

Writing a Resume

A resume is a one- or two-page summary that relates your education, experience and skills to your career goal or job objective. The primary purpose of a resume is to obtain interviews with potential employers. Therefore, a resume should:

- Present a positive image.
- Tell what you have done.
- Share your accomplishments.
- Provide an outline for an interview.
- Trigger positive action.

A resume should identify your educational background, extracurricular activities, paid or volunteer work experiences and your skills.

Rules of Resume Writing

The rules of resume writing are flexible, but these are general guidelines that work for most CAFNR students. We invite you to use our resume sample (PDF) and resources for ideas and additional suggestions. We will also critique your resume.

Before You Begin

Before writing and reviewing your resume, make sure you know the answers to these questions:

- **Purpose:** What do you want your resume to accomplish? Is it going to get you an interview for that job or internship? Admission into professional or graduate school? A scholarship? A good resume targets the intended audience.
- **Qualifications:** What are the top three reasons you should be chosen? These will be obvious to the casual reader on an effective resume.

Getting Started

1. **Write an objective**, a separate section that will reflect your job search goal. If you have several career objectives, you can state your goal in your cover letter. An objective should include these points:
 - The kind of position in which you are interested.
 - Your relevant skills, knowledge and experience.

Good Example	Bad Example
"An internship in the agricultural industry using my excellent communication skills and study of economics."	"A challenging position in a growth-oriented organization."

2. It is better to omit an objective than to make a statement that is vague or lacks direction.
3. **Brainstorm.** This is a very important step in preparing your resume. It is best to spend at least two days brainstorming with yourself, then brainstorm with others to generate more ideas for your resume. As you brainstorm, focus on tasks performed, skills and abilities used and accomplishments.

The best method is to use a notebook kept in a visible spot so you can write your thoughts as they appear.

- On the top of the first page, write the title "Education."
- Begin with your most advanced degree, list the degree, major and dates. List special honors, scholarships, grade point average, foreign language fluency, certifications and special training courses.
- On the following pages, write "Experience," then the name of the organization, for both paid and unpaid experiences.
- List all tasks, duties and responsibilities. Write down all major accomplishments, making them concrete with numbers.
 - Use action verbs to describe your transferable skills and abilities (for instance, the organizational skills you learned working at McDonald's could be put to use in any office environment).
 - All types of experiences can be used: internships, part-time jobs, extracurricular activities, volunteer service or any other experiences that demonstrate your potential or may be related to your goal.
 - Personal information such as age, marital status, height and weight should **not** be included on your resume. Include hobbies, travel experience or awards in a separate section or under experience or education only if they are related to your goal.

- Do not include reference names, addresses or phone numbers on your resume. List these on a separate sheet. See our references tips.
4. **Select a resume style.** There are two formats to help you organize your qualifications:
- **Chronological:** Positions are listed in reverse chronological order. Each position should include the name of the organization, city and state, job title, dates of employment, the tasks performed and the skills used.
 - **Functional:** Experience is organized according to skills or areas of expertise from a variety of experiences such as paid, volunteer or extracurricular activities. Experiences and places of employment with dates are listed in a separate section of the resume.
5. **Write a draft.** Decide on the style of resume that fits your goal and experience. You may want to write a rough draft of both styles.

Your resume needs to be concise and catchy. The average time spent on a resume by a future employer is 20 seconds! The typical resume is one to two pages.

Be prepared to write more than one draft. It takes a lot of effort, but this is effort well spent because your resume is an important job hunting tool.

6. **Prepare your final resume.** Ask your friends or people in your field of interest to review your resume. Then check, check and check again for grammatical, typographical and spelling errors. Your resume has to be perfect with no mistakes!

Print your resume on quality bond paper in a neutral shade. It is a good idea to buy matching stationery and envelopes for mailing cover letters.

Basic Hints

- This is your marketing tool. Be positive.
- Be honest. Stick to the facts.
- Avoid abbreviations.

- Appearance is important. Do not clutter your page. Use one inch margins. Use bold print, capital letters and underlining to emphasize important items.
- Your most impressive information should be at the top of the page.
- Never state salary history or requirements.
- Don't forget your name, address, phone number and appropriate e-mail.