

WHAT IS A RESUME?

Your resume is often one of the first things a prospective employer sees; its purpose is to present your skills, achievements, and qualifications as effectively and briefly as possible. Writing a resume is like developing an advertisement to market an interesting and exciting “product”—YOU!

MAKING IT COUNT

Most employers look at a resume for no more than a minute so it's important that yours is extremely easy to read and highlights your best qualifications. It should be a targeted compilation of any relevant, recent experiences that support your candidacy for a given position and NOT a running list of everything you have accomplished. For résumé samples, visit the Career Center Handouts & Samples page.

Important Reminders!

- You must have your resume approved by a Peer Career Advisor or Career Advisor before you can apply for most positions posted on Quest.
- Save your resume (and other application materials) as a PDF before submitting it for an application.
- Check for spelling mistakes and grammatical errors.
- Always include accurate information – do not misrepresent yourself.
- Know what is on your resume. Anything is fair game for an interview!

FORMAT & LENGTH

The recommendations for format and length of a resume will vary depending on where you are at in your career and what types of experiences you've had. The following suggestions are for college students and recent graduates. For résumé samples, visit the Career Center Handouts & Samples page.

FORMAT

The chronological format presents your experiences in reverse chronological order, highlighting your titles, employers, and dates of employment starting with the most recent at the top of each section and finishing with the least recent at the bottom. This is the preferred format for college student applicants.

LENGTH

Keep your resume to ONE page. This is especially true for those interested in any type of business career. Exceptions can be made for students with extensive laboratory and research experience applying for positions that ask for such qualifications. Typically, they will request a C.V. (curriculum vitae), which is like a resume, but can be over a page, and should list all pertinent research and publications. Meet with one of the career advisors for more information about this kind of document.

THE RESUME

RESUME CONTENT

Resumes are generally arranged by topics, or headings. The following are examples of typical headings you might use on your resume. For examples of how these are laid out in a resume, visit the Career Center Handouts & Samples page.

Contact info The first thing on a resume should be your name, address, phone number, and e-mail address. Your name should be the boldest and largest part of this heading.

Education List your college education first. State the degree you are a candidate for (Bachelor of Arts), your major(s)(if declared), concentration(s), expected graduation month/year, and overall/major GPA (if over 3.00). List any study abroad experience in this section, as well as any scholarships and academic honors you have received. If relevant, you can also include your thesis topic or relevant coursework.

For underclassmen, include high school information (school, location, awards). Juniors can include exceptional high school information. Seniors can do so as well, but are generally discouraged from including high school details unless you're applying for a job in your hometown.

Experience The section includes both paid and unpaid experiences – any activity that took considerable time and produced marketable skills is appropriate for this section. Summer internships and school year jobs are the most typical examples, but significant campus extracurricular or volunteer experiences can also be included.

In reverse chronological order, give your title, the name of the company/organization, the geographic location, the dates worked, and a brief description of your responsibilities. Use bulleted statements for maximum effectiveness and begin each statement with an action verb (see list of action verbs on next page). Avoid passive language and personal pronouns.

You may want to separate your experience into multiple sections; for example, “Relevant Experience” and “Additional Experience,” or “Work Experience” and “Extracurricular Experience.” Use the combination of headings that reflect your most important experiences and accomplishments.

Skills & Interests If you have significant language or technical skills, you may want to create a section to emphasize them. You can also include any certifications or licenses you have (CPR, life-guarding, etc.), if relevant. If you have space, mention your personal interests like travel, hiking or painting, though the more specific you can be, the better (e.g. ‘contemporary American short fiction’ is better than ‘reading’) This is not a necessary section but adds talking points to your resume.

THE RESUME

LIST OF ACTION VERBS

accomplished	decentralized	helped	performed	shaped
achieved	decreased	hired	pinpointed	showed
acquired	defined	identified	pioneered	simplified
activated	delegated	implemented	planned	sold
adapted	delivered	improved	prepared	solved
addressed	demonstrated	improvised	presented	sorted
administered	designated	increased	prevented	specified
advanced	designed	influenced	processed	sponsored
advised	determined	initiated	procured	staffed
allocated	developed	inspected	produced	standardized
analyzed	devised	inspired	programmed	started
anticipated	directed	installed	projected	stimulated
applied	discharged	instigated	promoted	streamlined
appointed	discovered	instituted	proposed	strengthened
appraised	distributed	instructed	proved	stretched
approved	documented	integrated	provided	structured
arranged	doubled	interpreted	published	studied
assessed	earned	interviewed	purchased	suggested
assigned	effected	introduced	realized	summarized
attained	eliminated	invented	recommended	supervised
audited	enforced	investigated	recruited	surveyed
centralized	engineered	lectured	reduced	sustained
clarified	established	led	re-established	tailored
collaborated	estimated	liquidated	renegotiated	taught
combined	evaluated	located	reorganized	tested
completed	exceeded	made	reported	tightened
composed	executed	maintained	represented	traded
conducted	exercised	managed	researched	trained
constructed	expanded	marketed	resolved	transacted
consulted	expedited	mediated	restored	transferred
contributed	extended	minimized	reviewed	uncovered
controlled	facilitated	modernized	revised	undertook
coordinated	formed	modified	scheduled	used
created	founded	monitored	selected	utilized

THE RESUME

TARGETING YOUR RESUME

For each position you apply to, you should revise and target your resume to highlight the most relevant qualifications and experiences. It doesn't make sense to use the same resume for every position because different employers seek distinct qualities and experiences from their candidates. Read the job or internship posting carefully and pay special attention to the job requirements, qualifications, and responsibilities. Conduct research on the organization and industry. The more you know about who will read your resume and what they seek, the more you will be able to create a document that catches their attention. Here are some ways to target your resume:

- **Create distinct resumes for distinct purposes.** If you have more than one career interest, you should create separate resumes tailored to those interests. You will customize the resume even more once you are pursuing a specific position in that field of interest.
- **Include a relevant coursework section.** If you have completed courses that are relevant to your opportunity, include the names of classes in your education section. If you have both introductory and advanced courses in the same discipline, include only the higher level courses. A senior thesis may also be included here, although you may choose to present it in an experience section if your topic is extremely relevant. In this case, you would need to develop bullet points describing your research.
- **Group similar material to emphasize your strengths and title accordingly.** Paid and unpaid opportunities can be included in your experience sections. Consider the similarities between your experiences and develop sections that reflect relevant competencies, applicable to the position (e.g. Communications Experience, Teaching Experience, Experience with Youth, etc.).
- **Choose items to include wisely.** It isn't necessary for a resume to include all past and present experiences. Select the most relevant information to communicate and make sure that your resume is easy to read and concise.
- **Prioritize sections according to the employer's interests.** Include sections with the most relevant experience close to the top of your document.
- **Prioritize your bullets.** To capture the employer's attention, your most important and relevant contributions and responsibilities should be listed first.
- **Format your experiences to emphasize most relevant details.** Determine whether it is more important to emphasize your position titles or the name of the organization within each section. Keep in mind that the order and format of how information is presented must be maintained for each entry within a section. Emphasis can be done by using bold, italics, or other formatting.
- **Use language that your target employers recognize.** When possible, integrate the language of a job description, organizational mission statement, or industry jargon to show your understanding of the job/industry/employer. Be sure that you understand the meaning of all of the terms you choose to use.

THE RESUME

Amherst College Career Center Resume Rubric

- Resume approved for uploading to QUEST
 Resume not approved for QUEST

Name	Reviewer	Date
Target for this resume: (e.g. career field, specific internship/job posting, graduate program, etc.)		

Your resume is an important marketing tool and it will reflect the strength of your communications skills. Employers usually spend only 30 seconds initially examining your resume. Your goal is to interest the reader so that she or he wants to interview you.

KEY: S=Satisfactory R=Revise

(To be used in QUEST, your resume must be rated satisfactory on every item below)

FORMAT		
S	R	Appearance – Fill one page without overcrowding; use consistent formatting (sections, paragraphs, lines, and words are spaced correctly); use appropriate font style (Arial, Calibri), font size (10-12 point), and formatting (indentation, bold, italic, CAPS, symbols); margins are at least a half inch and no more than one inch.
S	R	Name and Contact Information – Name is prominent; includes address where you can be reached through your search, telephone number, and email.
S	R	Education Section – Each institution is listed in reverse chronological order and includes institution name, location, and relevant date(s); degree is spelled out (Bachelor of Arts); major (if declared) and graduation month/year is indicated (e.g. Expected May 2015); GPA is formatted correctly (e.g. 3.36/4.00).
S	R	Experience Section(s) – Each organization is listed in reverse chronological order and includes name of organization, position title, location, and relevant dates.
S	R	Grammar, Spelling & Punctuation – Error-free; verbs are active and in correct tense; personal pronouns and extraneous words are omitted.
CONTENT		
S	R	Target – Resume is targeted for desired position, field, and/or industry; relevance of study abroad experience is explicit; relevant course work is listed; section labels reflect content and content substantiates headings.
S	R	Descriptive Statements – Begin with strong action verbs; avoid “duties included” or “responsible for”; include concrete examples and numbers whenever possible; descriptions are direct, concise, and indicate one’s impact; describe accomplishments, quantify results and list in order of importance to the reader; omit irrelevant and/or outdated information.
S	R	Skills & Interests – Accurately identify skills, communicate strengths, and reveal interests; include items which are relevant to reader; indicate level of proficiency for language or technical skills (e.g. proficient, conversant, fluent, native).
COMMENTS		