Resume How-To Guide

What is a resume?

A resume is a formal document that briefly describes your professional and academic experiences, educational background, and qualifications for the purpose of obtaining internships or jobs. It is a concise, organized, truthful, and specific record that succinctly lists your experiences. It is a living document, meaning that it will change and grow as you move through your career and you should update it periodically.

How will I use my resume?

Your resume is a required document for nearly all internship and job applications. In addition to customizing or targeting your resume for each application, you may choose to post your resume to Handshake and other career platforms, like LinkedIn, and/or share it with someone as part of a professional introduction. Posting your resume to a platform like Handshake makes you more visible to potential employers and recruiters as they may browse profiles when seeking talent or in trying to learn more about you during an application process. Additionally, you will use the content from your resume to complete your profile on Handshake. Students with completed Handshake profiles are five times more likely to be contacted by a recruiter!

What's the difference between a resume and a CV?

In the United States, a resume and a CV are two different kinds of professional documents. A resume highlights professional and academic experiences that are relevant to specific employers. For students, it is typically only one page. A curriculum vitae (CV) is an ongoing list of *all* academic and professional achievements. It can be as long as necessary to comprehensively cover your experiences. In the U.S., most employers request a resume.

Resume Basics

On Writing
Writing a compelling resume takes time and requires multiple drafts (4-6 usually!). There are writing and formatting norms in resumes that are different from nearly all other kinds of writing, so do not become discouraged if this is difficult at first. The more you practice, the easier it will be.

Relevant information

Your resume will contain a range of experiences that have been significant in time and meaning to you, including internships, jobs, extracurricular activities, athletics, and even projects, meaning that your resume will include paid and unpaid experiences. As a college student, potential employers understand that you may not have vast job experience in your interested/intended field.

Length

As an undergraduate student, your resume should be no more than one page

Voice

Write your resume in the removed first person voice, so no referring to yourself as 'I' or even 'They.'

Order

Place your experiences in reverse chronological order, meaning that the most recent goes at the top.

Document Needs

Save you resume as a .PDF with a formal file name, such as: AlishaRamirez_Resume_July2020.pdf

Components of a Resume

Format

- 1 page long with consistent, easy to read formatting throughout utilizing **bold**, *italicize* and <u>underline</u> features
- Size 10-12 font with a neutral typeface such as Times New Roman, Arial, or Verdana
- Your name should stand out at the largest and most noticeable text (can be Size 14-16)
- Margins between .5" - 1.0" on all sides
- Resumes do not need to contain complete sentences and most often contain statements. It is acceptable to delete articles (a, an, the) for brevity
- For experiences you have completed, write about them in the past tense; for experiences you are currently pursuing, use the present tense.

View Loeb Center resume examples to understand standard resume formatting

Contact Information

Your name, Amherst College address, phone number, and email address you check regularly

NOTE: You may also choose to list your home address if it is relevant to the positions you are applying to. For example, list your home address if you are applying to an internship in Chicago and you are from Chicago

Example:

Name

AC #0000 Keefe Campus Center, Amherst College, Amherst MA 01002
fresume15@amherst.edu | 000.000.0000

Education
- List Amherst College first, city and state (Amherst, MA), along with your expected graduation date, your degree (Bachelor of Arts), major or prospective major, and GPA. Amherst has a [GPA conversion worksheet](#) that converts your letter GPA into a numerical GPA.
  - You may also list any notable *academic* awards and/or relevant coursework
- Study abroad, if applicable
- List your high school*, city and state, graduation date, GPA, and SAT/ACT.
  - You may also list your most notable *academic* awards or honors

NOTE: Customarily seniors eliminate their high school from the Education section

Example:

EDUCATION

Amherst College, Amherst, MA | Bachelor of Arts   Expected May 2015
- Double Major in Economics and Psychology
- Relevant Coursework: Corporate Finance, Advanced Macroeconomics, Multivariable Calculus, Statistics
- Major GPA: 3.90/4.00 Cumulative GPA: 3.82/4.00

Horace Mann High School, Riverdale, NY   June 2011
- Cumulative High School GPA: **4.9/5.0** SAT: **2700** M: **900** W: **900**
- AP Scholar with Distinction (Score of 5 in Microeconomics, Macroeconomics, Chemistry, and Calculus)

Experience
The Experience section is the most difficult section to write as it requires you to describe entire, sometimes multi-year experiences into a very short amount of space. Each position requires 2-4 action-oriented bullet points describing not only what you did, but *how* you did it, emphasizing data and the impact of your work.

- List the organization, city and state, your role, and the month(s) and year(s) you were/are involved

- For an experience you are currently engaging in, the 'end date' is 'Present'
- Always use months instead of seasons
- 2-4 bullet points describing your role

How To Write Descriptions:
- When possible, refer back to a job or internship's description, noting the main aspects of the position. Pay particular attention to descriptive words and key themes of the role. How did this align with what you actually did or do?
- Become familiar with the [STAR Method](#) (Situation, Task, Action, Result) to help you effectively write your descriptions
- Begin each statement with an Action Verb such as Led, Supported, Collaborated, Researched. Need more Action Verb inspiration? [See our Action Verb Word Bank](#)
- Feature the most important aspects of your role rather than an exhaustive list of every component. Place these aspects in order of importance
- Be specific in your descriptions: try to anticipate where someone might ask, 'For what reason?' 'How many?' 'How did they do this?'
- Note the impact, destination, or result of your work, such as, '...in order to,' '...resulting in,' '...exceeding expectations by,' '...successfully,' '...ensuring that,' etc.

Example:
SELECTED EXPERIENCE

The Amazing World of Dr. Seuss Museum at Springfield Museums | Springfield, MA (Remote)   June-July 2020
Education Intern
- Designed 10+ program concepts and materials for Springfield Public Schools and other school systems, including a complete cross-disciplinary program on Seussian Architecture, and ensured compliance with Massachusetts Educational Standards
- Produced 20_ remote visitor engagement activities for Springfield Museums website, inclusive of crafts and science activities
- Excelled working independently in a remote setting while collaborating with and supporting Program Coordinator in contingency planning to reopen during the pandemic and offering remote programming

Mead Art Museum | Amherst, MA | February-May 2020
Marketing and Public Programs Intern
- Researched, composed, and scheduled social media campaigns (3 posts/week), including #5WomenArtists and #MuseumFromHome, to promote access to the collection before and during COVID-19, resulting in a 5% follower increase
- Coordinated local community and K-12 school outreach efforts through public advertising and direct contact to boost attendance at family/youth museum events; supported production for all in-person and digital programming

Kinds of Experiences
In telling your story through your resume, you may realize that there are themes between your experiences that can be best told through multiple Experience sections. These could be specific to a certain industry area, such as Teaching Experience or

Editorial Experience; specific to a skill you've honed over time, such as Leadership Experience or Political Organizing Experience; or specific to research you've conducted, such a Lab Research Experience or Clinical Research Experience. Curating your own Experience sections can make your resume more customized to you, though is not necessary.

Skills & Interests

This last section of your resume is an optional opportunity to highlight things that you are good at and/or enjoy doing. Include language or technical skills, along with your level of proficiency, or certifications such as CPR, lifeguarding, etc. Adding a few specific personal interests can provide talking points for an interview by sharing some of your personality.

Example:

Skills & Interests

Language Skills: Fluent in Spanish; Advanced in French
Digital Tools: Google Suite, Microsoft Office Suite, Zoom, Slack, Zotero
Interests: Baking pastries, rock climbing, political podcasts, fiction writing

Additional Categories

These are all optional categories that may be relevant depending on your circumstance, field of study or intended industry.

Selected Projects

- This is a section most often utilized by students interested in computer science, tech, entrepreneurship, and the arts. It is an opportunity for you to list a significant project you've worked on outside of a course showcasing your abilities. You may describe these projects just as you describe experiences in the Experience section with a location, title of the project, your role, when you worked on the project, and a bulleted description.
- Examples include app development, coding challenges, self-published publications, art exhibitions, and film projects. Talk with an advisor about how to strategically feature your projects.

Publications and Presentations

- Appropriate if you co-authored a paper that was published as part of a formal research project, or if you presented research at a conference or other professional gathering. Talk with an advisor about standards for your industry area

Certifications and Supplemental Education

- Such as EMT certification, completing a certificate program through the Harvard Business School, or a training program in the military

Awards

- ○ As noted earlier, some extraordinary awards can be in the Education section, but for awards not connected to Amherst, it might be appropriate to have an additional section

Targeting Your Resume

To 'target' your resume means customizing your document to match specific criteria you notice in an internship or job description and to align with what you've learned about an employer or industry by doing research. While you must always be honest in your application materials, you want to highlight different aspects of your qualifications based on the skills or experiences desired by the employer or industry.

Tips for targeting a resume:
- **Include relevant coursework**: If you have completed courses that are relevant to your opportunity, include the names of classes in your education section
- **Create a Relevant Experience section**: This section should fall right under your Education section and contain any experience that is relevant to the position.You can also create sections that reflect relevant competencies, such as Communications Experience, Teaching Experience, Research Experience, etc
- **Determining if an experience is "relevant" (in order of importance)**:
  - ○ It was in the industry of the position you're applying for
  - ○ You learned content/knowledge that relates to the work you would be doing
  - ○ You developed skills in another industry that are "transferrable," in other words, you could apply those skills in the position you're applying for
  - ○ It demonstrates hard work and dedication
- **Prioritize your bullets:** To capture the employer's attention, your most important and relevant contributions and responsibilities should be listed first under each experience
- **Use aligned language:** Integrate the key words of a job description or industry into your descriptions and skills areas to show your alignment with the desired qualifications. This means you may describe your experiences differently from one resume to the next. Some employers even use keyword scanner software for the initial round of application reviews so integrating appropriate keywords is critical to moving on to the next phase.

Tips & Resources

- A [web page version](#) of this Resume How-To Guide is available.
- Get your resume reviewed by a Loeb Center Peer Career Advisor (PCA) for feedback. [Schedule an appointment in Handshake](#).

- Refer to the Loeb Center's [Resume Examples](#) to see a range of resumes from Amherst students
- [Action Verbs Word Bank](#)
- [STAR Method How-To Guide](#)
- [Resume approval checklist](#)
- [Resume review policy and process](#)