

Writing a Resume

Objectives

1. State the purpose of a resume
2. Describe the design, length, and format of typical and alternative resumes
3. Distinguish between a chronological and a functional resume format
4. Describe the six basic categories of information on a resume
5. Review four sample resumes
6. Write a quality draft of your resume for critique by others

Purpose of a Resume

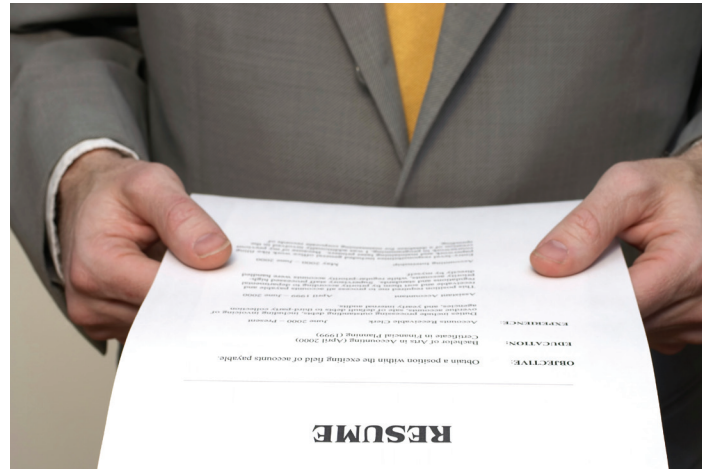
The resume documents one's qualifications for a position. It is a marketing tool and should be unique in both content and format to highlight facts about an individual as they relate to a job or position. A resume is a summary of one's personal, educational, and work experiential qualifications. Resumes can be used by candidates applying for work, graduate schools, or scholarships/fellowships. This guide will focus on the resume primarily for a job search situation.

Style of a Resume

Design

Resumes follow several formats as there is not one correct design, but certain elements of the resume have become standard. The following descriptions are intended to help you create a resume that will serve and represent your individual needs and qualifications.

A resume must present a positive image. Keep in mind that while a resume is an essential tool in your job search, it is not meant as a substitute for the interview (it usually precedes the interview). The resume is a summary, so you can use incomplete sentences to describe your job duties and accomplishments. Some people feel that the resume should be action-oriented and reflect a more assertive, confident job seeker. Others are more comfortable with a neutral tone demonstrating qualifications and experience without much focus on assertiveness or salesmanship. Ultimately, the tone and content of your resume is based on information regarding your career field and prospective employer.



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Length

How long your resume can be depends on the purpose for which you are using it. In the private, non-profit, and government sectors the traditional resume length is one page. Multi-page resumes may be appropriate when applying to graduate school programs, scholarships, or more academically-oriented positions.

If you are an active and involved student, keep in mind the maxim "quality over quantity" and select only those experiences which strongly support your candidacy for a particular position. It may be helpful to keep a multi-page master resume which documents all of your experiences and then save different, one-page versions of your resume targeted at particular positions.

Format

The format should attract attention and create interest. Choose appropriate categories for your information and order them from most to least relevant to your objective. Use capital letters, underlining, bold face, indentations, and white space to emphasize important information. Once you've selected a format, be consistent within categories. The resume should be easy to follow and pleasing to the eye. Two situations that may require your resume in an alternate format include Internet resume posting and resume scanning systems.

Alternative Resume Styles

Resumes for posting on the Internet

A common job-hunting practice involves posting resumes on the Internet. This may or may not increase your chances of securing an interview. There are a few recommendations to consider before posting your resume.

- No line of text should be longer than 65 characters, including spaces.
- Pay close attention to your choice of words throughout your resume. Employers searching for online resumes typically use keyword search programs to find resumes of interest. If your resume does not include these words, it may not be retrieved during the search process. To select keywords, consider specific skills and qualifications necessary for success in the field of interest.
- Keep in mind that the information you place in your resume will be available to anyone who wants to see it, so avoid confidential information, such as your address and telephone number.

Scannable Resumes

Some employers use scanning technology to handle the large number of resumes they receive. This is done by a system that scans the resume into computer memory. Employers can then search the resume for skills that match those necessary for a particular job.

When constructing a scannable resume, remember the following tips:

- Specify skills you have obtained using verbs. For example, "trained new employees."

- Use lots of white space to aid the computer in recognizing the information.
- Avoid using underlining, bold facing, varied fonts, or other fancy formatting options. These can result in misread information.
- Do not fold or staple a resume that will be scanned. If you are concerned about whether a particular employer scans resumes, you may want to call in advance to check.

For more information on electronic and scannable resumes, see resources in the Career Library.

The Two Basic Formats

The two basic approaches to organizing information on a resume are chronological (or general) and functional.

Chronological or General

A chronological resume lists, describes, and dates the details of each job and educational experience separately. Listings under each category are placed in reverse chronological order, starting with the most recent schooling or job. This approach is most appropriate if you have extensive uninterrupted work experience in the area in which you seek employment. It is also the most common approach.

Functional

This resume format consists of selections from your total experience of only those parts which relate to the job you seek. Under each category, list qualifications, skills, experiences, etc., that logically support your job objective in functional areas such as management, research, writing, teaching, sales, human relations, etc. This approach is more difficult to construct, but may be more effective in documenting the skills or functions you want to perform, especially if your background is varied. Functional resumes are generally not appropriate for traditional college students.

The Six Categories of Information

Certain elements of a resume have become standard. The following categories are commonly found on resumes.

1. Identification

Your name, full address, and phone number(s) with the area code should be the first item on your resume. If you are at a temporary address, you can include this in addition to (or in place of) your

permanent address. It has become common practice to include your e-mail address, but make sure it is professional in nature, and doesn't contain cutesy words, slang, or profanity. It is also important to choose an email address that you check regularly.

2. Professional Objective (optional)

This should be your career objective stated as concisely as possible. It should be broad enough to cover any suitable employment and to interest a wide array of employers, yet be specific enough to give an element of sound career direction to your resume. If you are planning to seek employment in several different areas where the same objective would not be appropriate, consider writing a resume for each area. Remember to state clearly whether you are looking for an internship, full-, or part-time job.

An alternative is to omit this category from your resume and relay the information in a cover letter.

A potential problem with this approach occurs when cover letters and resumes get separated, creating a void when it comes to comments about your job interests and objectives.

Statements concerning your objectives should be continually reinforced and supported through the other elements of your resume. You can focus on any of the following:

- position title
- career area
- organization type
- specific population
- skills you wish to use

For more information, visit the Career Center Library.

3. Education

The highest level achieved (or the degree you are currently seeking) should come first and continue backward with other schools attended, degrees earned, or training received. It is not necessary to include high school. However, if some items in your high school background show high honors or generally reinforce the career objective, then that data should be included. List the names of schools, dates attended or graduation date, degrees earned, and major/minor subjects.

You may also include honors, awards, Dean's list, grade point average, and other items which may enhance this section of your resume. The possibilities for expansion in this category are unlimited.

Consider listing courses you have taken, as well as research projects and other efforts that demonstrate your abilities.

If you have a long list of such activities, it might be wise to select only the most important. You can omit the others or include them in separate categories such as "Honors/Awards" or "Activities." Including all of these items under the Education heading might begin to dilute the image of the degree and make your resume look cluttered and confused.

4. Experience

This category typically reflects your contact with specific employers. It is permissible to include cooperative education, internships, volunteer work, summer jobs, special projects, or military experience under this category. If you have several experiences very much related to your objective or target audience, you may wish to list those under "Related Experience" and your other experiences under "Other or Additional Experience."

List position titles, names of organizations, locations (city and state), dates, and duties. Present this in a format where the most relevant comes first. Two different examples for presenting the same information follow:

Holiday Inn: Tallahassee, FL
Desk Clerk, 1/11 - Present

Desk Clerk - Holiday Inn, Tallahassee, FL
January 2011 - present

Employers are mainly interested in the degree of responsibility you held and the skills you demonstrated. Outline your duties in a way that accentuates your job experience and at the same time relates it to your professional objective. For example:

Crew Member, McDonald's
Tallahassee, FL, 1/11 to present

- Managed operations and supervised 19 co-workers
- Compiled inventory data and maintained stock
- Assisted in hiring and training new employees

Use the *Positive Action Word List* and *Job Duties Exercise* included in this guide to help you identify and document skills and accomplishments from your past experiences. Remember, any experience in the world of work may be capable of demonstrating your dependability, resourcefulness, and responsibility, including internships, volunteer experience, leadership positions, class projects, part-time work, etc. Choose items that show your qualifications and experience to your best advantage.

5. Personal (optional)

Personal information about age, gender, marital status, and ethnicity is typically not included on a resume. In fact, many employers become uncomfortable when receiving this information out of fear they may violate federal equal opportunity laws. It is important to note that this information may be necessary when using a resume to apply for a position abroad. Other information, such as hobbies and interests, should only be included if it is relevant to the position to which you are applying. For example, a person applying for a sales position with Nike might list relevant sporting activities.

6. References

Choose one of the following:

- Leave off the statement referring to references, as it is assumed you will provide them.
- “References available upon request.”

To document your references, list the names, titles, addresses, telephone numbers, and e-mail addresses of three to five people on a separate page. Include your contact information on this page as well in the event that your resume and reference list are separated. Be sure these individuals can speak about your experience or knowledge of a specific subject matter. Remember to ask their permission before listing them as a reference, and make sure to provide your references with a copy of your resume. Provide this list to the employer only when requested. Your Career Portfolio is a good place to store your references.

FSU students and alumni seeking admission into graduate or professional school, or those applying to teaching, nursing, social work, library science, or higher education positions have the option of utilizing a “Credentials Files Service”. This service is a fee based file, available via the FSU Career Center for their references. For more information, please contact the Career Center at 850.644.6431 or visit www.career.fsu.edu/credentials/.

Other Categories: The above categories are a foundation of a resume, but there are many other options. Some possibilities include:

- Activities
- Background
- Certifications
- Computer Skills
- Honors/Awards
- Interests

- Languages
- Licenses
- Memberships
- Professional Activities
- Publications/Presentations
- Recitals/Art Shows
- Special Skills
- Workshops/Seminars

If you have information which you feel is important, but doesn't fit any of the above categories, create sections to encompass this information and/or the requirements of specific job targets. You also may have categories unique to your field of study, e.g., clinical nursing experience. The key is having categories that best fit the position(s) you are seeking.

Four Sample Resumes

At the end of this guide are four sample resumes. *These are only intended as examples. Feel free to create a format that fits your own style and career goals.* Please note that the font size of the samples has been reduced for inclusion in this guide. They are intended to help you pull together the information in the preceding sections and to give you some idea of what finished resumes can look like. Be aware of the variety in layout style, writing techniques, format, etc. Additional sample resumes are available in two locations where a career advisor may also be available to help you.

- The Career Center Library, DSC 1200
- The College of Engineering, B226

Pick and choose what is useful and consistent with your individual needs and objectives and create your own original resume. Remember, the focus is on your needs, objectives, and qualifications.

Resume Builder

If you need help getting started, SeminoleLink has a new feature called “Resume Builder”. To start the process, click on the “Create a Resume” button located under the “Shortcuts” tab in SeminoleLink.

Resume Builder allows students and alumni to create a resume using a variety of formats and styles. Resume Builder should be used as a starting point, and individuals are encouraged to bring in their resume drafts to the Career Center for further revisions.

Hints and Suggestions

Before you begin the task of actually writing your rough draft, thoroughly familiarize yourself the *Do's and Don'ts of Resume Writing* included in this guide. By following these guidelines, you will increase the probability of producing a readable and straightforward account of your unique qualifications. While most sources agree that a resume composed along these lines is more competitive and successful, remember, the focus is on your needs and objectives. Consider which hints will help you write the resume most appropriate for your job objective.

The Resume Critique

Have several people critique your best draft. Next, bring your revised draft to the Career Center and a career advisor will be glad to review it with you.

Resume Printing

Given the accessibility of computer technology, most individuals produce their resume using some form of word processing software. However, be sure not to use the templates or wizards in these software packages. Using these tools often results in a generic resume which looks too much like the resumes of other people. Plus, it can be difficult to edit and revise resumes created by these tools. Thus, you might need to recreate your resume from scratch. Once you have completed your resume, copies can be created using a high quality laser printer.

If you want a certain type of paper to print your original on, specialty papers are sold at most office supply stores and copy centers. Avoid textured or marbled paper as it does not scan or copy well.

Remember, when you save your file on a USB drive or hard drive you can easily update it, but be sure to keep a backup of this file in a safe place so you don't lose your resume. Both the online Career Portfolio and SeminoleLink at www.career.fsu.edu are great places to upload your resume for safe keeping.

Students can access a variety of computer labs on campus to create and print their resume.

For information on campus computer labs visit www.its.fsu.edu/Computing/Computer-Labs/.

Students and alumni can also use the Career Center's computer lab located in 1200 DSC.

Do's and Don'ts of Resume Writing

Do

- **Be brief, clear, and concise.** A resume that is not confusing, easily readable, and well-organized is more competitive.
- **Be consistent.** Experiment with the arrangement of headlines, captions, indentations, blocks of text, and the use of capitalization and underscoring. Then choose a layout which is readable and appealing to the eye and stick with it.
- **Be positive.** Start statements or phrases with verbs denoting positive actions (see the *Positive-Action Word List* for ideas). Avoid the use of the personal pronoun "I." Omit negative statements.
- **Be honest.** Included information should accurately represent you to employers.
- **Be careful.** Double-check for typos and mistakes in grammar, spelling, or punctuation. Use a dictionary. When in doubt, check it out. Errors in detail suggest careless workmanship.
- **Be neat.** Use lots of white space when creating your resume to avoid the cluttered look. Make sure you get a clear, unmarred copy. Print copies of your resume using a quality laser printer.
- **Get your resume critiqued!**

Don't

- State salary requirements. If asked, research the value of the position and your skills and give a range of mid to high.
- Give reasons for quitting previous jobs.
- Limit geographical considerations unless absolutely necessary.
- Expound on philosophy or values.
- Offer any negative information.
- Use standard resume templates found in popular computer software or books

Positive Action Word List

accomplish	delegate	interpret	publish
account	demonstrate	interview	purchase
achieve	decrease	invent	qualify
act	decide	investigate	raise
administer	design	judge	read
advertise	determine	landscape	recommend
advise	develop	lead	recruit
analyze	devise	learn	repair
appraise	diagnose	listen	report
appeal	direct	make	research
arrange	discover	manage	review
assemble	document	manufacture	schedule
assign	draft	market	select
assist	draw	measure	sell
attend	edit	meet	serve
audit	engineer	mobilize	solve
authorize	entertain	model	speak
budget	establish	motivate	staff
build	estimate	negotiate	start
calculate	evaluate	operate	structure
catalogue	exercise	order	submit
chart	exhibit	originate	supervise
clarify	experiment	organize	supply
collect	explain	paint	synthesize
communicate	facilitate	perform	talk
compete	formulate	persuade	teach
complete	furnish	photograph	test
compile	guide	plan	train
compose	handle	play	translate
conduct	hire	predict	travel
contribute	implement	prepare	tutor
control	improve	present	type
coordinate	increase	preside	understand
correct	influence	produce	verify
counsel	initiate	program	write
create	inspect	promote	
dance	install	propose	
	instruct	provide	

Job Duties Exercise

Sometimes people have a difficult time describing what they did in a particular job. In the Career Center we often hear, "Oh, I just waited tables." Every position requires skills which are transferable to work after college. Use the following steps to identify these skills and make them relevant to employers.

1. Think about a specific job you held. Picture in your mind what you did on a typical day.
2. Use the *Positive Action Word* list to brainstorm all of the skills you employed during this day. Mark each word that fits the job.
3. Choose three to five of these words that shows you working at your best.
4. For each verb think of the questions "Who?, What?, When? Why? How?" to write a detailed description of the job duty.

These steps can help you create a vivid and accurate picture of a past job. For example:

Rabbit's Restaurant, *Head Server*, Tallahassee, FL

January 2010 - July 2011

- Promoted nightly specials while greeting guests
- Trained 25 new hires in restaurant policy and procedures
- Supervised front-of-house staff when manager was off duty

Now, use this space and the four steps to describe one of your jobs.

Chronological Resume: Example 1

Steve Andrews

123 Ocala Rd #1
Tallahassee, FL 32304
(850) 323-4000
abc251@fsu.edu

Education

Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL 5/11

Master of Accounting in Taxation

Overall GPA: 3.92

Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL 5/10

Bachelor of Science in Accounting

Overall GPA: 4.00, Summa Cum Laude

Experience

FSU College of Business, Tallahassee, FL, Teaching Assistant (ACG 2021) 8/09– Present

- Review course assignments with approximately 50 students
- Assist students in course material by staying after class frequently
- Administer and grade course exams as well as assignments

Leon Co. Commission, District 5, Tallahassee, FL, Campaign Treasurer 6/09 –11/09

- Assisted in fundraising in excess of \$87,000 in campaign contributions
- Managed the campaign account
- Produced financial reports in accordance with Florida election law

State of Florida DEP, Tallahassee, FL, Accountant I 6/08 – 8/08

- Reconciled work order accounts
- Assembled vouchers to pay invoices for various projects
-

ABC Bank, Tallahassee, FL, Accounting Clerk 5/07-8/09 (seasonal)

- Determined institution's fixed assets
- Completed Accounting Department procedures manual
- Handled accounts payable assignments

Honors

FSU Accounting Department – Outstanding Senior 2004-2005

FICPA, Tallahassee Chapter Scholarship

FSU College of Business Achievement Scholarship

FSU Accounting Department – Outstanding Junior 2003-2004

Member of National Society of Collegiate Scholars

Dean's List; 8 consecutive semesters

Activities

Accounting Society, Treasurer, Political clubs—local & school, intramural football

Chronological Resume: Example 2

Natalie Jones

123 Park Avenue North

Tallahassee, FL 32301

Home: 850-575-2000, Cell: 333-290-8000

abcd5518@yahoo.com

Education

Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL, Bachelor of Science, April 2011

Major: Criminology, Minors: Psychology & Sociology

Major GPA: 3.5

Experience

Assistant to Director of Undergraduate Internships, January 2010-Present

Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL

- Collect and analyze reporting data using Web site and SPSS
- Deliver basic advising services to undergraduate students
- Answer phones, open mail, and file documents

Receptionist, September 2008-August 2009

State Attorney's Office-Worthless Check Division, Tallahassee, FL

- Collected and processed fees and receipts
- Processed mail and organizing files

Administrative Assistant, September 2008-August 2008

Thomas Smith Law Offices, Tallahassee, FL

- Created spreadsheets and performed data entry
- Arranged daily appointments and greeted clients

Account Representative, May 2008-August 2008

National Distribution Centers, Orlando, FL

- Acted as the sole account representative for the Florida sales territory
- Kept accurate and current inventory records and account receivable ledger
- Prepared orders and selected individual carriers for distribution

Research Experience

- Florida State University-Center for Excellence Study on School Violence
- Federal Public Defender's Office-United States v. Drayton

Honors

- All American Scholar Award 2009
- Seminole Award Nominee 2009
- Who's Who Among Students in American Universities & Colleges Nominee 2009
- Dean's List-5 semesters

Activities

- Alpha Phi Sigma-National Criminology Honor Society
- Volunteer-Animal Shelter, Kate Sullivan Elementary School

Ariana Franklin

7578 Tree Lane • Atlanta, GA 30318
arifranklin@fsu.edu • (850) 385-1370

Objective

To obtain a position in the financial industry allowing me to utilize my financial and managerial skills to increase the customer base of the organization.

Education

Georgia State University, Atlanta, GA

5/10

Finance GPA 3.6/4.0, Bachelor of Business Administration

Financed 100% of Education

Relevant Coursework

Corporate Finance

International Finance

Financial Institutions

Relevant Experience

Banking

- Serviced business and consumer accounts according to customer financial needs
- Made consumer loans and created lines of credit
- Approved transactions and resolved discrepancies on accounts

Analytical

- Acted as liaison between regional executives and sales staff by tracking, forecasting, and reporting revenue activities
- Analyzed sample of projects to evaluate the quality of current forecasting tools
- Established reports that enabled the sales department to increase efficiency of operations

Employment History

Nations Bank, Atlanta, GA

2/10-Present

Consumer Banker I

Wallace Computer Services, Atlanta, GA

1/08-12/09

Sales Analyst

Honors

- Tracy Oaks Scholarship for Outstanding Leadership
- Dean's List

Skills

- Proficiency in Lotus 1-2-3, Excel, dBaseIV, Microsoft Word and WordPerfect 7.0

Combined Functional & Chronological Resume

DANIEL TAYLOR

1234 Park Ave. Apt. 15, Tallahassee, FL 32303

Home: (850) 555-7000 · Cell: (407) 555-6000

abc1202@fsu.edu

EDUCATION

Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL

Biology, Bachelor of Science

8/11

G.P.A. 3.55, with Honors, Dean's List

HEALTHCARE EXPERIENCE

Healthcare Services, Tallahassee, FL

6/10-Present

Self-Employed

- Initiated my own business working with adults with disabilities
- Rehabilitate clients on a mental, emotional, and physical level
- Develop and incorporate daily routines that utilize physical and mental exercises

Starlight Child Center, Tallahassee, FL

1/09-8/09

Counselor

- Mentored and advised children ages 3-11
- Prepared programs integrating physical and mental activities for youth success

Bobby E. Leach Center, Tallahassee, FL

12/08-12/09

Personal Trainer

- Refined fitness goals and introduced proper technique to over 150 clients
- Motivated and enhanced clients' work-life balance by incorporating physical fitness into their daily routine

MARKETING AND SALES EXPERIENCE

Vector Marketing, Orlando, FL

4/08-8/08

Sales Associate

- Met sales goals successfully for quarter on a constant basis
- Worked sales and marketing functions for CUTCO product

Mail Boxes Etc.—U.P.S., Orlando, FL

8/07-8/08

Sales Associate

- Generated store marketing plans and refined customer service process

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

- **Gretchen Everhart School:** Aide to children with a wide range of mental disabilities
- **International Medical Outreach:** Medical mission trip serving a third-world population
- **Clairbridge Nursing Home:** Program facilitator for elderly
- **Hospital:** Shadowed physicians and assisted with daily routines

ACTIVITIES & HONORS

American Medical Student Association (V.P.)

Golden Key International Honor Society

F.S.U. Career Center Advisory Board

Seminole Torchbearers



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FLORIDA STATE
UNIVERSITY

The
Career Center
linking futures

850.644.6431 • career.fsu.edu

Alternative Format Available.
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