a variety of sources and include experiences from your undergraduate years if you are a recent bachelor's graduate.

You may choose not to include every experience on every resume you create, but keeping a "master list" and updating it frequently can allow you to easily copy and paste.

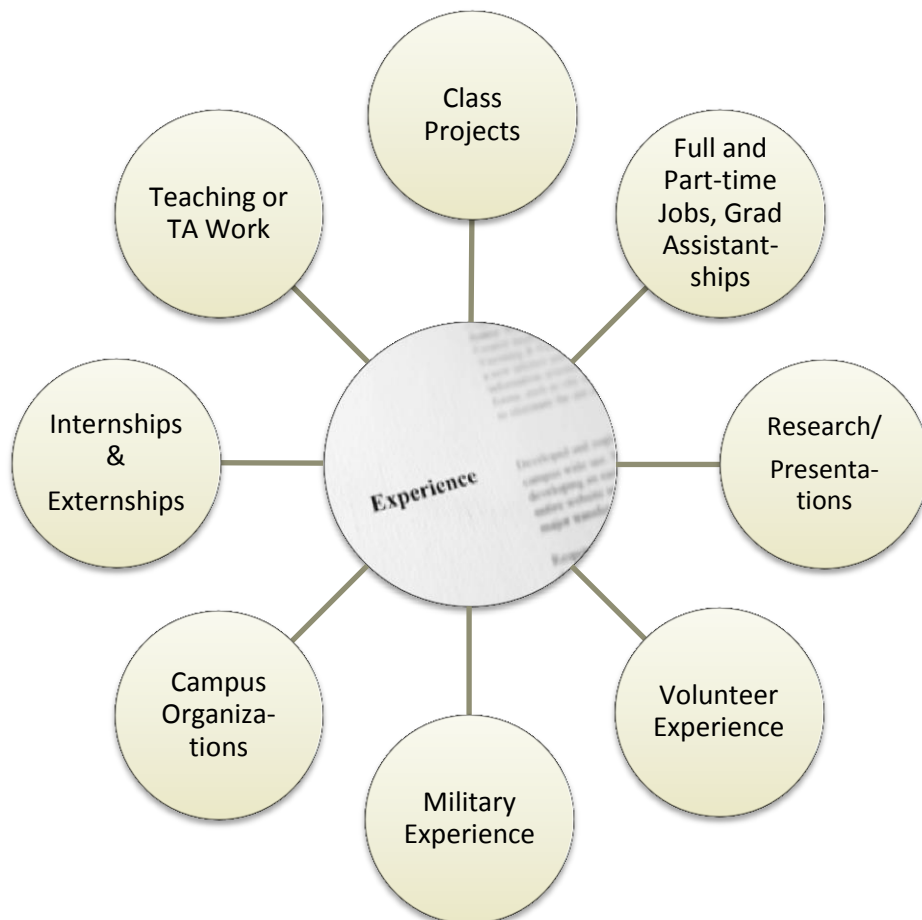
Your resume is not meant to be an autobiography. Distill content to what is most important to a prospective employer.

Group your experiences under specific headings, when possible, e.g. "Project Management Experience" or "Elementary Teaching Experience."

Alternatively, experiences can be grouped under two general headings: "Related Experience" and "Additional Experience."

Begin your description lines with action words. A list of action words can be found on page 8. Avoid writing "Responsibilities included" or "Duties included."

Draw From a Variety of Sources



As much as possible, the descriptions of your experiences should convey your ability to make things happen, solve problems, offer recommendations, improve efficiency, cut costs, etc. An effective way to describe your experiences in this way is to use the **Challenge, Actions, Results (CAR) model**.

CAR Model Examples:

Challenge:

- Organized team of 10 to research present humanitarian issues and how they relate to the global community.

Actions:

- Planned and executed monthly meetings.
- Delegated research tasks to team members and established timelines for completion.

Results:

- Created an action plan that both raised awareness on-campus about respective humanitarian crises and offered strategies to respond to them.

Challenge:

- Developed strategy to retrieve missing production data and made them ready for transfer to the company's new ERP system.

Actions:

- Collaborated with company staff regarding the definition and possible locations of the missing data.
- Located and retrieved the data from company's existing ERP system, populated them into a master Excel spreadsheet with different fields such as Order Prep Time, Queue Time, and Set-up Time.
- Created a tracking tool to measure weekly progress on each missing data field.

Results:

- Exceeded anticipated results by completing 33% more data fields than projected.
- Participated in a milestone meeting with a company manager to report progress, problems, and the projected outcome.
- Delivered a presentation to company representatives to describe achievements and opportunities for improvement.

Challenge:

- Designed and fabricated an off-road recreational vehicle with a focus on weight and recyclable material in order to develop a highly fuel-efficient green vehicle with reduced emissions.

Actions:

- Performed material cost and production cost calculations for both prototype and final vehicle.
- Conferred with vendors & team members regarding purchases, procedures, product specifications, manufacturing capabilities, and project status.
- Delegated tasks among team members.

Results:

- Ranked 4th in cost category and 7th in manufacturing category. Received "Go Green Award" in the event based on vehicle weight and emissions.

Key Words

For each opportunity you will be pursuing, determine what the target employer is seeking (from job descriptions, company web sites, etc.):

Specific Skills:

Qualifications:

Jargon of Your Field or Industry/Other Key Words:

The key words you listed should appear on your resume. A matching of key words is an important way to demonstrate your fit for a position.

Summary Statement

It is a snap shot of who you are, as a professional. It is your marketing “pitch” in 2 – 4 lines.

A good summary statement conveys your most important and relevant competencies & skills, or professional niche. It can also make brief reference to key experiences.

If the reader read no further than your summary, she should have a good idea of what you can offer to the organization. Avoid writing about what you hope to gain from the employer.

Beware of including generic summary statements such as, “I am well-organized and detail oriented with good communication skills and a passion for helping organizations reach their full potential.” If you focus on interpersonal skills in your summary statement, be sure to support them with some specific evidence.

There are many different ways to write a summary statement. For more in-depth information on this topic, please view the resume e-workshop. Summaries should always appear immediately after your name and contact information at the top and can also be called “Profile” or “Qualifications.”

Cover Letters

Cover letters allow you to expand on the skills and qualifications that you express in your resume. They serve as a venue for you to explain your technical and transferrable skills using examples.

A cover letter should always accompany your resume unless a job description states it is not necessary.

Write to a specific person, when possible. Avoid using these outdated salutations: “Dear Sir or Madam” or “To Whom it May Concern.” You can sometimes find a specific name by conducting some internet research. Whenever possible, send your letter to the hiring decision maker (the person for whom you would be working), and not the Human Resources Department.

If your attempts to identify the specific decision maker are unsuccessful, use the salutation, “Dear Search Committee:” or “Dear Hiring Manager:”

Use a colon (:) after the salutation instead of a comma (,).

Target your skills and experiences. Present any relevant background that may be of interest to the person you are writing. The second paragraph should highlight specific results achieved by you in those areas known to be important to successful job performance.

The length of your cover letter should be no more than $\frac{3}{4}$ of a page.

When appropriate, use the specific vocabulary of the industry. Every field has its own terminology (avoid overuse).


Avoid frequent use of personal pronouns such as “I,” “me,” “my,” and “mine”; especially at the beginnings of paragraphs. Vary your sentence structure by beginning sentences with prepositional phrases, connectors, and subordinate clauses.

Include a statement expressing your thanks & appreciation for the employer’s consideration of your candidacy.

Keep a copy for your file. After the application deadline passes, you will want to contact the employer about the status of your application.

COVER LETTER OUTLINE

Omit this information when
applying by email.



Your Name
Street Address
City, State ZIP

Month, Day, Year

Employer Name
Title
Company
Street Address
City, State, ZIP

Dear Dr., Mr., or Ms. _____:

Or

Dear Search Committee:

Or

Dear Hiring Manager:

First paragraph (Purpose)

You may organize the information in this paragraph several different ways, but be sure to state who you are and why you are writing. Also indicate how you learned about the position and why you are interested. If someone associated with the organization referred you, mention that person's name in the first sentence. If you are addressing your letter to someone you have already met, remind her when and, briefly, what you discussed. End with a brief statement about why your background is a strong match.

Second paragraph (Make Your Case)

In this paragraph, demonstrate how you are the best fit for the position. Beyond your resume text, elaborate on how your background and experiences would be of value to the employer. Be as specific as you can about your qualifications, skills, and accomplishments as they relate to the position. Provide examples but don't rehash your entire resume. Your goal here is to focus on matching your skills and experiences to the employer's specific needs, only. Explain how you would fit into the position and the organization. If this paragraph gets lengthy, break it into two paragraphs to make it easier to read. Remember, this letter should only be about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a page in length. Anything longer runs the risk of overwhelming the reader.

Third paragraph (Request for Action)

Close your letter by briefly restating how your background aligns with the employer's needs. Express your interest in further discussing your background and the position with the employer. Finally, include a statement expressing your thanks and appreciation for the employer's consideration.

Sincerely,

(Signature)

Name

Phone Number

Sample Action Words to Begin Your Experience Description Lines

Abstracted	Created	Handled	Produced
Achieved	Critiqued	Helped	Programmed
Acquired	Cultivated	Identified	Projected
Acted	Dealt	Illustrated	Promoted
Adapted	Debated	Implemented	Proposed
Addressed	Decided	Improved	Proved
Administered	Defined	Improvised	Provided
Advertised	Delegated	Increased	Publicized
Advised	Delivered	Influenced	Published
Advocated	Designed	Initiated	Queried
Aided	Detected	Instituted	Raised
Allocated	Determined	Integrated	Received
Analyzed	Developed	Interpreted	Redesigned
Answered	Devised	Interviewed	Reduced
Anticipated	Diagnosed	Introduced	Referred
Applied	Directed	Invented	Related
Approved	Discovered	Launched	Reported
Arranged	Documented	Learned	Researched
Ascertained	Drafted	Lectured	Responded
Assembled	Edited	Listened	Restored
Assessed	Eliminated	Located	Reviewed
Assisted	Enforced	Maintained	Scheduled
Attained	Enlisted	Managed	Screened
Audited	Ensured	Mastered	Set goals
Augmented	Established	Maximized	Shaped
Authored	Estimated	Mediated	Solicited
Bolstered	Evaluated	Mentored	Solved
Briefed	Examined	Met	Specialized
Brought	Exceeded	Minimized	Strategized
Budgeted	Excelled	Modeled	Streamlined
Built	Expanded	Modified	Strengthened
Calculated	Expedited	Monitored	Summarized
Cared	Extracted	Motivated	Supervised
Charted	Explained	Negotiated	Supported
Chartered	Explored	Observed	Surveyed
Coached	Expressed	Obtained	Sustained
Collaborated	Facilitated	Offered	Synthesized
Collected	Financed	Operated	Taught
Communicated	Fixed	Organized	Theorized
Compared	Followed	Originated	Trained
Compiled	Formulated	Overcame	Translated
Consulted	Fostered	Oversaw	Upgraded
Contracted	Founded	Participated	Used
Contributed	Gained	Performed	Verified
Converted	Gathered	Planned	
Cooperated	Gave	Prepared	
Correlated	Generated	Presented	
Counseled	Guided	Prioritized	

Final Tips

There are MANY different ways to format resumes. You are not limited in your resume formatting style by the sample resumes contained in this Course Site. A different kind of format may work better for your content. Feel free to customize – but make sure the format you use makes your resume easy to read.

Please see the resume samples and let them guide the construction of your own. Do not copy summary statements or experience descriptions word-for-word, but rather, let your own unique voice shine through.

Summary statements can be tricky to write. Please view the resume e-workshop for a deeper dive on this topic.

[What Recruiters Look at During the 6 Seconds They Spend on Your Resume](#)