

Resume Guide – Tips for Designing a Professional Resume

Your resume serves as an important tool for gaining opportunities such as internships, leadership roles, and part/full-time job positions. A resume is a marketing piece that is designed to sell your "best self" and your skill set to an employer. Every resume is *different and tailored to the individual it represents*, and should advertise strengths, education, and accomplishments in a visually appealing, concise format.

LENGTH

A college student's resume should normally be no more than one page (exceptions may be made if you have extensive related experience). **A cover letter and reference page should always be listed on separate pages alongside your resume.**

CONTENT

So, what do you include in your resume?

Header with Identifying Information:

- Include:
 - Name
 - Phone Number
 - LinkedIn personal address (optional)
 - Professional Email (preferred Winthrop email)
 - E-portfolio Website (optional)
- Leave out personal information: age, sex, marital status, etc.

Education:

- Degree type and major/minor areas of concentration
- Institution attended (include city, state, and date degree received or will receive)
- Grade Point Average (if above a 3.0)
- Any scholarships awarded or academic honors received (Dean's List, Winthrop Gold Scholarship Recipient, etc.)

Summary of Skills:

- Use this section instead of an objective statement.
- Highlight information or skills you have learned in the classroom and in the workplace to summarize your resume into a few bullet point statements.
- Include computer and technical skills.
 - If you are a Computer Science or related major, you may benefit from having a separate section to list your more advanced hardware skills.
- Use words such as proficient in, knowledge of, experienced in, familiar with, etc. to describe your skill sets.

Related Experience:

- Related experience can be part-time, full-time, volunteer, experiential education (internships and service-learning projects) and/or class projects as they relate to the position you are seeking.
- What to include:
 - Title of Position
 - Name of Organization
 - Beginning and end dates of employment (month and year)
 - Bullet point accomplishment statements that are descriptive, *specific*, and *action-oriented*



Additional Section Headers:

- Related course work (projects, term papers, etc.)
- Honors and awards
- Certifications and licenses
- Campus and community involvement
- Summary of Skills
- Professional memberships (national organizations)

FORMATTING AND WRITING TIPS

- Keep the resume design consistent. Use **bold** or *italics* for emphasis. Do not use underline as it can be hard to read and does not photocopy well.
- Use standard font styles, such as Calibri, Times New Roman, Arial, etc. Avoid fonts that are too elaborate, **such as script**. Use one font throughout the resume.
- Font sizes 10, 11, and 12 are standard, with some titles and headings in a larger font or ALL CAPS.
- Do not use vertical lines, graphics, charts, tables, or boxes; these features do not transfer well to resume databases and often print out looking funky.
- Bullet statements are preferred over narrative style (paragraphs) when describing your skills, job positions, etc. Do not use the personal pronoun “I” on your resume. Instead, start each bullet point with an action verb.
 - If you’re having trouble with coming up with action verbs, visit our website [Resume and Cover Letters](#).
- As a freshman, high school information can be included, but once you move on to your sophomore year in college, replace your high school experiences with new college experiences.
- Use high quality paper; off-white/ivory or white are preferred. Paper is available and free for students to print their resume in our office.
- Proofread to avoid spelling and grammatical errors, and do not use abbreviations and acronyms. Spell check does not catch everything.
- The most important information goes on the top one-third to half of your resume.
- We read left to right. Use tabs to properly align dates on the right-hand side of the resume to de-emphasize.
- Use a .7 to one-inch margin; use the narrow .5 setting only if you need additional space to maintain a one-page resume.
- Do not use a resume template. They can be tricky to work with and edit, and they are made for the masses, not you as an individual.
- All resumes, cover letters, and reference pages (unless otherwise specifically requested) should be saved as a PDF and sent electronically as a PDF. This will preserve the integrity of your resume layout and design that you worked so hard to get just right.

Accomplishment Statements Guide – Tips for Selling Your Achievements

Effective resumes use statements (bullet points) that are accomplishment driven. When writing a resume, it is important to not only explain what you were required to do in your work (job description) but also expand on your success. Your past experiences (internships, part-time work, full-time work, service learning/volunteer projects) should enlighten future employers on what you bring to the organization.

IDENTIFY YOUR ACHIEVEMENTS USING THE P.A.R. APPROACH:

If you are having a hard time identifying what your accomplishments are, try the P.A.R. approach.

- **P- Project / Problem**
 - What problem needs to be resolved? What project needs to be initiated or completed?
 - e.g., No record-keeping system for all the sales/orders that came in.
- **A-Action**
 - What action did you take to resolve the problem?
 - e.g., Developed an electronic submission form and organized a two-step process for the sales representatives to use on future orders.
- **R-Results**
 - What were the beneficial results of your action?
 - e.g., Company order got processed 40% faster.

Now, you have an accomplishment statement:

- Increased order process by 40% by developing an electronic submission form and two-step process for record keeping on sales/orders.

ACTION VERBS:

Every statement should start with an action verb. What action did you take to solve the problem?

We have a complete action verb list on our website that is a great resource to find the right action verbs for your accomplishment statements.

SOME QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF:

To help list your accomplishments, here are some questions that you can answer for each of your former jobs:

- Have you ever increased or reduced costs for an employer?
- Have you ever created a new procedure or initiated something as a leader?
- Did you prevent a problem or help fix a problem?
- How did you go above and beyond what was asked of you according to your job description?
- What tangible evidence do you have of your accomplishments – publications, awards, writing samples?

MORE EXAMPLES:

- Initiated and launched a campus-wide campaign that resulted in the collection of 2000 pounds of non-perishable goods for needy families in the Rock Hill area.
- Implemented the use of social networking sites (Twitter and Facebook), which led to an increase in student participation at events by an average of 20%.
- Served as a mentor to 18 first-year students.

Action Verbs

Management/Leadership Skills:

Achieved	Decided	Improved	Operated	Programmed
Administered	Delegated	Initiated	Orchestrated	Regulated
Advised	Directed	Instructed	Oversaw	Spearheaded
Built	Facilitated	Led	Planned	Started
Coached	Guided	Managed	Presided	Supervised
Coordinated	Handled	Mentored	Produced	Trained

Communication Skills:

Addressed	Campaigned	Demonstrated	Marketed	Presented
Advertised	Communicated	Designed	Moderated	Revised
Advocated	Corresponded	Discussed	Motivated	Taught
Authored	Created	Documented	Negotiated	Translated
Brainstormed	Critiqued	Edited	Performed	Visualized
Branded	Decorated	Illustrated	Persuaded	Wrote

Analyzing/Critical Thinking Skills:

Analyzed	Conducted	Examined	Integrated	Researched
Anticipated	Connected	Explained	Investigated	Reviewed
Assessed	Consulted	Explored	Measured	Solved
Balanced	Counted	Evaluated	Predicted	Studied
Calculated	Discovered	Forecasted	Qualified	Summarized
Compared	Discussed	Generated	Quantified	Surveyed

Clerical Skills:

Allocated	Budgeted	Filed	Monitored	Published
Answered	Classified	Greeted	Ordered	Recorded
Arranged	Complied	Implemented	Organized	Screened
Assembled	Corresponded	Inventoried	Prepared	Updated
Authorized	Developed	Maintained	Processed	

Helping Skills:

Aided	Developed	Improved	Partnered	Supported
Assisted	Educated	Included	Provided	Tracked
Collaborated	Enabled	Informed	Served	Utilized
Contributed	Gathered	Motivated	Streamlined	Volunteered
Counseled	Guided	Participated	Strengthened	

Skill Statements:

Ability to	Adept in	Effective at	Knowledge of	Qualified to
Accomplished in	Associated with	Efficient in	Licensed in	Skilled in
Accounted for	Capable to	Experienced in	Participated in	Trained in
Acquainted with	Certified in	Familiar with	Performed with	Understanding of
Active in	Competent in	Involved in	Proficient in	

Reference Lists

A reference list is often required for internship, job, and graduate school applications. It is a document listing 3-4 professional references and their contact information. References are people who can speak to your character, work ethic, and professionalism. They serve as confirmation of your knowledge, skills, abilities, and past performance.

While a reference list is typically prepared as a separate page using the same contact header as the resume, many education and teaching roles may prefer that applicants list references on the resume. When formatting as a separate page, consider this approach: Name, Title/Role, Organization, Phone, Email, and the nature of your relationship:

REFERENCES

Jane Smith, MBA PhD

Associate Professor, Finance
Winthrop University
(803) 323-1111
smithj@winthrop.edu
Faculty Internship Supervisor

Robert Jones

Director, Campus Recreation Center
Winthrop University
(803) 323-2222
jonesr@winthrop.edu
Campus Job Supervisor

Marion Adams

Office Manager
Ajax Accounting LLC
(803) 111-2222
marion.adams@ajaxaccounting.com
Internship Supervisor

It is best to have someone with more authority than you — a supervisor (internship, work, volunteer), manager, professor/teacher — serve as a reference. Some applications will specify that peer and character references are acceptable and welcomed. When in doubt, you should ask someone to serve as a reference when they are very familiar with your strengths, abilities, and goals.

Always ask someone in advance before submitting their name as a reference! You want to ensure they are prepared and willing; you can also confirm their preferred method of being contacted.

Resume vs. Curriculum Vitae (CV)

A curriculum vitae (CV) is similar to a resume. Both are used to showcase your relevant knowledge, skills, education, and experience. A CV focuses more on academic history, research interests, teaching experiences, and scholarly pursuits. It is usually longer, although an undergraduate resume and CV may look similar. CVs are typically used when applying to academic, scientific, or research positions, as well as for grant, fellowship, scholarship, and tenure applications. Some graduate and professional programs will request a CV instead of a resume.

	Resume	Curriculum Vitae (CV)
Goal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply for a non-academic job, whether part-time or full-time • Often paired with a cover letter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply for an academic position, grant, or graduate school
Audience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-academic potential employers • Networking contacts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fellow academics • Potential graduate programs
Header	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name should be bold and emphasized in a larger font size • Brief listing of contact information (phone number, LinkedIn profile, and professional email) • Do not include hyperlinks, age, sex, or marital status 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name should be bold and emphasized in a larger font size • Listing of contact information • Include "Curriculum Vitae" along with contact information under the name. • Do not include hyperlinks
Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most relevant skills and experience • Tailor content to fit the specific job/firm/industry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete history, including academic achievements such as research, teaching, awards, organizations, etc.
Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimal text • Two to five achievement-oriented bullets under each experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text-rich • Narrative/paragraph style descriptions
Length	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Typically, 1 page (preferred) • 2 pages okay if significant relevant experience or multiple degrees • Never more than 2 pages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible length as needed to include all information • Typically, 1-3 pages for master's-level graduates • Typically, 3-4 pages for doctoral-level graduates

ADDITIONAL CATEGORIES TO CONSIDER ON A C.V. (If Applicable)

- Certifications – must be relevant and up to date
- Licensures
- Fellowships
- Publications
- Study Abroad and/or International Experiences
- Professional Development (workshops, seminars, in-service presentations)
- Computer Software or Technology – list the software that you are familiar with (e.g., Microsoft Office Suite, SPSS, R, Qualtrics, etc.)
- Leadership Activities
- Community Service & Service Learning
- Athletics

The tips below were written by Cornell University, Graduate School, Office of Career and Professional Development: <https://gradschool.cornell.edu/career-and-professional-development/pathways-to-success/prepare-for-your-career/take-action/resumes-and-cvs/>

When to use a Curriculum Vitae (CV)

A CV is a longer synopsis (i.e., longer than a resume) of your educational and academic background as well as teaching and research experience, publications, awards, presentations, honors, and additional details. CVs are used when applying for academic, scientific, or research positions. International employers often use CVs as well.

A CV is a comprehensive statement emphasizing:

- professional qualifications
- education
- experience
- accomplishments
- activities
- special qualifications

A CV can vary from two pages to several pages. Professionals seeking academic positions and non-academic positions in science, higher education, research, and health care typically use a CV. It is also used to seek a fellowship or grant and is expected for some positions overseas. Consult with faculty members in your field to determine what is expected and appropriate for your field.

Guidelines for Preparing a CV

- The order of topics in a CV format is flexible.
- Arrange sections to highlight strengths for the position you are seeking.
- Elaborate on accomplishments and skills within categories.
- List items within each category chronologically, the most recent appearing first.
- Include additional headings when appropriate to reflect certifications/licensures, workshops/training, languages, book reviews, etc.
- Present information in an easily accessible and attractive style.