

THE ULTIMATE RESUME GUIDE: CREATING A RESUME THAT WILL GET YOU NOTICED

**High Point University
Career & Professional Development
Cottrell Hall, Suite 103**

Your Resume Is...

- An advertisement
- A highlight of your background
- An individually designed Document
- Used by employers as a screening device
- Just ONE piece of the job search process

What Employers Look For:

- **Evidence of “life skills”**
(Leadership, verbal & written communication, teamwork, critical thinking, problem solving, adaptability, initiative)
- **Accomplishments in student organizations, work & service experiences**
- **Relevant experiences to posted position opening**
- **Academic performance**

Is There Such a Thing as a Correct Resume?

NO! There is no right or wrong when it comes to resume *content and format*. Each resume is as unique as the individual it represents. It is up to YOU to select the appropriate content that best highlights your skills for the employment you hope to secure, and then effectively communicate your qualifications in a format that is clear and easy to read.

Should I Include an Objective?

No resume topic is more debated than this one...

No! Either replace your objective with a summary or profile section or remove it entirely.

An objective statement does not tell the reader much. If you apply for the job, it's obvious you are interested. No need to reiterate that in an objective.

Getting Started

1

Brainstorm

- Think about the purpose of your resume--how do you want to market yourself and how will you be using your document?

2

Complete the worksheet

- Complete the **Resume Development Worksheet** included in this guide.

3

Headings

- Decide on section headings that will best fit your background and experiences.

4

Format

- Select a resume format from our samples in the [Resume Lookbook](#), located on Career & Professional Development's website.
- **Do not use Microsoft Word templates!** They are difficult to alter & do not always download correctly when transmitted electronically.
- Set your margins at 0.5" - 1.0" on all four sides, creating a "frame".

5

Font

- Use standard font sizes between 11 - 12 point. Choose a commonly used and easily read font:
 - Calibri
 - Times New Roman
 - Garamond
 - Hightower
 - Trebuchet MS

Tip:

Students often find it helpful to create a master or "exploded" resume that captures all past and present experiences. You may then extract relevant sections when writing a targeted resume.

6

Draft

- Create a first draft of your resume and edit to fit on one page.

Helpful Tips

Proofread carefully for grammar and spelling!

Be consistent in the use of punctuation, how experiences are presented and how information is highlighted (bold, italics, caps, etc.).

The most important and relevant information should be the closest to the top and left margins.

Content should only appear once; avoid redundancy.

E-mail a copy to yourself & print it out.

Save your finalized resume in a PDF format to preserve your layout when sending via e-mail.

Never overstate qualifications or accomplishments; exaggerations can damage the credibility of the entire resume. Doing so is considered misrepresentation! Only include experiences you would be comfortable talking about in an interview.

Have your resume reviewed by a Career & Professional Development staff member, a faculty member, or someone else you trust!

Essential Components

Name/Contact Information

Goal: to ensure an employer can easily contact you.

Include:

First & last preferred name (in larger font such as 18 to 20 point), phone number, e-mail, city, and abbreviated state

Make sure information is accurate

Include only one e-mail address to avoid confusion

This section should always be located at the top of the page immediately under your name

Tips:

If you are applying for positions near your hometown, include your home address. By doing so, you may alleviate concerns employers may have about relocation costs or your level of interest in that geographic location.

Make sure that both your e-mail address & your voicemail message are professional!

Section Checklist

- ✓ Name/Contact Information
- Education
- Honors/Awards
- Experience
- Campus Involvement & Community Activities
- Skills

Education

Goal: to convey academic qualifications & training.

Include:

Degree-granting colleges/universities, and institutions in which courses have been completed, including study abroad experiences

Note location (city, state, country), dates of degrees or dates attended (month/semester, year), the degree earned, & your major(s)/minor(s)

Most students include their cumulative GPA if it is over 3.0

Students may also choose to include a major GPA if the number is higher than their cumulative GPA

You may choose to include relevant coursework if you do not have much experience in your industry yet

Include your high school if you are a freshman or sophomore, or if your school has name recognition with influential alumni

Honors/Awards

This section can be integrated into another section, such as Education, or can stand alone

Goal: to emphasize accomplishments that differentiate you from other applicants!

Include:

Academic and extracurricular honors, scholarships, and fellowships

If the title of the award does not explain the qualifications to receive it, a brief description should

List dates (month/semester, year)

Section Checklist

- ✓ Name/Contact Information
- ✓ Education
- ✓ Honors/Awards
- Experience
- Campus Involvement & Community Activities
- Skills

Experience

Goal: to highlight your skills and non-academic qualifications in a concise manner, showing their relevance to your candidacy. Draw attention to groups of experiences that resound with your target employer by breaking them into sections, creating a “targeted resume.”

Include:

Past & present employment, extracurricular involvement, & volunteerism

Experiences should be listed in reverse chronological order (most recent to least recent) within each section, based on the end date of participation

Include the employer or organization, location (city, state), dates involved (month/season, year), position title, and powerful descriptions (see page 9)

Choose to list the most relevant experiences first when several have the same end date

Campus Involvement / Community Activities

Goal: to highlight leadership, volunteer, and extracurricular activities which are not listed elsewhere on your resume.

Include:

Clubs, organizations, fraternities/sororities

Athletics, intramural sports

Philanthropic activities, mission trips, or service

Section Checklist

- ✓ Name/Contact Information
- ✓ Education
- ✓ Honors/Awards
- ✓ Experiences
- ✓ Campus Involvement & Community Activities
- Skills

Skills

Goal: to include skills which do not appear elsewhere on the resume.

Include:

Technological skills, language skills or certifications

Indicate level of proficiency in foreign languages (e.g., native speaker, fluent, proficient, conversant)

What other documents should you submit with your resume?

1. A **cover letter** should always accompany a resume. See our **Cover Letter Guide** and [Cover Letter Template](#) for details on effective cover letter writing.
2. Create a separate document for your **list of references**. Use your resume contact information as your heading and list each person's name, job title, employer, contact information, and state the relationship of this person to you.

Section Checklist

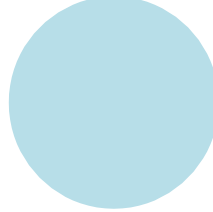
- ✓ Name/Contact Information
- ✓ Education
- ✓ Honors/Awards
- ✓ Experiences
- ✓ Campus Involvement & Community Activities
- ✓ Skills

Writing Descriptions for Your Experiences



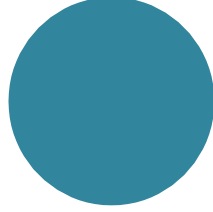
Begin with a strong action verb (see list at the end of this guide).

The verb tense should reflect whether the experience is *ongoing* (present tense) or has been *completed* (past tense).



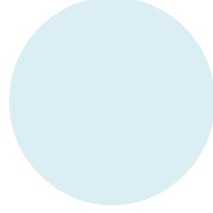
Include details of major accomplishments and core responsibilities; show your *impact* on the organization.

Address the scope of your experience; provide facts/numerical figures, and indicate results achieved.



Do not write descriptions in complete sentences; eliminate pronouns and other non-essential words.

Descriptions are often written in bullet points or in short paragraphs. Space is limited; give preference to the most relevant experiences.



Include 2-6 bullets under each experience.

Turning Job Duties into Accomplishments

Job Duty	Accomplishment
Organized recruitment activities for fraternity	Developed new recruitment strategies which doubled number of prospective members
Helped run classroom activities for music students	Exposed students to meaningful musical experiences to enhance social and academic development
Helped students with their homework	Tutored five students in biology which increased test scores an average of 10 points
Worked for ABC Mission	Devoted over 100 hours to feeding the needy in High Point community
Answered phones	Efficiently responded to customer phone inquiries on how to use specific software

Tips:

Writing descriptions is often the most challenging part of writing a resume! Partner with Career and Professional Development staff for guidance.

Spell out numbers one through nine but use numbers for 10 and above.

Abbreviate states with capital letters (e.g., NC, CT, ME).

Why You Should Tailor Your Resume

When viewing resumes, employers are looking for:



Fit between the job and the candidate refers to how much your resume matches the job description. This means that it is in your best interest to tailor your resume – for EACH position to which you apply – to include keywords from the job description.

For example, you may be a Computer Science major applying to several IT positions.

- Requirements for one IT job varies from another IT job
- You may need knowledge of a specific software or experience in a certain industry
- What one employer is looking for varies from another employer

All of these differences result in different keywords in the job descriptions. By adjusting your keywords for each job description, you are more likely to be seen as an excellent match for the position.

How to Tailor Your Resume in Three Steps

1. Understand the job requirements
 - Highlight job-related skills, software/hardware, training and certification, industry jargon, and soft skills
2. Create a Summary or Profile section
 - Place critical job-related skills at the top in a Summary or Profile section
 - This allows recruiters/hiring managers to see that you have what they want right away and makes them want to read more
3. Revamp your bullet points
 - Rearrange bullet points so that ones with keywords matching the job description are on top of each entry
 - Write new bullet points, or change words to include more keywords

Why Matching Your Resume to the Job Description is So Important

Applicant tracking systems (ATS) are human resources software that scan resumes using match rate algorithms before an employer ever views the resumes.

ATS acts as a database for job applicants. ATS is used by companies of all sizes to organize, search, and communicate with large groups of applicants.

**As reported by
[JobScan](#), 99%
of Fortune 500
companies
use ATS as part
of their
recruiting**

The main goal of ATS is to assist recruiters or hiring managers. Companies are often hiring for multiple positions at once and receive hundreds of applicants for each job opening. With an ATS, they can sort through applicants based on keywords, filters, or how well the resume matches the job description. If ATS doesn't pick up that your resume is a strong match for the job, your resume might never be seen by human eyes for that position.

How to Prepare Your Resume for ATS

- Tailor your resume to the job description every time you apply by matching your resume keywords with the job description
- Use both the long-form and acronym version of keywords (e.g. "Master of Business Administration (MBA)" or "point of sales (POS)") for better search-ability
- Use a reverse chronological resume format (avoid the functional resume format)
- Don't use tables or columns as they often cause parsing errors
- Use a traditional resume font (see page 3)
- Don't use headers or footers because the information might get lost or cause a parsing error
- Use standard resume section headings like "Work Experience" rather than trying to stand out with something unconventional ("Where I've Been")

NOTE: Some of this information might not be applicable to creative resumes. See a Career Advisor to discuss if it is appropriate for you to use a creative resume and how to apply for creative positions.

Resume Development Worksheet

NAME: _____

PRESENT PHYSICAL ADDRESS

City _____ State _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

PERMANENT ADDRESS (if closer to internship or job location)

City _____ State _____

Phone (be certain your voicemail is professional) _____

PROFILE OR SUMMARY

Include any or all of the following in either a brief statement or in bullet format: career interests, key strengths/skills/qualities/characteristics that set you apart from other candidates. Note: You will customize this section as you “target” each employer.

EDUCATION

Degree _____ Major (or double major) _____

Minor/Concentration _____

High Point University, High Point, NC, Graduation Date _____

GPA _____ (overall, major, or both) *Note: Students often choose to list if 3.0 or higher.*

Use this format for previous degrees. First year students may include high school. Transfer students may list degrees completed from a community college or the number of hours completed at previous institutions.

Optional Sub-Headings Under Education:

- Study Abroad
- Academic Awards/Recognitions/Accomplishments
- Relevant Courses
- Projects/Research

For **Study Abroad** experiences, include program name, location, and dates: _____

List **academic recognitions** such as honor societies, Dean's List, scholarships: _____

List any **advanced courses** related to your major or career interest. This is **optional** and helpful if it informs the reader of your progress in the curriculum or clarifies a specific area of career interest. _____

Include **projects/research** related to your major or career interest. This is **optional**, but highly recommended, if project/research is directly related to a career interest and especially if experience section is light.

EXPERIENCE

Choose experiences you want to talk about. You can “target” your resume better if you customize this heading for specific opportunities. *For example:* COACHING EXPERIENCE or MARKETING EXPERIENCE or ACCOUNTING EXPERIENCE.

Include paid and unpaid/volunteer experiences. Place most recent first and work backwards. Use brief “bullet point” phrases/statements starting with action verbs to describe your accomplishments. Prioritize bulleted phrases/statements within each position so that you highlight the most important and relevant information for your reader (list 2 - 6 points). You may wish to list your job title first OR the employer first:

Entry #1 (Current or Most Recent)

Employer _____ City, State _____

Job Title _____ Dates _____

- _____
- _____
- _____

CAREER AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GUIDE TO RESUME WRITING

Entry #2

Employer _____ City, State _____

Job Title _____ Dates _____

- _____
- _____
- _____

Entry #3

Employer _____ City, State _____

Job Title _____ Dates _____

- _____
- _____
- _____

TECHNOLOGY OR SPECIAL SKILLS

List specific technical/computer or special (such as language) skills developed through courses, work, or personal experiences. If you prefer to highlight several different skills, create 2-3 subcategories that best reflect or present these skills (*Computer, Language, Laboratory, Technical, Equipment, Personal*):

CAMPUS INVOLVEMENT/LEADERSHIP

List in order of commitment and/or passion. Refine list, prioritize, and either combine into one section or keep separate. Dates are not critical but are optional. Choose a title that reflect content – *LEADERSHIP / SERVICE / INVOLVEMENT*:

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Include community activities/volunteerism that will help an employer get to know you. Draw from community leadership, projects, athletics, service or mission trips, travel experiences, or other ways in which you have served the community:

Resume Action Verbs

The most difficult part of resume writing involves describing your experiences and what you did on the job. The best approach: begin each job description with a **Power Verb**. They stress results and impact, which are what employers want to see. You can even string power verbs together. For example, "Designed, developed and implemented..." or "Established, cultivated and maintained..." Check out the power verbs listed below.

Management Skill Verbs

Allocated, Determined, Directed, Elected, Enlisted, Formed, Founded, Governed, Hired, Initiated, Inspired, Instituted, Led, Managed, Moderated, Motivated, Operated, Oversaw, Pioneered, Presided, Produced, Recruited, Represented, Selected, Spearheaded, Sponsored, Staged, Started, Supervised, Trained

Organizational Skill Verbs

Arranged, Assembled, Collected, Centralized, Coordinated, Catalogued, Distributed, Disseminated, Enforced, Executed, Formalized, Implemented, Installed, Maintained, Organized, Planned, Prepared, Processed, Routed, Recorded, Reorganized, Scheduled, Updated

Communication Skill Verbs

Acquainted, Apprised, Answered, Briefed, Conducted, Contacted, Demonstrated, Drafted, Educated, Explained, Familiarized, Handled, Informed, Instructed, Introduced, Lectured, Listened, Presented, Reported, Responded, Spoke, Summarized, Taught, Trained, Translated, Wrote

Analytical Skill Verbs

Analyzed, Assessed, Audited, Compiled, Consulted, Detected, Discovered, Documented, Edited, Evaluated, Examined, Gathered, Identified, Interpreted, Interviewed, Researched, Searched, Surveyed, Tested

Helping Skill Verbs

Aided, Attended, Assisted, Collaborated, Contributed, Counseled, Comforted, Facilitated, Fostered, Guided, Helped, Instilled, Mentored, Provided, Settled, Supported, Tutored, Treated

Selling Skill Verbs

Arbitrated, Convinced, Dissuaded, Encouraged, Marketed, Mediated, Negotiated, Persuaded, Promoted, Publicized, Resolved, Sold, Secured, Solicited

Creative Skill Verbs

Authored, Conceived, Conceptualized, Created, Composed, Designed, Devised, Established, Invented, Originated, Revolutionized

Additional Skill Verbs

Adapted, Attained, Augmented, Awarded, Boosted, Broadened, Built, Calculated, Catered, Decreased, Developed, Ensured, Eliminated, Exceeded, Excelled, Expanded, Expedited, Fabricated, Financed, Gained, Generated, Improved, Increased, Launched, Mastered, Modernized, Published, Raised, Reconciled, Reduced, Revamped, Revitalized, Saved, Shopped, Strengthened, Supplemented, Tended, Utilized