



Cornell College

CAREER ENGAGEMENT CENTER

RESUME BASICS

The Resume

A resume is a personal advertisement that tells a potential employer who you are, what you would like to do, and why you are qualified. A resume is not your autobiography; it should not tell your entire life story. It should be an organized summary containing the information about you that an employer must know in order to consider you for employment.

Before You Start Writing Your Resume

Before you actually start writing your resume, there are several factors to take into consideration. Do you know enough about yourself, your strengths and weaknesses, the things that interest you, and the career options to which your education and experiences can lead? If the answer is “no,” then you need to do some personal research. To get started on your research, consider your skills, interests and abilities. What have you learned about yourself from your education, work and life experiences? Consider personal characteristics, the things about yourself that would make you a good employee. Finally, use the career resources around you to determine how the things that you are learning about yourself relate to the career field you want to enter.

Resume Musts

Keep it short and to the point: An employer will spend approximately 45 seconds on the first read through of your resume. Although there are exceptions, most employers prefer a one page resume for new college graduates. Be sure that the information included is pertinent and supports your employment objective.

Make it easy on the eyes: At first glance your resume should appear professional and easy to scan. The layout should flow logically. Balance text and white space. Use a 10-12 point font size and a font style that is easy to read such as Times New Roman.

Use the right paper: You don't want to go through all of the work to develop a terrific resume and then print it on cheap paper. Use 24# resume quality paper in a conservative color such as white or ivory. Purchase matching envelopes and extra pages to use for writing cover letters. Keep it standard size – 8.5 by 11 inches.

No mistakes allowed: Be sure to proofread carefully. Don't rely on spell or grammar check – they don't catch everything. If you send out a resume with errors in it you're telling an employer that you do sloppy work or that this job wasn't important enough for you to double check your work. Have the staff from Career Services review your resume before having it printed and distributed.

Don't use a resume template: A template will not allow you to fully personalize your resume or highlight what you think is important. It will also make your resume look like everyone else's.

A resume should never include personal information such as marital status, age, birth date, health, children, religious affiliation, national origin, sexual preference or ethnicity.

Resumes contain five basic informational categories. There are also optional sections you may want to include depending upon your circumstances and personal preferences. These categories and additional sections include:

Contact Information

This section includes name, complete addresses and phone numbers. You may list both your current and permanent residences, or pick one that will be most helpful to the employer. Include your email address – use your Cornell account since this is the most professional. Avoid abbreviations. If the resume is more than one page in length, then your name should be placed at the top of each page.

Career Objective

The career objective is a specific statement, limited to one or two concise sentences. It should be focused on a job title, industry or type of position (internship/full-time). Considering two or more career options? Separate resumes, each stating one objective, may be necessary. Another possibility is to leave the objective out, however, make certain that a specific objective is clearly stated in your cover letter.

Education

At this point in your career, your education is your most recent, relevant credential and should be listed next. List your degree and anticipated graduation date on one line. Also list the institution, city and state. Include your GPA if you are comfortable doing so. Be sure to differentiate between major and cumulative GPA. Include minors, concentrations or specializations that are unique or support your objective. Academic honors, honorary societies and graduation with distinction should be noted. You need not include attendance at a higher education institution where no degree was earned. Your high school education should not be included on your resume once you have started college.

Course Highlights or Related Coursework

This optional section is important if you do not have a lot of experience in your field. It can also be used to elaborate upon coursework that is unique, point out special knowledge, or identify skill areas not traditionally reflected by a given major.

Experience

This section need not be limited to paid work. It can include internships, volunteer experiences or major class projects if they support your career objective. When listing your experiences, start with the most current one. Your title, name and location of the employer (city and state, but not street address), dates of employment, areas of responsibility and duties performed must be presented succinctly. Employers will read this section looking for information on how your experience relates to their employment needs. As you write this section, think in terms of transferable skills. Use active verbs – past tense for previous experiences and present tense for current ones. Whenever possible use concrete numbers and examples to highlight your accomplishments. Use bullets and short phrases to make this section easier to read.

Interests and Activities

Use this section to describe co-curricular activities like participation in student groups and volunteer work. Note leadership roles or offices held. Include activities that show leadership ability, interpersonal skills or demonstrate initiative.

Special Skills Sections

This optional section might include computer or foreign language skills. You should list any operating systems and software packages that you know how to use. Although computer use may seem obvious to you, an employer may assume you are not computer literate if you skip this section. When listing foreign languages, you might want to include proficiency information because the employer could give you an impromptu fluency test in an interview. International travel is not a skill in and of itself and should only be included if it was substantive and supports the career objective.

Additional Considerations

Religious, political and other organizations and activities can tell an employer a great deal about you. Consider carefully which activities you want to include and what personal data they might reveal.

High school activities are usually out of date for most college students and should not be included unless they were outstanding or directly support your objective.

Military experience should be presented like other work experience with highest rank obtained, responsibilities described and any continuing obligations mentioned.

College expenses financed may explain few outside activities or a lower GPA.

Action Verbs

accelerated	chose	earned	helped
accomplished	coached	edited	hiked
accounted for	collected	elected	housed
acquired	combined	eliminated	hunted
adapted	communicated	employed	identified
added	compared	encouraged	illustrated
addressed	completed	enforced	implemented
adjusted	composed	enlisted	improved
administered	computed	ensured	improvised
advised	conceived	entered	included
aided	conceptualized	established	incorporated
allocated	concluded	estimated	increased
alphabetized	conditioned	evaluated	indexed
analyzed	conducted	examined	indicated
anticipated	consolidated	excelled	influenced
applied	constructed	executed	informed
appointed	consulted	exercised	initiated
appraised	continued	expanded	innovated
approved	contracted	expedited	inspected
arbitrated	controlled	experimented	instructed
arranged	convinced	explained	insured
assembled	coordinated	explored	interpreted
assessed	copied	expressed	interviewed
assisted	corrected	extracted	introduced
assumed	counseled	facilitated	invented
assured	counted	familiarized	investigated
attained	creafted	fashioned	joined
attended	created	figured	judged
audited	critiqued	filed	kept
authored	dealt	financed	labored
authorized	debated	fixed	launched
awarded	decided	followed	learned
balanced	defined	forecast	lectured
began	delegated	foresaw	led
boosted	delivered	formulated	licensed
bought	demonstrated	forwarded	lifted
briefed	designed	fostered	located
brought	determined	found	logged
budgeted	developed	founded	looked
built	devised	gained	made
calculated	diagnosed	gathered	maintained
cataloged	digested	gave	managed
caught	diminished	generated	manipulated
caused	directed	governed	mapped out
chaired	discovered	graded	marketed
changed	documented	greeted	maximized
checked	drafted	grossed	mediated
chopped	dramatized	guided	mentored
chose	drew	handled	met
clarified	drew up	hastened	modeled
classified	dropped	headed	modified
cleared up	drive	heightened	monitored

motivated
moved
negotiated
netted
observed
obtained
offered
opened
operated
organized
originated
overcame
oversaw
paid
painted
participated
perceived
performed
persevered
persuaded
photographed
piloted
pioneered
planned
played
policed
prepared
presented
prevailed
processed
produced
profited
programmed
projected
promoted

proofed
proved
provided
publicized
purchased
qualified
quicken
raised
ran
rated
read
realized
reasoned
received
recognized
recommended
reconciled
recorded
recruited
redesigned
reduced
referred
related
renovated
repaired
reported
represented
rescued
researched
resolved
resulted in
restored
returned
revealed
reviewed

revised
saved
saw
scheduled
screened
scrutinized
secured
sent
separated
served
serviced
set
shaped
shipped
shored up
showed
simplified
smoothed
sold
solved
sought
spearheaded
specified
spoke
started
stopped
straightened
streamlined
studied
submitted
suggested
summarized
supervised
supplied
supported

surveyed
targeted
taught
tested
tightened
took
took over
totaled
toured
traced
trained
transferred
transformed
translated
traveled
treated
troubleshoot
tutored
typed
uncovered
unearthed
unfurled
unified
updated
upgraded
used
utilized
weighed
welcomed
won
worked
wrote