



### Creating an Effective Resume

*There is no one standard format or template for a professional resume, but there are some generally accepted guidelines which will serve as a great starting point for most resumes. At a basic level, your resume is an opportunity to tell a potential employer everything you've done in the past. More than this, it's a chance to tell that employer why your experience matters and how it has directly prepared you for the specific job for which you are applying. This is why it's important to revise your resume every time you apply to a new position. Be sure to thoroughly read the posting for every job to which you apply and be sure to follow any instructions given by the employer. Similarly, try to become familiar with the expectations of your chosen field as different industries may have different preferences for resume format and content.*

#### Know your type:

- The *Chronological* resume is best for people with significant, continuous work experience who have grown professionally within a single field. It can pose problems for new graduates who lack significant work experience.
- The *Functional* resume privileges skill acquisition over job titles and employment history by grouping related skills and abilities in sections with discrete headlines (e.g. Leadership Skills, Communication Skills). It is rarely recommended for students or new graduates.
- The *Combined* resume is generally the best choice for most students and recent graduates. It can emphasize skills and experiences gained in the classroom or through extracurricular activities and volunteer positions while still including a chronological employment history.

#### Formatting Guidelines:

- Use a simple font between 10.5 and 12 pt. Headings may be 14 pt.
- Do not exceed two pages unless requested by the employer.
- For emailed and uploaded resumes, send a .pdf file as it will preserve your formatting.

#### Make the MOST of your competencies:

When detailing your skills and abilities, it pays to be specific. The skills you focus on should be **Measurable, Observable, Selective, and Transferable**. Provide qualitative and quantitative support for the claims you make about yourself, choose only skills that are related to the field in which you are applying, and be sure to consider how skills you acquired during your education can translate to the working world. Describe what you've done, not what you're like. How many clients did you manage? How much money did you raise? How much web traffic did your blog generate?

### Potential Resume Headings

*The following headings are suitable for many resumes. Note that section headings are only guidelines. You may title the sections of your resume slightly differently, and you should only include the sections that apply to your situation.*

#### Header/Contact Information

List your first and last name, your telephone number, and an *appropriate* e-mail address. Also include your LinkedIn URL and links to any other relevant sites such as your e-portfolio or personal website. While a full mailing address has traditionally also been included, it is now considered acceptable to leave this information off the resume.

#### Objective (Optional)

In most cases, including an objective is not necessary and takes up valuable space you could be using to share your skills and communicate your value to the employer. If you do begin your resume with an Objective section, it should be no more than one or two sentences. This section may be valuable when you are not applying to a specific posting but rather wish to submit your resume to an employer for future consideration in which case it would be helpful for them to know what types of opportunities might be of interest (part-time, customer service, etc.).



### ***Profile of Skills/Summary of Qualifications***

In most cases, you should begin your resume with a succinct summary of your most impressive selling points relevant to your field. Be as specific as possible, avoid generalities, and tailor your points to the position and organization to which you apply. Aim for five or six total bullet points. Potential skills areas could include proficiency in specific software, additional languages, research expertise, and communication skills such as delivering presentations or writing reports. You may also include licenses or other certifications in this section if they would be valuable for the position.

### ***Technical Skills***

Depending on the position you are seeking and the range of skills you possess, you may wish to create a separate Technical Skills section in addition to a general Profile of Skills.

### ***Education***

As a full-time student or recent graduate, this section should come near the top. For each degree or diploma you've earned, include its full name (no abbreviations), the institution that granted it, that location's city and province (and country, if not Canada), and a graduation date. Use reverse chronological order – this means that you begin with your current or most recent degree and work backwards. Use bullet points to list your major and/or minor. Consider also including names of related courses if they would help the employer understand the knowledge you have gained during your studies. Your GPA may be helpful if it is particularly strong, but it is not required.

### ***Scholarships and Awards***

If you've won many honours, include only the most appropriate, recent, and impressive; you don't want to bombard a recruiter with a long list of minor awards. Clarify *why* you earned an award when its criteria might not be obvious to a recruiter. Avoid awards based solely on financial need.

### ***Academic Projects***

You don't want to list everything you did in university, but some major academic projects may be relevant to the job for which you are applying. Highlight these projects when they emphasize skills and experiences you're unable to relate through employment or volunteer experience.

### ***Employment Experience***

State your experience in reverse chronological order (starting with your most recent job). Describe your duties using **action words** (verbs) to stress skills used on the job. Avoid personal pronouns ("I") and do not refer to yourself in the third person in this section. Use the appropriate verb tense (past tense for jobs completed in the past.) Use a bulleted format for readability. Standard bullet points are recommended rather than dashes, arrows, or other icons.

### ***Volunteer Experience and Community Involvement***

This section is particularly important for students who lack significant work experience. Use the same format as you did for Employment Experience. Specify which duties you performed and your level of responsibility, accomplishments, and skills gained. Focus on leadership, initiative, and energy (your "star quality").

### ***Activities and Accomplishments***

Include *relevant* professional development courses, additional training certificates, workshops, and conferences, plus affiliations and memberships with/in clubs, societies, and career-related associations.

### ***References***

Unless you are specifically asked to provide references at the time of application, do not include them on your resume. You may indicate that references are available upon request, but this is not necessary. If you are called for an interview, you can expect to be asked for at least three references. (Keep in mind that employers usually prefer references from those who have been in a position to evaluate your work, such as current or former supervisors or professors with whom you have worked closely on a research project.)

## **CAREER DEVELOPMENT & EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING**

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