



## Resume Guide

### What is a resume?

A concise summary of your *education, experience, accomplishments, skills* and *other qualifications* especially relevant to your career interests and your audience's needs. A resume is NOT a complete history of your life or work. Your resume serves as an introduction to your skills and experiences, and is often an employer's first impression of you.

### Why do I need a resume?

Consider it a marketing tool used to communicate your professional qualifications. Convey an understanding of your audience's needs, priorities, hiring criteria, and vocabulary through the content you include. Your resume's job is to get you an interview!

### How do I tailor a resume?

Begin by researching the industry, job and/or employer you are targeting to determine which messages are most important to your audience.

- Clearly and succinctly highlight your *most relevant* experiences
  - E.g. Rather than providing an extensive list of classes, only include a select few that have been most important in your education, and are pertinent to the type of work you seek.
- Include skills that align with requirements and qualifications of the specific industry or job posting.
- Emphasize your accomplishments, contributions, and outcomes.
- Don't forget to create visually appealing format – one that is well-organized and easy to read.

## Elements of a resume

### Format

Select a layout that suits your experiences and avoid using a resume template. Starting with a blank page is much easier to tailor.

- Stick to 1-page in length; use standard 8 ½" x 11" paper
- You might consider a 2-page resume if you have an advanced degree, or extensive relevant experience (10+ years)
  - If you have a 2nd page, put your name on the top or bottom of page 2
- Leave sufficient white space; margins should be .5" to 1"
- Use consistent fonts (e.g. Arial, Times New Roman) and text sizes (10-12pt)
- Emphasize what is most important using *italics*, **bold** fonts, and CAPS (use sparingly!)
- Use consistent formatting throughout your resume; avoid using colors or graphics, which could affect how an [applicant tracking system](#) interprets your resume.





## Content

- Your contact information is listed at the top of your resume (name, email, phone number, address)
- Education is commonly listed next. Include all important information, such as dates of graduation, degree earned, and GPA. Consider including relevant or notable coursework.
- Additional section headings should invite your readers' interest (e.g., "Related Experience, Independent Research, Community Involvement"); Avoid generic section headings (e.g. "Employment, or Other")
- Give evidence of your skills and personal impact: show not only that you completed tasks but that you contributed to organizational goals.
- Quantify bullet points to convey size and/or scale of project, budget, team, time or results.
- Give examples that demonstrate personal skills/attributes (e.g. leadership, teamwork, adaptability)
- Omit unrelated memberships and information that is repetitive, implicit (e.g. high school graduation for a college graduate), or out-of-date.
- If you are a US citizen or hold a permanent resident visa, include this if readers might have reason to think otherwise.
- It is a good idea to exclude data relevant to salary expectations, religious or political affiliations, geographic descriptions and personal information (e.g. age, marital status, photo).
- Employers assume that "references are available upon request," so omit this phrase.

## Style Guidelines

- Use action verbs and strong adjectives
- Avoid repeating words or phrases, as well as using jargon
- Leave out unnecessary words, sentences, and phrases e.g. "Duties included / Hired to / Project involved / Responsible for..."
- Avoid stilted or confusing language. Ask yourself, "Would I talk like that?"
- Don't use the first person, I, or any pronouns.
- Be consistent and use the same grammatical style throughout.
- Avoid self-flattering terms such as "highly skilled, outstanding, or excellent." Describe your accomplishments effectively and let readers decide for themselves that you are well-qualified.
- Be honest and accurate, but not overly modest.

## Final Edit

- Proofread one more time to ensure correct spelling, grammar and punctuation.
- Ask a classmate, friend, or someone unfamiliar with your background to review your resume for clarity and effectiveness.
- [Schedule an appointment](#) with a career counselor or peer career advisor to review your resume.

For more tips, information, and sample resumes, review the [CAPD Career Handbook](#).