



Resume Preparation Checklist | Career Services

The purpose of a resume is to introduce your qualifications, education, skills, and experience. It is a formal document that tells your career story by outlining all details in an easily read format. A clearly written and job-focused resume will get you job interviews!

- Resumes are organized into sections that describe your education, work/volunteer experience, and competencies
- It is important to include work-integrated learning opportunities such as clinicals, practicums, field placements, or projects that provided you with real-world and hands-on practice
- Accomplishments and scholarships applicable to the job can also be included

Your resume should be adapted to each position you apply for. An employer needs to see quickly and clearly how your background meets their needs and should not have to guess why you are applying for a position.

- Focus on different aspects of your experience for each job you apply for
- General resumes that are not focused on a clear job target are often not effective and will not lead to an interview
- Your resume should clearly demonstrate how your experience connects with the requirements of the job

The suggestions below can help you create a more effective resume.

After you have a draft, it is recommended that you submit your resume for review and then make an appointment with a Career Advisor to discuss the feedback.

Getting Started

- ☐ Create your own resume in MSWord
 - Avoid using resume templates. Resume templates can be inflexible, and you will not be able to move sections easily
 - Many application systems that employers use to collect resumes will distort the information if a resume has columns, extensive formatting or is built from a downloaded template
- ☐ Choose a job advertisement that you would like to apply for
 - Don't apply for every single job posting you see. Take the time to research the company, look at their website, understand their business, and how your skills will be of benefit
 - In large companies, employers can often see every single resume you have submitted for current or past positions!

- ☐ Assess how the job is related to your experience and what you are studying
 - Identify 3-5 top requirements of the job and think about how your skills and experience match
 - You do not need to meet 'all' requirements of a job posting to apply, but there should be a connection to your education or experience
- ☐ Review and follow the directions in the posting regarding how to apply for the position
 - Some companies may have very specific instructions for the content they want to see in your resume and/or how to submit it

Formatting the Resume

Formatting is the overall structure of your documents and is an important step in creating a professional, organized, and readable resume. Use the following checklist to ensure that your resume is properly formatted:

Formatting Checklist for your Resume

CONTACT INFORMATION

- ☐ Type in and center your contact information at the top of your resume. Do NOT use a 'header' as these are often not read by job application software

Mary (Marianne) Kaur

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Mary.smith@gmail.com

403-444-4444

- ☐ List your full name on the top line of the resume
- ☐ Include city and province; street/postal code is optional
- ☐ Include a current phone number
 - Ensure that you have a clear, professional voice mail greeting message in case you cannot answer when they call.
- ☐ Use an email address that is professional
 - Ideally list your first name, last name@yyy.com)
- ☐ Include a link to your LinkedIn profile
 - Ensure your profile is up to date and current
- ☐ Do NOT include pictures of yourself and/or distracting or unnecessary graphics; remember your resume is not the same as a LinkedIn profile
- ☐ Do NOT include personal information (age, weight, children, marital status, social insurance number etc.)

FONT AND LENGTH

- ☐ Kept resume to one to two pages in length
- ☐ Emphasize major headings using capital letters, underlining, or bold
 - Use bold, italics, underlining, and indenting to make the document easier to read
- ☐ Use simple bullets. Avoid checkmarks, hollow squares, and arrows
- ☐ List dates in a consistent format throughout the resume. Use “right-justified” to align all dates
- ☐ Use easy-to-read fonts such as Arial Narrow, Verdana, Garamond, Goudy, Georgia, Calibri.
 - Choose one font for the entire resume/cover letter package
- ☐ Keep font sizes 11, or 12 pt. for text and 14, or 16 pt. for headings and name
- ☐ Set margins to approximately 1 inch on all sides

Resume Content Checklist

Resume content is the information you write in your resume that describes your skills, abilities, and other important facts that will help an employer understand how you would be a good fit for the position. Use the following resume content checklist to guide you:

Profile/ Highlights Section

- ☐ Create a profile or highlights section to summarize the key accomplishments and experience you have relevant to the job
- ☐ Write 3-5 bullets with descriptive sentences to help an employer quickly determine your connection to the job
 - Most employers will scan a resume in less than 10 seconds! The beginning of your resume should encourage them to want to keep reading the rest of your resume
- ☐ Avoid using personal pronouns such as “I, me, or my” when writing the profile/highlights section
- ☐ Sample statements to include in a highlights section:
 - *More than 3 years of experience working with children in a childcare setting*
 - *Completed 280 hours of practicum in a school with children ages 5-12*
 - *Experienced in creating word documents, reports, letters, and presentations using MS Office Word and PowerPoint*
 - *Over 5 years of customer service experience in various retail and restaurant settings*

Education

- ☐ List all credentials using the formal name
 - *Hospital Unit Clerk Certificate*
 - *Legal Assistant Diploma*
- ☐ List the name of the institution that granted the certificate, diploma, or degree, along with the city, province, and country
- ☐ Include courses relevant to the job you are applying for
- ☐ Write full course names; do NOT use course numbers
 - Do not list every course you have ever taken
- ☐ Include the month and year of graduation or expected graduation date
- ☐ Include GPA (Grade Point Average) only if requested by the employer in the application
- ☐ List scholarships, awards, and grants achieved
- ☐ Include Practicum/Clinical, Co-op, Field Placement or Work Experience after any course title that has a practicum or work experience associated with it

Related or Relevant Experience

- ☐ Include relevant paid work and unpaid work experience related to the job
- ☐ List the position title, company name, city, province, and dates of employment
- ☐ Begin each bullet point with an action verb (e.g., created, developed) and focus descriptions on accomplishments and outcomes
 - Use quantifiable and measurable descriptions when possible (e.g., increased sales by 30%)
- ☐ List any relevant technical skills and indicated skill level
- ☐ Include language skills
- ☐ Sample descriptive sentences to include in the experience section:
 - *Created 40+ vendor invoices per week using Quickbooks accounting software*
 - *Handled all day-to-day front reception desk tasks, including database management of 500+ customer files*
 - *Supported Executive Team of four, managed calendars, booked meetings, travel arrangements, and tracked expense budgets*
 - *Entrusted as Key Holder, opened and closed store on weekends*
 - *Led a high-performance team of ice-cream scoopers resulting in a 600+ Google reviews with a 4.5/5 rating*

Community Involvement/Volunteer Experience:

- ☐ Include the position title, company name, city, province, and dates of employment.
 - Begin each volunteer description with an action verb (e.g., created, developed)
 - Focus descriptions on accomplishments
 - Quantified and qualified descriptions when possible (e.g., Helped fundraise \$1000 for BVC Student Leaders Club)

Interests

- ☐ Include interests or hobbies that might set you apart from other applicants
 - *Enjoy researching other culture's food and trying out recipes to challenge my cooking skills*
 - *Seeking out books on various topics that add to my knowledge of history*
- ☐ Avoid listing personal interests that could be misunderstood by some employers
 - *Enjoy hours of playing video games online and watching you-tube videos*
- ☐ Do NOT include organization names that reveal political affiliation, religious preference, racial/ethnic background, etc. (discuss with a career advisor if not certain)

Additional Categories

- ☐ Use additional categories if relevant to the job you are seeking.
- ☐ Examples of additional categories include but are not limited to:
 - Research, Publications, Professional Associations/Affiliations
 - Certifications, Licenses, Military Service
 - Presentations, Class Projects
 - Achievements and Awards, Scholarships

References

- ☐ Do NOT include names and contact information for references on your resume
- ☐ List references on a separate page that you bring to the job interview

Getting Professional Feedback

- ☐ Proofread and spell check resume to make sure it is free of spelling and grammatical errors
- ☐ Review tip sheets provided by Career Services: Resume Samples and How to Write Descriptive Sentences
- ☐ Submit a resume critique by emailing careerservices@bowvalleycollege.ca to get feedback on your first draft
- ☐ Make an appointment with a Career Advisor to discuss feedback. A Career Advisor will review your resume and give you more tips and tricks to make certain that you are on the right path!

For more support with your career development, please contact the Career Services team to book an appointment.

- ☐ Email: careerservices@bowvalleycollege.ca
- ☐ Phone: (403) 410-1498