

Resume Development

**Century College Career Services
Room 2400W – 651-779-5774**

What is a Résumé?

- 1) A resume is a summary of your **relevant** education, experiences, skills and accomplishments relevant to the field of work you are entering.
- 2) A resume highlights your accomplishments to show a potential employer that you are qualified for the position you are seeking. It is NOT a biography of everything you have done! The average time spent reviewing a resume is 12-15 seconds!!
- 3) The purpose of a resume is a way to get your “foot in the door” – to get you an interview.
- 4) In addition to paid work experience, a resume can also include student involvement within extracurricular, volunteer, study abroad and leadership experiences.
- 5) Often times people will create slightly different resumes tailored to each career field/job opening within your job search.
- 6) To prepare a successful resume you will need to review, summarize and present your experiences and achievements on one page. Two pages are not necessary unless you have considerable experience. It is important to be brief and concise.

Résumé Do's & Don'ts

You will find hundreds of books, websites and other resources dictating what you “do” want to include and “don’t” want to include in your resume. There are also hundreds of templates, outlines and options for formatting your resume. For now, the most important outcome is a clear, concise and easy to read resume that is filled with information. To keep it simple, we’ll stick to a few general rules:

- Keep it to one page if possible. Two pages are ok if you have extensive experience and/or relevant experience.
- Reverse chronological (as opposed to functional) format, unless you have little experience in the area of work you are pursuing
- An objective or summary of qualifications—your opportunity to communicate right near the top of the page that you know what you're looking for and are qualified for the job.
- Top down—it's better to read like a list than a letter. This is achieved with action-oriented "bulleted" statements (note: these are rarely complete sentences, personal pronouns—I, we, etc.—are not included).

- Lead your statements with verbs.
- Use spell/grammar check and have someone proofread when you are finished.

How to Prepare an Effective Resume

Everybody has their own style of writing, their own style of organizing their thoughts. Microsoft Office has templates that can help you format the "look" of your résumé. In addition, there are many sites on the Web that will offer loads of advice (see the last page of this handout and/or go to our website links on our site (www.century.edu/careerservices) for more information).

Before you write, take time to do a self-assessment on paper. Outline your skills and abilities as well as your work experience and extracurricular activities. This will make it easier to prepare a thorough resume.

To do this first make a list of your experiences, involvement in activities, etc. Then write a paragraph about each item on your list. Describe accomplishments and duties that you performed (Action/Outcome based items are a nice addition). Do not worry about using appropriate resume language at this time. Next, choose the items that you will highlight on your resume.

The next step will be to create the sections of your resume and include the above information accordingly.

The Content of Your Resume

Name, address, telephone, e-mail address, web site address

All your contact information should go at the top of your resume.

- Avoid nicknames.
- Put your name in at least 14-point font. This will make your name stand out and will be easier for recruiters to see.
- Use a permanent address. Use your parents' address, a friend's address, or the address you plan to use after graduation.
- Use a permanent telephone number and include the area code. If you have an answering machine, record a neutral greeting.
- Include your e-mail address. Many employers will find it useful. (Note: Choose an e-mail address that sounds professional.)
- Include your web site address only if the web page reflects your professional ambitions.

Objective or Summary

An objective tells potential employers the sort of work you're hoping to do. This is an optional piece of your resume.

- Be specific about the job you want. For example: To obtain an entry-level position within a financial institution requiring strong analytical and organizational skills.
- Tailor your objective to each employer you target/every job you seek.
- Avoid pronouns and be to the point.

- If you are not clear about your career goals it is wise to *not* include an objective on your resume. This can be developed at a later time.

A summary of qualifications is sometimes included at the beginning of a resume, especially for experienced job seekers who may have a two-page resume.

Important – If you submit a resume to an employer via email or the Web, your resume may end up on a resume database. When employers search databases for resumes they match **keywords** that are appropriate to the particular career field/job they are hoping to fill. It is important that your resume contain some of those keywords so that it is pulled from the database. If you choose to use a summary of qualifications you should keep this section concise and use as many keywords as possible.

Education

New graduates without a lot of work experience should list their educational information first. Alumni can list it after the work experience section.

- Your most recent educational information is listed first.
- Include your degree (A.S., B.S., B.A., etc.), major, institution attended, minor/concentration.
- Add your grade point average (GPA) if it is higher than 3.0.
- Mention any academic honors and awards.
- “Relevant Coursework” is an optional section.

Work Experience

Briefly give the employer an overview of work that has taught you skills. Use *action* words to describe your job duties. Include your work experience in reverse chronological order—that is, put your last job first and work backward to your first, relevant job. Include:

- Title of position,
- Name of organization
- Location of work (city, state)
- Dates of employment
- Describe your work responsibilities with emphasis on specific skills and achievements.

Look back at the paragraphs you wrote about each of your experiences/activities. Choose up to 5 sentences (depending on the level of your responsibilities) that summarize the skills used in that particular job, your duties performed and your significant accomplishments. Be sure to include both your duties and your accomplishments. Use *action* verbs to describe your experiences and outcomes. Citing numbers is also an effective way to make a point (number of people supervised, percentage of increase in participation, etc.)

Other information

If needed, you may make an appointment in the Career Center to further discuss other information to add to your resume. You may want to add:

- Key or special skills or competencies (computer skills, etc.)
- Languages (indicate level of ability – basic conversational vs. fluent)
- Internship/Clinical/Student Teaching experience
- Leadership experience in student clubs and organizations
- Participation in athletics, intramurals, etc.
- Volunteer experience
- Study abroad/international experience

References (no need to list on your resume)

Ask people if they are willing to serve as references before you give their names to a potential employer. Do not include your reference information on your resume. Have an updated list of your references available for potential employers if they request it.

Resume Checkup

You've written your resume. It's time to proofread carefully and have it reviewed and critiqued by someone in your particular career field, staff in career services, etc... You can also take the following steps to ensure quality:

Content:

- Run a spell check on your computer before anyone sees your resume
- Get a friend to do a grammar review
- Ask another friend to proofread. The more people who see your resume, the more likely that misspelled words and awkward phrases will be seen

Design:

These tips will make your resume easier to read and/or scan into an employer's data base:

- Use white or off-white paper.
- Use 8-1/2- x 11-inch paper.
- Print on one side of the paper.
- Leave plenty of white space – don't make it look crowded.
- Use a font size of 10 to 14 points, preferably 12 point.
- Center and balance your resume on the page, leaving approx. 1-inch margins.
- Use non-decorative typefaces; keep it clear and easy to read.
- Choose one typeface and stick to it.

- Boldface job titles and use descriptive category headings (“Leadership Experience vs. just “Experience”).
- Leave a blank space between the separate sections and items on your resume.
- Avoid italics, script, and underlined words.
- Do not use horizontal or vertical lines, graphics, or shading.
- Do not fold or staple your resume.
- If you must mail your resume, put it in a large envelope.

Samples & Templates:

Microsoft Office Templates – templates for resumes, cover letters and more

<http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/templates/CT061993551033.aspx>

Samples available online at:

www.careermag.com

www.vault.com

www.monster.com

www.wetfeet.com

* There are also several resources available in the Career Center and through Career Services.

VISIT US AT:

WWW.CENTURY.EDU/CAREERSERVICES