

CAREER & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER

10 Steps to a Great Resume

Step 1. Self-Analyze

Before you begin writing your resume, you must first plan the information you believe should be included. Here are a few suggestions to think about before you begin:

- What are my career goals?
- What skills and/or abilities do I possess?
- What experience do I have?
- What extracurricular activities have I done?

Step 2. Format

Once you decide on the information you would like to include in your resume, you must choose a format. There are two types of resume formats that you can choose from to use in your resume.

A **Functional Resume** is one that lists your employment, education, volunteer work, and internships or co-ops in order of importance and relevance to the position being applied for. It is most successfully used in cases where you have relevant job experience, are changing careers completely, or for students with no prior work experience.

A **Chronological Resume** is one that lists your employment, education, volunteer work, and internships or co-ops in chronological order beginning with the most recent. This format is most successfully used in any situation for resume writing including general employment.

You may also format each section as you wish by using underlining, **bold**, and *italics* as you see necessary in the Employment, Education, Volunteer Work, and Internships/Co-ops sections.

Step 3. Contact Information

Your contact information should be located at the top of your resume. You may right justify, left justify, or place your information in the middle of the top of the page. You may also choose to list your name in the middle, right justify your address and left justify your phone number and e-mail address, or list the information vertically, horizontally, or use a combination of the two. This is how a potential employer will contact you if you are selected for an interview; therefore, you should always use accurate information.

The following should be included in your Contact Information:

- **Name.** This should be the very first thing on your resume and should stand out. It should include your first and last name. You may also add your middle name or initial if you choose to do so. You may use a nickname only if it is a shortened version of your given name.
- **Address.** This should be your full, permanent address.
- **Phone Number.** You may include your home, work, and/or cell phone number.
- **E-mail Address.** Use the e-mail address you check most often.
- **Personal Website.** Include your personal website only if it is relevant to the position you are applying for.

Step 4. Objective

The Objective included in your resume is used to inform your prospective employer of your career goals. An objective should be included in your resume unless you are applying for multiple positions

at the same organization. This section may be labeled as Objective, Professional Objective, or Career Objective.

Your objective should contain at least the first two parts below. You may add the third to highlight what skills or experience you have to offer the employer, especially if you do not elect to include a summary of skills, summary of qualifications, or demonstrated skills. The 3 main parts should create one smooth sentence.

The 2 to 3 parts that should be included are:

1. **Position title desired.** *What position are you applying for?*
2. **Organization type.** *What type of organization are you seeking for future employment?*
E.g. – medical facility, business, law firm, etc.
3. **Special skills, knowledge, or experiences.** *What special skills, knowledge, or experiences do you have that could present you as the most qualified candidate for the position?*
E.g. – customer services skills, technical knowledge, etc.

*The next 4 steps may be included in your resume in any order you choose.
There is no set order as to what sections should go first, second, third, etc. on your resume.
Whichever section you believe is more important to the employer should be first.*

Step 5. Education

You should include the following for each degree obtained and/or in progress:

- Degree
- Major
- College/University
- City
- State
- Graduation Date

Your highest degree should be listed first. Degrees that are still in progress should also be listed on your resume along with anticipated graduation date. High School education should only be included on a resume that is intended for internships or summer jobs. If you are currently working on a degree or have just graduated with a degree, you may want to add any specific courses or training you have that are specific to the position for which you are applying. Specific courses and training may be included in the Education section or may be formed into an independent section.

Academic honors or achievements can also be included in this section or in a separate section if you choose.

GPA should also be included if it is 3.0 or above on a 4.0 GPA scale. List the highest of your GPAs, whether it be in your major or overall.

Step 6. Employment

The following should be included in any order for each job listed:

- Job Title
- Organization
- Location of Organization (*city, state*)
- Brief list of duties and responsibilities, and/or accomplishments, results
- Dates employed

It is standard to list your employment history in reverse chronological order beginning with your most recent job. If you have had more than one job for the same company, be sure to list the most recent

first and continue backwards. Be sure to include dates in this situation so that the job progression is visible to the prospective employer.

If you are listing responsibilities for a position you currently obtain, use present tense. If you are listing responsibilities for previous jobs, use past tense.

You only need to list your employment history for the past 10 to 15 years. Other employment may be summarized briefly at the end of the section in a few sentences.

You may list employment under a variety of section titles including Employment, Related Employment, Experience, Related Experience, Employment Experience, Employment History, Work History, etc.

Co-ops and internships are also considered employment; however, they should be listed in a different section. You should include the same information for a co-op or internship as listed at the beginning of this step.

Step 7. Skills (*Optional*)

You may, if you choose, add a section with transferable skills you possess that could contribute greatly to the position you are applying for. Transferable skills are those that you have gathered from previous experiences in your job, sports, or life in general, that can be used in a future career.

Here are a few examples of transferable skills:

- Multi-task
- Responsible
- Self-Motivated
- Organized
- Personable
- Customer Service Skills

Step 8. Hobbies, Activities, Volunteer Work, etc. (*Optional*)

Hobbies and activities should be mentioned in your resume if they are pertinent to the position you are applying for. For instance, if you enjoy outdoor activities such as camping or biking and you are applying for a position with the local park service, you should mention that in your resume. If the hobby is completely unrelated to the position you are applying for, you should consider your purpose in mentioning it. For example, do you wish to demonstrate that you are a well-rounded person with interests outside of the workplace? Employers sometimes like to know that the person they hire is not a candidate for burnout because they have other outlets.

Volunteer work should be mentioned on your resume if it relates to the intended position or if you learned transferable skills through completing your volunteer work. You may name the section Volunteer Work, Volunteer Experience, etc. You may list the information in the same way you would employment if you wish. You may also abbreviate the information to include a brief description of what you did, the organization you did the work for, and when you did it.

Step 9. References.

References should not be listed directly on your resume, but should instead be provided on a separate sheet along with your resume if the employer requests references. If the employer does not specifically request references, a line is commonly added to the bottom of the resume indicating that references are available upon request.

Who a reference can be:

- A current or former manager or supervisor
- Professor or teacher
- Major clients or customers
- Peers, etc.

***Be sure to use a variety of references because each one will have a different positive perspective about you. Try to avoid using relatives as references. Also be sure to ask before you add someone as a reference.*

What information you should provide about your references:

- Full name and title
- Organization name
- Work address and phone number (unless they prefer to be contacted at home)
- Best time to call
- Relationship to you

Information your references are typically asked about:

- Professional Demeanor
- Personality / Attitude
- Team work
- Communication skills
- Dependability / Responsibility
- Leadership skills
- Learning Ability, etc.

Step 10. Proofread.

Sloppy work on your resume will indicate to a potential employer that you may do sloppy work for them as an employee. Be sure to check for uniformity, grammar, tense, spelling, etc.

It is always a good idea to have your resume reviewed by others to assist in identifying errors.

Have your resume critiqued by a Career & Professional Development Center Advisor. Walk-in hours and appointments are available. Contact our office for more information.

*Sample resumes are available in the Red Book.
The Red Book is available in our office for purchase and on our web site.*

**Be sure to upload your resume on
[HireCalYOU](#) (Cal U's job and resume posting site)!**