
RESUME TIP SHEET

A resume is a document that summarizes your skills, experience, education and accomplishments. Its goal is to spark a hiring manager's interest in interviewing you. The most effective resumes demonstrate to an employer that you have the specific skills and abilities they require, by providing specific examples of when you developed and how you used these skills.

On average an employer spends only 10-20 seconds reading a resume for the first time and 85% of employers stop reading resumes that have spelling or grammatical errors. Further, in a survey of 600 hiring managers, the overwhelming majority said that the most important part of a resume is the "Summary of Qualifications" section and yet only about 5% of people include this in their resume.

GENERAL TIPS

- **Put the most important information at the top** in a Summary of Qualifications, or Key Skills section. Based on a survey of the NACE (National Association of Colleges and Employers in the US) employers recruiting university students ranked the following skills as very important:
 - Communication Skills
 - Teamwork skills
 - Strong work ethic
 - Analytical skills
 - Initiative Flexibility/Adaptability
 - Interpersonal Skills
 - Computer skills
 - Problem-solving skills
 - Detail-oriented
- **Be honest, modest and creative in your summary of qualifications** e.g. "Experienced researcher, voracious reader, quick learner." Or "Responsible, self-started, fluent in Chinese with a broad and deep knowledge of Asian cultures."
- **Education or Experience first?** If you do not have the specific major that the recruiters state, you may want to put your skills/experience first so as to avoid being overlooked because of generalizations or assumptions about what your abilities are
- **Include the exact words listed in the job posting**, if you indeed have those skills/qualifications. If a posting states "event planning experience" put "event planning experience" – resume scanning software may eliminate you if you do not explicitly state that you have what they are looking for
- **Don't use cutesy email addresses** on your resume like *feline lover@gmail.ca* or *sharpshooter@hotmail.com*.
- **Don't include an "Objectives" section**. Your resume is prime real-estate, so don't waste space stating the obvious
- **Don't include "references available upon request"**. Again, you are wasting space on the obvious
- **Don't include photos, age, gender, sexual preference, religion or other information that is not relevant** to your professional qualifications
- **Use short phrases** that include outcomes and accomplishments e.g. "Implemented a new online document organizing system that resulted in faster retrieval times."
- **Use a matching style/format** for your resume, cover letter, and reference sheet
- **Prepare more than one version** of your resume that speaks to different areas of expertise and goals rather than trying to cram it all into one long resume
- **Don't trust spell check** – always have at least 2 other people proof read your resume

FORMATTING/STYLE TIPS

- Use common fonts such as Helvetica, Arial, Times New Roman, or Century Gothic
- Use 10-12 point fonts and never use more than 2 different fonts
- Use ½" to 1" margins
- Recent graduates should limit their resume to one page
- Be consistent with your punctuation – do not punctuate the end of bulleted statements
- Use quality white or off-white resume paper and print in black
- A functional or a combination resume is usually the best format for a new university graduate

RESUME FORMATS

CHRONOLOGICAL

Use this style when you have work experience that is directly related to the job that you are applying for. Information is presented in reverse chronological order with an emphasis on paid work experience.

- List experiences from present to past, primarily focus on accomplishments, highlights and key components of each job
- Highlight progression and growth through job titles, promotions and names of employers
- This style will make non-impressive job titles, gaps in employment and frequent career changes more prominent

FUNCTIONAL OR SKILLS BASE

This style is best suited to new grads and people looking to make a career change. This style deemphasizes irrelevant job titles and work history and draws attention to transferrable skills.

- Highlight demonstrated skills and abilities by organizing information in categories that detail the main skills and accomplishments that best support your career goal (e.g. Communication, Leadership, Project Management, Organization, Analysis and Problem Solving)
- Draws from all sources of knowledge and experience including jobs, volunteer experience, extra-curricular activities, interests, course-work etc.

COMBINATION

Use this format when you have some relevant work experience, but also want to highlight transferrable skills that you have acquired through other experiences.

- Combine elements of the Chronological and Skills-Based formats
- Emphasize both work experience and transferrable skills

RESOURCES

Visit www.huronuc.ca/students/service_centre/Career_Development/ for other tip sheets, action verbs and handouts.

Make an appointment with Clare by e-mailing ctatter3@uwo.ca to review your resume one-on-one.

Visit success.uwo.ca/index.cfm/careers/ for tips, tools and resources provided by the Student Success Centre.