

Resume Writing Workshop Activities

The following activities can be used before, during or after a "Resume Writing Workshop" for the purpose of improving your resume writing skills

Activity 1: Structuring a Successful Resume

- Step 1: Read through the list of information that may appear in a resume
- Step 2: Decide and write down the section heading(s) that you think will best present each piece of information in a resume
- Step 3: Rank each of these sections in the order that you would present them in your own resume

Your information	Possible Section Heading(s) in Your Resume	Rank Order
Your academic qualifications and track record		
The skills, knowledge and personal qualities you will bring to the position		
Where you see yourself moving within that field or industry		
Your interests		
Referee contact details		
Your principal achievements, within and outside of university		
What you do in your free time, on campus and outside of university		
Your employment and work experience		
Where you live, your phone numbers and email address		
Memberships		
Your name		

Activity 2: Using a Job Analysis Checklist

Read through the job advert. Highlight and underline important information - this includes (where applicable) application closing date, contact details etc.

Step1: How well do I understand the broader context of this job opportunity?

- The type of industry/organisation: products, services, growth, goals, mission, culture, size, structure, location, competitors, market share, challenges, opportunities etc?
- The purpose and importance of this role to the organisation?
- All the terminology used in the job advert?

Tip: Start to think about how and where can you demonstrate (some or all of) this knowledge in your resume – look at the section titles you identified in the previous activity to help you decide.

Step 2: Have I analysed what they say they are looking for? (ie. what selection criteria are listed?)

- From the job advert (and job description, if available), list everything the employer is looking for.
- Allocate each of the selection criteria that you identify to one of the categories within the Job Analysis Checklist (below).

Tip: Be as specific as you can be – eg. if the advert mentions that you must have “Excellent Communication Skills”, don’t simply copy this into your checklist (perhaps in the Transferable Skills column). Instead, think of who your target audience will be on the job (will there be more than one group of them?) and, therefore, how you will be required to demonstrate different types of communication skills to them. For example you may need to list both ‘Giving formal presentations to groups’ and ‘Explaining product information to customers via the telephone’ etc.

Step 3: What additional criteria will be necessary to do this job well? (ie. what info doesn’t appear in the advert?)

- Next, from extended research and by thinking through the reality of working in this job, supplement your list with additional experience, skills, personal qualities, knowledge and/or qualifications that you believe the employer would also be impressed by (Note: you are listing here what the employer ideally wants - not yet what you may be able to offer them!)

Tip: Aim to have listed approx. 12-20 selection criteria in total by this stage. Use more paper if necessary - the more accurate and comprehensive your job analysis, the better your application will be!

Step 4: What do I need to highlight in my resume?

- From the selection criteria list you’ve identified on your checklist, now highlight the 3 or 4 you think are especially critical if the job is to be done well.

Tip: Review how and where in your resume you will present this (most important) information.

Job Analysis Checklist

⇒ Job Context

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⇒ Relevant Experience (if applicable)

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⇒ Skills

Technical skills

Transferable (ie. generic) skills

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| • | • |
| • | • |

⇒ Personal Qualities/Attributes

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⇒ Relevant Knowledge & Qualifications (if applicable)

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Activity 3: Writing a Career Objective Statement

Look over these sample job objectives, to see how others have written them.
Draft your own with a particular job or industry in mind.

Examples

- To use my computer science training in software development for designing and implementing operating systems.
- A public-relations position which will maximise opportunities to develop and implement programs, to organise people and events, and to communicate positive ideas and images. To use my public speaking and organisational skills in managing a publicity/promotional campaign.
- A position as a general sales representative within a pharmaceutical house, which will enable me to use my chemistry background and ability to work on a self-directed basis, in managing a marketing territory and delivering high quality client services.
- A position in data analysis where skills in mathematics, computer programming and deductive reasoning will contribute to new systems development.

<http://www.careers.unsw.edu.au/careerEd/workshops/downloads/resumeWriting-activities-v1.pdf>

- To use my knowledge of financial analysis in an environment where initiative, attention to detail and communication skills are valued. To take on increasing responsibility and deliver outstanding results whilst working on key client accounts.
- A position which will maximise opportunities to develop and implement programs which promote environmental awareness within the community. To utilise my effective public speaking and experience in the management of publicity/promotional campaigns.
- To contribute my knowledge of applied mechanical engineering, and my ability to work on a self-directed basis in managing projects and designing contemporary and environmentally sustainable solutions.
- To work in an engineering environment that provides continual personal and intellectual challenge through creative problem solving. To manage and apply my technical skills and knowledge to a range of engineering projects that can help improve the efficiency, competitiveness and safety of a manufacturing organisation.
- To be employed in the area of urban and regional planning where my analytical and problem solving skills will enable me to define a range of urban or environmental problems and plan appropriate strategies to resolve them.

Your Turn:

Remember, your career objective statement should:

- Be a clear, specific, and positive statement of the type of career you want
- Be tailored to each position - using broad categories rather than specific job titles, and defining a 'bracket of responsibility'
- Be 1-4 lines in length

It can also:

- Show a clear understanding of the key skills, knowledge, experience required for the role
- Refer to your most relevant skills and knowledge – currently, and what you intend to develop in the future
- Reflect on your current and longer term goals

Activity 4: Writing Skills Statements

Look over these sample skills statements, to see how others have written them.
Draft your own with a particular job or industry in mind.

Examples

Analytical & Problem Solving:

In preparing my Honours thesis for my Geology degree, I needed to produce a precise written document of a high standard that reviewed and integrated the relevant literature and accurately reported all experimental procedures. My thesis involved researching stormwater management, more specifically the problem of pollution in Waverly Council area. I studied comparative data on pre and post ocean outfall and water quality and was able to implement a management program resulting in major improvements. My strong ability to analyse and solve problems was also demonstrated in the fact that I achieved a mark of First Class Honours for the project.

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Time management:

Having undertaken full time study while also conducting a research project part time at CSIRO last semester, and maintaining a casual job at my local chemist, I needed to plan my time carefully in order to meet competing deadlines. My careful scheduling and prioritising resulted in my maintaining a Distinction average for the semester as well as completing the research project one day prior to the due deadline.

Leadership:

As a volunteer representative for an international exchange student orientation program, I led teams of exchange students and acted as a Student Advisor whilst on exchange camps. In these roles I had responsibility for ensuring the safety and for monitoring the well being of my team. As a result, I made decisions concerning the group, provided support for team members and helped create a sense of adventure and excitement for the camp programs. The program organisers who were impressed with my ability to manage and organise such large groups asked me to continue working for them on a part-time basis.

Teamwork:

In the final year of my degree I participated in the Higher Education Workplace Skills Olympiad (HEWSO) competition. I was a member of a multi disciplined team and our task was to provide strategies for improving the work/life balance at Optus. During the 4 weeks of the project the team members agreed to delegate tasks and set milestones. Regular meetings were arranged to integrate information and update the team's progress. My role was to research strategies used by other organisations and to analyse exit survey information. Our team presented our findings to an audience of 15 management staff from Optus, UNSW representatives and 4 other student teams via a 20 minute presentation, a 100 page report and a website. We were judged the winning UNSW team and will now compete in the national finals.

Your Turn:

1. Think about a position that you are applying to (or the kind of position you want).
2. Identify (up to) 3 key skills that you think the role might require. These skills may have been developed in your education, employment, extra curricular experiences or other life experiences

REMEMBER: Your skills statements should:

Be ordered in terms of importance and/or relevance for the employer/position

Have a title and be approximately 4 –7 lines

Use the STAR method to structure the description of your past or current example:

Situation, Task, Action, Result

Provide clear, concrete details of how you demonstrated that skill behaviour in that situation

Position: _____

Skill 1:

Skill 2:

Skill 3:

Activity 5: Writing Achievement Statements

Look over these sample achievement statements, to see how others have written them. Draft your own with a particular job or industry in mind.

Examples

- Received an Australian Development (AusAid) Scholarship from the Government for tertiary studies and living expenses, to the value of \$26,000 per annum. The scholarship was awarded on the basis of academic achievement across all secondary school subjects.
- Implemented plant process control equipment resulting in \$53000 raw materials savings in nine months.
- Privately tutored three, high school students in the HSC 4-unit extension mathematics course, resulting in an average increase of 15% in the students' academic grades.
- Exceeded sales quota by more than 20% in two consecutive years, resulting in approximately \$3,000 commission-based earnings.
- Suggested improvements in the firm's internal auditing systems that saved \$40,000 per annum.

Your Turn:

1. Think about a position that you are applying to (or the kind of position you want).
2. Identify (up to) 3 key achievements from your education, employment, extra curricular activities or other life experiences that you think demonstrate skills and/or knowledge relevant to the position.
3. For each achievement, try drafting an achievement statement that demonstrates the level you were performing at and the significance of the achievement.

REMEMBER: Your achievement statement should:

- Provide clear, concrete details of the achievement and be results-based where possible
- Be relevant to the position

Position: _____

Achievement statement 1:

Achievement statement 2:

Achievement statement 3:

Things to avoid when writing career objectives, skills statements and achievement statements

- Do not make highly exaggerated claims that you cannot back up with fact.
- Avoid general statements and unclear descriptions.
- Avoid copying statements directly from the website. Employers are unimpressed by a lack of imagination and motivation. They also get frustrated at reading the same things 100 times!
- Avoid using examples of things that are not related to, or that are less important for, the job you are applying for. Your resume will have more impact if you select competencies that are vitally important in the jobs you will be doing and/or competencies that have been identified as important for that whole organisation.
- Don't use the same example over and over again – variety will maintain interest.