

Center for Academic and Career Success

# **RESUME WRITING**

# WHAT IS A RESUME?

A resume is a summary of your qualifications, education, and experiences related to an opportunity you are seeking. In an average of 30 seconds or less, most reviewers decide whether or not to consider a candidate for an interview. To make the best impression, your resume must be clear, concise, and compelling. The following are general guidelines to help you craft a resume which successfully highlights your qualifications, education, and experiences.

## CONTENTS

RESUME FORMATS	2
Chronological	2
Functional & Combination	2
Federal	2
Curriculum Vitae	2
RESUME CONTENT	3
Identifying Information	3
Summary of Qualifications (optional)	3
Education	4
Experience	4
Skills	5
Other Categories to Consider	5
References	5
RESUME APPEARANCE	5
Formatting Guidelines	5
Resume Templates	6
SAMPLE DOCUMENTS	6
SAMPLE ACTION VERBS	7
SAMPLE FUNCTIONAL HEADINGS	9

# WANT ASSISTANCE WITH YOUR RESUME?

The Center for Academic and Career Success will assist students and alumni at any point in the resume writing process. You DO NOT need a complete resume to come see us!

**Scheduling an appointment:** Academic and Career Advisors are available to meet with students and alumni for resume assistance and critiques, as well as a variety of other academic and career development related topics. To schedule an appointment, either visit us in 120 Garvey Hall or call (202)319-6262 between 9:00 AM and 5:00 PM.

**Handshake:** Make sure to upload your finalized resume version to Handshake. Handshake will use your resume to auto-populate your profile, saving you a lot of valuable time! You can also give employers access to your resume by making your profile and resume viewable to employers. Learn more here: <u>bit.ly/CatholicHandshake</u>.

# **RESUME FORMATS**

For most industries, there is no "standard resume" format. Each resume format offers a different perspective on your experiences. Your goal is to best present your qualifications, so the format you choose will depend on what you want to emphasize to the reader. Included in this handout are the most common formats and <u>links to sample documents</u>.

NOTE: You may discover your industry of interest or an application requires a specific resume format (e.g. federal government, music/performance, etc.). Visit the Center for Academic and Career Success online or <u>schedule an</u> <u>appointment</u> with an advisor to learn more about formats not included in this handout.

### Chronological

The most common format, **chronological resumes organize experience in reverse chronological order** (i.e. most recent first). Chronological resumes are easy to follow as they show career/experience growth and the organizations at which you have gained experience. When in doubt, choose a chronological format because it is most familiar to readers.

Consider a chronological resume if you:

- Are seeking an opportunity in a career field where you have already gained experience
- Want to highlight you most recent experience
- Have little to no previous experience (see the <u>"Limited Experience Resume" example</u>)
- Are applying to graduate, medical, law school, or other post-graduate opportunities

To draw attention to the most relevant experiences you can break your experience section into parts, such as "Relevant Experience" and "Additional Experience". The chronological example included in this document breaks the experiences up in this way. You may also find you have enough of specific type of experience to warrant an additional section. For some ideas of categories to include, see the "<u>Other Categories to Consider</u>" section of this document.

### Functional & Combination

By focusing on three to four areas of transferable skills and achievements, **a functional resume places emphasis on your relevant qualifications**. Qualifications are arranged around these skill/achievement areas rather than around date (see "Same Functional Headings" for heading suggestions). After the qualifications, it is expected that a simple list of experience history is included at the bottom of a functional resume. Functional resumes are highly effective if you have a diverse set of experiences which make qualifications difficult to communicate in the chronological format.

Just as its name suggests, a combination resume combines features of the chronological and functional resume formats. Like the functional format, it places emphasis on your relevant qualifications in a "summary of qualifications" or "professional highlights" section. However, instead of simply listing experience history, you would include a detailed experience section like in a chronological resume. By combining these features, this resume format is extremely useful for those who have an extensive work history and want to immediately emphasize your strongest credentials.

You should consider a functional or combination resume if you:

- Are seeking to change career fields or re-enter the job market after taking time away
- Have an extensive work history and want to highlight specific abilities and transferable skills
- Have a variety of experiences that do not align with the opportunity you are seeking
- Want to take the focus away from your places of employment or gaps in employment

#### Federal

Interested in an opportunity with the Federal Government? You may have noticed some differences in the hiring process, including requiring a federal resume. The federal resume format is different from what you may know as a typical resume, as it requires more details and can run up to five pages for an entry-level position. For more information about how to write a federal resume, the Center for Academic and Career Success suggests students visit either USA Jobs (www.usajobs.gov) or Go Government (gogovernment.org). You can even find a FREE Resume Builder on the USA Jobs website, which will generate a template with your inputted information.

### Curriculum Vitae

A curriculum vitae (CV) is a listing of your education, work history, publications, presentations, awards/recognitions, and other accomplishments related to academia. Rather than selecting the most relevant experiences, **a CV is a comprehensive document of all your professional accomplishments**; therefore, it will be much longer than your resume. In the United States, CVs are primarily used in the academic world; however, a CV may also be useful to graduate students with published work and presentations, as it can serve as a log of your accomplishments. To learn more about the content, formatting, appearance, and uses of a CV, <u>set up an appointment</u> with an advisor.

Tips and guidelines for writing a CV:

- → Include categories that best highlight your experiences; such as, education, research, publications, teaching experience, presentations, volunteer experience, university/professional service, memberships/affiliations, leadership, additional/special trainings, honors/awards/distinctions, etc.
- → Organize your experience sections based on degree of relevance to the opportunity. For example, if you are applying for a position that is primarily teaching focused, give your teaching experience a prominent position.
- → Most disciplines have specific CV format requirements (e.g. APA format), so make sure to research the appropriate format before beginning. We advise consulting with a faculty member in your department.

**NOTE:** Outside of the United States, especially in Europe, CVs are more common in a variety of contexts and often interchangeable with a resume; however, expectations regarding content and formatting may differ by country. GoingGlobal (bit.ly/CACSResources) is an excellent resource to learn more about international resume and CV expectations, and any other questions about working internationally.

# **RESUME CONTENT**

**There is no "standard resume", but there is a "standard goal"** – to best highlight your qualifications relevant to the opportunity you are seeking. This section contains content guidelines to help readers quickly and easily identify your relevant qualifications. Use these guidelines to help craft a resume that best showcases your unique experiences.

### Identifying Information

At the top of your resume create a header that includes the following information:

- → Name ensure your name stands out by making it bold and slightly larger than the rest of your resume.
- → Address/location for privacy purposes, you do not need to include your street address, but at minimum include city, state, and zip code. If you are still in school, you may consider including both your current and permanent addresses/locations.
- → Phone number include the best number to reach you and ensure your voicemail greeting is professional.
- → Email address ensure your included email is professional (e.g. no "soccerluvr17@aol.com").
- → Professional Website URL(s) include the link to your LinkedIn, portfolio, or other professional websites.

Sample Header:

# **Red Cardinal**

Washington, DC, 20064 • 123cardinal@cua.edu • 202-123-4567 • linkedin.com/in/redcardinal

### Summary of Qualifications (optional)

Also known as a professional summary or professional profile, **a summary of qualifications IS NOT an objective statement.** Objective statements are seeker-focused, emphasizing what you are looking for in an opportunity. Conversely, a summary is employer-focused, communicating what you would bring to a role or organization. **The goal of a summary is to make your resume easier to understand,** by providing context that helps readers quickly identify your credentials and focus on your most transferable skills and accomplishments.

Some reasons you may considering adding a summary of qualifications to your resume include if you:

- Have dense or extensive experience that could potentially overwhelm a reader
- Have a range of seemingly unrelated experiences that require context
- Are making a career change and want to focus on transferable skills (see the <u>Career Changer Resume</u> sample)
- Want to feature a core set of relevant skills or accomplishments (see the Combination Resume sample)

If you choose to include a summary of qualifications on your resume you should think of it as your "professional brand". That is, you should include industry specific information, such as **relevant experience**, **amount of relevant experience**, **specialized skills and achievements**, **and additional qualifications setting you apart from other candidates**.

Sample Summary of Qualifications:

Media Studies and Video Production student with significant experience developing, pitching, and producing short-form video using Adobe Premiere Pro and Final Cut Pro, and communication experience in the form of program facilitation, providing campus tours, and administrative responsibilities.

- Program Manager with over 10 years experience in leading teams which support high-profile clients within the Department of Defense (DoD) and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).
- Managed teams of up to 30 personnel (contracts valued up to \$18M) in the areas of acquisition, financial, IT, and program management.
- Hold professional credentials in project management (PMP), project risk management (RMP), and an active Top Secret security clearance.

### Education

In reverse chronological order, list all institutions from which you have earned a degree. Beyond your sophomore year, you typically do not include your high school, unless you were involved in an experience relevant to the opportunity you are seeking. Education should follow your identifying information (or if you choose to include it, your Summary of Qualifications), unless you graduated several years ago or have experience demonstrating stronger qualifications.

For each institution listed include the following:

- → Name and location of the institution
- → Type of degree(s) and year earned always write out your degree (e.g. Bachelor of Arts, not B.A.)
- → Major and any minors, concentrations, certificate programs, etc.

You may also consider including these optional items:

- → Cumulative GPA and/or major GPA
- → Relevant courses list course titles, not numbers
- → Scholarships, honors, awards, and/or honor societies
- → Study abroad
- → Projects and/or thesis or dissertation topic, clinical or field experience
- → Special training programs, certifications, and/or licensures

NOTE: You may consider including these optional items in different sections. For example, if projects are among your most relevant experiences, you may include them in your experience section or separate "Course Projects" category.

#### Sample Education:

**The Catholic University of America - Washington, DC** Bachelor of Arts in English, Media Studies Minor - May 20xx GPA: 3.85 (University Honors Program, Dean's List 6 semesters) Study Abroad: CUA in Rome - Honors Program, Fall 20xx Relevant Coursework: Introduction to Journalism, Media and Rhetoric, Argumentative Writing

### Experience

Use this section to summarize experiences that best highlight your skills and accomplishments related to the opportunity you are seeking. A common misconception is an experience section is only for work experience (e.g. jobs or internships). You can actually include much more, including but not limited to:

- Full-time and part-time work
- Paid and unpaid internships
- Military Service
- Student involvement and leaderships

- Volunteer and service work
- Course projects
- Practicum and clinical experiences

For each experience you choose for your resume, create a header that includes the following information:

- → Your position title (e.g. Marketing Intern, Vice President, Varsity Athlete)
- → Name of the organization
- → Location of the organization (i.e. city, state or city, country if abroad)
- → Dates you participated (e.g. August 20xx-Present, Aug.-Dec. 20xx, Fall 20xx, Summers 20xx-20xx)

Following the header, **include concise statements (not full sentences)**, **typically in bullet point format, summarizing and highlighting the skills and accomplishments you demonstrated in the position.** When writing your bullet points, keep the following in mind:

→ Bullet points should tell a mini-story and are more effective when written as accomplishment statements in the Situation-Action-Result (S-A-R) format. This format helps a reader understands *in detail* what you did, why you did it, and what happened as a result of your actions. See our <u>S-A-R Method Worksheet</u> for more.

- → Begin each bullet point with a strong action verb in the correct tense, that is use the present-tense if you are currently in the position (e.g. Create) and if you have finished the experience, use the past-tense (e.g. Created). This document contains a list of sample action verbs to help you get started and diversify your verb use.
- → Quantify your results whenever possible to provide a full scope of what you did/do and the impact you had/have. In the first example below the writer made sure to highlight how many were in attendance and provided a percentage increase.

NOTE: Sometimes you cannot quantify your results, but can **illustrate the impact with a qualitative impact**. In the third example the writer emphasized how what they did built the sense of community.

**To draw attention to the most relevant experiences, you may consider breaking your experience into multiple sections.** Often this is done by sorting experiences into "Relevant Experience" and "Additional Experience" sections. You may also find you have enough of a type of experience to warrant more specific categories (e.g. "Leadership Experience" or "Marketing Experience"). For ideas of categories to include, see the "Other Categories to Consider" section below, or you use functional headers (see list of sample functional headers) to categorize your experiences.

Sample Experience:

#### Cardinal Technology, Communication and Marketing Intern

Washington, DC, May 20xx – August 20xx

- Researched and wrote posts for the Cardinal Tech Magazine, blog, website, and other special projects to highlight recent events and provide updates on initiatives
- Managed social media campaigns, creating visual and written content for Facebook and Twitter which consistently resulted in over 300 likes for each post
- Conducted photo research for magazine and website, including archiving 3 years' worth of used photos
- Collaborated with 3 staff members to streamline and track digital content publication by developing editorial calendars for the magazine, website, e-newsletter and press releases

### Skills

By including a separate skill sections, you can ensure your specialized skills stand out to readers. List any relevant skills and your level of expertise. You may also choose to create sub-headings such as "Language Skills" or "Technical Skills". The following are skills you may consider including:

- Language skills ensure you list your level of expertise (i.e. basic, intermediate, advanced, or fluent)
- Computer/technical skills any software and/or programs you've worked with (e.g. databases, programming languages, social media analytics, video/photography editing programs, graphic design programs, etc.)
- Specialized skills any skills you have honed professionally or academically (e.g. through a training program), such as training and facilitation, conflict mediation, etc.

### Other Categories to Consider

To best highlight your qualifications and experiences, consider using one or more of the categories below in addition to or in the place of the sections already talked about in this document. When deciding if you should use a category, consider if you have enough experience under the category to warrant its own section. Categories you may consider, include but are not limited to:

- Student Activities
- Community Service
  - Campus Involvement
- Leadership Experience
- Honors & Awards
- Course Projects
- Presentations
- Research

- Publications
  - Certifications/Licenses
  - Professional Memberships

### References

Including references or "references available upon request" on your resume wastes valuable space and therefore should not appear on your resume . Rather, **create a separate page with the same header and formatting as your resume** which you can provide if asked. Typically you will be asked for 3-4 references for which you should include their full name, title, relation to you, and contact information (phone number, email address, and mailing address). **Always ask permission before including individuals as your reference.** See the <u>sample documents section</u> for an example.

### Formatting Guidelines

When formatting your resume, keep in mind less is generally more. Your goal is to effectively communicate your qualifications, not to include as many different fonts, font sizes, graphics, or formatting styles as possible. Here are some guidelines to ensure your qualifications, not the formatting, stand out.

- → Choose a commonly used font (e.g. Times New Roman, Garamond, Arial, Calibri, Helvetica, or Veranda) at 10-12 points in size (except your name, which should be bigger, typically 18-24 points in size).
- → If you are an undergraduate student or recent grad, keep it to one page. If you have several years of experience, additional pages are acceptable, but ensure you fill the entirety of added pages. There are exceptions to this guideline (e.g. Federal resumes or specific industries), which you can come speak to an advisor about.
- → Format your resume consistently to ensure your resume will look clean and uniform and to make it easier for the reader to locate information.

#### Some specific things to pay attention to include:

- Are all the section headers formatted the same?
- Is the spacing between sections the same? Between items within the sections?
- Are the dates all listed in the same format? Are they aligned on the page the same?
- Is the organization name and location, your position title, and the dates consistently ordered and formatted for all your chosen experiences?
- Do all your bullets either end with periods or without periods? Are they all indented the same?
- → Use white space advantageously Aim for a healthy balance between used and unused space on your resume. While you should ensure you fill the entire page, keep in mind a crammed resume is difficult to read and may be a turn-off to the reader. By adjusting your font choice and size, adding space between headers, and changing your margins, you can craft both a full and easy to read resume.

#### NOTE: Margins should be no bigger than 0.75 inches and no smaller than 0.5 inches.

→ When digitally submitting/uploading/emailing your resume, always submit a PDF version. This ensure compatibility across systems, meaning your formatting will not appear differently on the reader's computer if they are using a different word processing system or update year.

#### NOTE: always submit a PDF with a professional file name (e.g. RedCardinal\_Resume.pdf).

→ When printing your resume on paper, it is preferable that you print on resume paper. If resume paper is not possible, stick to traditional white, off-white, or ivory. You should also print all other documents (e.g. references or a cover letter) on the same paper.

#### **Resume Templates**

Using a resume template is tempting. Templates require little time and effort, but in the end they can cause a lot more time and trouble. Bottom line, your experiences are unique and no standard template found on the internet is going to accurately represent you. You may find many appealing templates, but when you add space for more experiences or move sections around, you will run into trouble keeping content clean and consistently formatted.

**Do not sell your word processing skills short!** Show off and create your own resume from scratch. It will take time and dedication, but your finished product can be simply updated throughout your academic and professional career. In the end, your hard work will pay off!

A good place to start is looking at the samples on the next page. Identify formats, fonts, and styles you like and work to integrate them into your own personalized resume. **If you need help, <u>schedule an appointment</u> with advisor in the Center for Academic and Career Success.** They have seen and formatted many resumes and can show you some word processing features which can help you personalize your resume and best highlight your experiences.

# SAMPLE DOCUMENTS

Access sample documents using the links below. Use these documents as examples to help you begin visualizing the writing guidelines in this document and various resume formats. These documents are not meant to be templates, but idea generators. Your experiences and qualifications are unique, so in the end, your resume will also be unique.

General Samples:

- Chronological Resume 1
- Chronological Resume 2
- <u>Limited Experience Resume</u> (ideal for freshman and those with limited professional experience)
- <u>Functional Resume</u>
- <u>Combination Resume</u>
- <u>Curriculum Vitae</u>
- Reference Page

Specialized Samples:

- Engineering Resume (limited experience, emphasizing design projects)
- Education Resume
- Nursing Resume 1 (emphasizes clinicals)
- <u>Nursing Resume 2</u> (emphasizes experience)
- Master of Social Work Resume
- <u>Career Changer Resume</u>

Want to see more sample documents? <u>Schedule an appointment!</u> Advisors are available to meet with students and alumni for resume assistance, as well as a variety of other academic and career development related topics.

Want help writing resume bullet points? Try using our <u>S-A-R Method Worksheet</u>.

# SAMPLE ACTION VERBS

Need help describing your experiences or want to strengthen your resume? Try using a variety of action verbs like the ones listed below.

Promoted

**→ Clerical/Administrative** Approved Archived Arranged Catalogued Classified Collected Compiled Documented Executed Generated Implemented Inspected Inventoried Maintained Monitored Operated Ordered Organized Prepared Processed Purchased Recorded Reorganized Retrieved Screened Systematized Tabulated Validated Communication **→** Addressed Advertised Arbitrated Attested Authored Clarified Communicated Composed Corresponded Directed Drafted Edited Formulated Influenced Informed Interpreted Invited Lectured Marketed Mediated Moderated Motivated Negotiated Persuaded Presented

Publicized Reported Responded Solicited Spoke Transcribed Translated Wrote → Creative Acted Adapted Conceived Conceptualized Created Customized Designed Developed Directed Discovered Enhanced Established Fashioned Founded Illustrated Initiated Innovated Instituted Integrated Introduced Invented Modified Originated Performed Redesigned Remodeled Restructured Revitalized Shaped Simplified Transformed → Financial/Analytical Allocated Analyzed Appraised Assessed Audited Billed Balanced Budgeted Calculated Compared

Computed

Conceptualized

Concluded Confirmed Deciphered Devised Distinguished Estimated Evaluated Factored Forecasted Formulated Investigated Isolated Justified Managed Measured Planned Prioritized Projected Rated Reconciled Recommended Researched Sorted Studied Tabulated Validated

→ Leadership/Management Accelerated Accomplished Administered Advanced Appointed Approved Assigned Authorized Built Contracted Consolidated Cultivated Delegated Designated Directed Elicited Encouraged Endorsed Enriched Evaluated Executed Expanded Hired Improved Increased Initiated Instigated Judged

Launched Led Lobbied Managed Motivated Orchestrated Organized Overhauled Oversaw Pioneered Planned Prioritized Produced Provided Recommended Recruited Regulated Reviewed Scheduled Strengthened Supervised Strategized Validated → Research Accumulated Acquired Clarified Collected Compiled Critiqued Diagnosed Documented Evaluated Examined Extracted Extrapolated Gathered Identified Inspected Interpreted Interviewed Investigated

#### Organized Reported Researched Reviewed Studied Summarized Surveyed Synthesized Systematized

#### → Results Based/Problem Solving

Accomplished Achieved Acted Advanced Alleviated Attained

Verified

Augmented Awarded Closed (a deal) Completed Decreased Delivered Demonstrated Earned Eased Eliminated Enlarged Expanded Expedited Extended Finalized Fulfilled Generated Identified Increased Interceded Improved Obtained Produced Recognized Reduced Reinforced Relieved Remedied Resolved Restored Selected Solidified Solved Streamlined Strengthened Transformed

#### → Teaching/Helping

Advised Assessed Assisted Clarified Coached Coordinated Counseled Critiqued Demonstrated Diagnosed Educated Enabled Encouraged Evaluated Explained Facilitated Guided Influenced Inspired Instructed Mentored Referred

Rehabilitated Taught Trained Tutored

→ Teamwork Assisted Collaborated Contributed Cooperated Coordinated Participated Partnered Shared

→ Technical Analyzed Assembled Built Calculated Computed Configured Constructed Converted Created Debugged Designed Devised Diagnosed Drafted Engineered Fabricated Inspected Installed Maintained Operated Overhauled Processed Produced Programmed Remodeled Repaired Solved Tested Trained Upgraded Validated Verified

# SAMPLE FUNCTIONAL HEADINGS

Often you can identify essential skill/achievement areas by reading the description of the opportunity you are seeking. If you are having difficulty identifying these areas or need a place to start, here are some sample headings to use to organize your functional resume. NOTE: It is common practice to follow each of these headers with the word "experience" (e.g. "Marketing Experience").

If you have a chronological resume with an extensive and diverse experience section, you may also find it helpful to break up your experiences. Using functional headings, you can organize your experience into categories, similar to if you decided to break your experience up into "relevant experience" and "additional experience".

Accounting Administration Advertisina Architecture Athletic Bookkeeping **Career Development** Communication Computing Child Care Counselina Creativity Culinary **Customer Service** Data Processing Desian Drafting Editina Education Employment Engineering Field Work Finance Fund Raising **Global Development** Graphic Design Group Work

Healthcare Human Resources Human Services Inspecting Instruction International Interviewina Investigation Investment Laboratorv Layout Leadership Management Market Research Marketing Materials Handling Media Productions Medical Service Mentorship Non-Profit Personnel Planning Political/Public Action Presentation Printina Problem Solvina Production

Product Development Program Development **Program Evaluation Program Planning** Promotion Publicity Public Relations Public Policy Public Speaking Purchasing **Real Estate** Research **Resource Development** Retailing Sales Schedulina Social Work Supervision Sustainability Systems and Procedures Teaching Testina Training Volunteer Management Writing Youth Counseling