

WSECU Center for Career Services - Resume Writing Packet

SIX STEPS TO A GREAT RESUME

A resume is a succinct outline of your education, experience, activities, accomplishments and skills as they pertain to your career goals. Effective resumes get noticed because they:

- Emphasize relevant accomplishments and potential contributions
- Focus on the skills and requirements of a specific field or position
- Are concise, well-organized and easy to read

1. Self-evaluate.

- **Assess your skills.** Career development begins with your current skills and interests.
- **Think about your experiences.** These may include education, coursework, jobs, internships, activities, honors, publications, language skills, study abroad experiences and community service.
- **Create a rough outline.** This should cover the past three-to-five years.

2. Do some industry research.

- **Visit job posting sites.** Review job descriptions to uncover industry needs. All employers will be interested in communication and leadership skills.
- **Seek out keywords.** These include nouns and phrases, industry buzzwords or acronyms tied to a field. Often, these are found in job descriptions or employer requirements. If your resume includes industry keywords, it is more likely to be selected. Only list terms you can speak to in an interview.
- **Compare.** Match your qualifications to employer requirements and decide what to highlight.

3. Write your first draft in a Word document.

- **Know the architecture.** View the sections of a resume and guidelines before you start writing.
- **Be concise.** Express your qualifications and accomplishments succinctly. For students and recent graduates, a 1-page resume is recommended. If you have extensive experience, or are applying for a four year institution, you may create a 2-page resume or a CV.
- **Templates.** Refrain from using them. Making changes to a resume template is difficult and can have trouble being scanned by employer systems.
- **Observe the forms.** Do not use first-person pronouns (I, me, my) or articles (a, an, the).
- **Don't get personal.** Your picture, age, gender, religion, political affiliation, ethnicity, marital status, social security number, references or salary expectations/history should not be included.
- **Format professionally.**
 - **Font:** Use an easy-to-read font such as Times New Roman, Arial, Calibri, Cambria or Garamond.
 - **Size:** Stay between 11 pt. and 12 pt. Your name can be larger than 12 pt.
 - **Margins:** Ideal margins are .75" all around, and no smaller than 0.5".

4. Create multiple versions (optional).

Multiple resume versions may be needed for various industries or positions. By leveraging industry research, you can develop tailored resumes that emphasize relevant skills pertaining to any number of fields. You will also need to create formatted and non-formatted (text) versions for various modes of distribution.

5. Edit, proofread and critique.

- **Create hierarchy.** Organize your resume so that the most relevant information appears closer to the top.
- **Review for content.** Be sure that you have effectively conveyed the right skills, abilities, or accomplishments.
- **Proofread.** Spelling, capitalization or punctuation errors are 100% unacceptable.
- **Find readers.** Have your resume critiqued by a career adviser and, if possible, others within the field.

6. Save in multiple formats.

- **Create a PDF.** Convert your Word document version into a PDF to retain the original formatting when sending as an attachment. Save as yourname.pdf.
- **Format in text.** Use Notepad or another text-editing program to convert your Word document to a non-formatted version suitable for copying and pasting into online applications or the body of an email. Save as yourname.txt.

WSECU Center for Career Services
Center for Student Success
Building 22, Suite 250
360.596.5567

Content of a Resume

Heading

- Contact information to allow employers to make contact
- Include, name (16-18 pt. font), permanent and/or current address, professional or student email (remove hyperlink), and telephone number with professional voicemail message.
- It is recommended to use your "Resume Heading" like stationary on all of your job application documents (i.e. resume, cover letter, or writing sample) to create a professional appearance.

Objective

- An one-sentence statement that focuses your resume and signals to potential employers your job interests at their organization
- Objectives are tailored to the job description and should include: the title of the position, name of the company, and any knowledge or specialized interests or skills that you have to distinguish yourself.

Education

- List any education institutions that awarded you a degree beyond high school
- Important information to include: Name of institution and location, graduation date (do not indicate expected/anticipated), official name of Degree and major (e.g., *Associate in Arts in Criminal Justice*), overall GPA and/or major GPA and scale, if 3.5/4.0 or higher

Summary of Skills

- You may substitute with one of the following headers: Professional Profile, Summary of Qualifications, or Highlights. Use this opportunity to customize your resume to highlight your skills that are most relevant to each position and future employer.
- Before you customize this section for the position, begin with a list of statements that summarize your skills and experiences relevant to your long term career goals. To do this, review the skill statements for your career field on ONET: <http://www.onetonline.org/> (*opens new tab*).
- Create a list of 5-7 bullet skill statements that show a clear relationship between the skills you have and the skills requested by the future employer. The statements should summarize how your candidacy meets the needs of the position and future employer.
- Use the qualifications and requirements on the employer's job description to customize this section of the resume to incorporate your skills or each position by to write these statements.
- This is an example of a Summary of Skills section for a student who is completing his/her clinical rotations and pursuing a career in nursing:

Experience

- Highlight employment, volunteer, military, and school experiences that are related to your desired objective or the job description.
- Breakdown each position into position held, company or organization name, start and finish dates and location. Emphasize the relevant skills, specific accomplishments and/or contributions
- Create bulleted statements that start with an action verb to highlight a transferable skill or task. Use numbers, dollar amounts, or percentages, if appropriate.
- Infuse key words listed in the job description into your bulleted statements to tailor your resume.

Additional Sections

- Optional sections based on your background that demonstrate relevant job related skills (e.g., leadership, organizational, or budget, management) or show that you are well-rounded (e.g., community service or student clubs/organizations)
 - Study Abroad
 - Certifications or Licensure
 - Honors or Awards
 - Leadership Experiences
 - Activities or Co-curriculars
 - Community Service or Volunteer Experience
 - Skills
 - Professional Affiliations
 - Notable class projects
 - Research, Teaching, Publications
 - Presentations