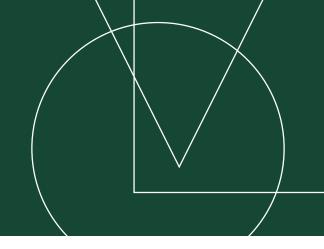# The Résumé

Types of Formats

There are two main ways to organize your information in a résumé. There is no "best" résumé format. Consider your skills and experience and determine which will showcase you best. Sometimes it may work best to combine features from both formats.

*   **Experience based** - Highlights your experience and your formal education
*   **Skills based** - Features a section that highlights relevant skills and achievements, in addition to sections about your experience and education.

Résumé Tips

1. **TARGET** your résumé to the reader – make sure you know what the employer is looking for (refer to the job ad). Ensure your résumé reflects the job ad by using keywords and key phrases, however, this does not mean copying and pasting from the job ad. Take the time to tailor your résumé for each position; you may have **more than one résumé format** to suit the type of work you are seeking, e.g. seasonal work vs work in your field.

2. Focus on ALL of your experiences, not just paid jobs. Remember academic coursework, experiential learning, volunteering, and extra-curricular activities can all be relevant in the world of work. To include these in your "Experience" section, entitle it "Relevant Experience" not "Employment" (which refers to just paid work). Use "(volunteer)" next to the position title to avoid any misunderstanding.

3. Use appropriate bolding, sizing, bullets, and fonts to make the most impressive information stand out. Caution: don't overdo this. Also, be consistent with formatting – check bullets, spacing, layout, and fonts.

4. Be concise and persuasive. Start statements with a strong action word – never use "Responsibilities included…". Remember, your résumé's purpose is to get you to an interview where you can provide more detail about your experiences and abilities. Employers are okay with one or two pages. Add your name and the page number to the second page.

Résumé Considerations for Application Tracking Systems (ATS)

Some organizations use software to filter applications based on specific criteria related to the job requirements. ATS may be the gatekeeper but ultimately, there will be a human reading your application. For ATS-friendly résumés:
*   Use MS Word doc.x format
*   Use keywords and keyword phrases in context (also use variations of them)
*   Use the full spelling as well as the abbreviation, e.g. Master of Business Administration (MBA)
*   Keep formatting simple: no tables, columns, fancy fonts
    o   Header / footer, graphics – ATS can't read these so it's only for the human; if you have a second page, your name and "p. 2" can go in the footer for when it's printed
*   You can use bullets, bold text, CAPS, tabs -- as long as letters aren't obscured or touching
*   Use conventional headings, job titles
    o   e.g. "Customer Service Assistant" NOT "Customer Service Ninja"

The Basic Content

1) Contact Info

Name, address(es), telephone, email, LinkedIn address on top of first page

· Is your email address professional?

2) Objective

Optional. If included, it should be brief, clearly stated and match the job/program.

· Avoid "fluff" – this statement focuses on your objective for applying to this specific job
· The focus should be on what you have to offer to the employer, not on **your** needs

3) Summary

A summary/profile highlights your strengths **that are relevant to the job**

· 5 or 6 key points that will encourage the reader to look at the rest of your résumé
· Mention skills, experiences, knowledge, a personal quality that's relevant
· Prove it – add details about the skills and mention how they were developed
· Other names for this section - Profile, Highlights, Summary of Qualifications

4) Education

Degree / Diploma / Certificate; Specialization/ Major; Institution Name; Date completed (or "to present")

Some additional information to include, if relevant to the reader:

· Relevant Courses, Projects and Research
· Academic Highlights / Achievements / Awards
· Professional Development Activities
· Experiential learning, internships, placements, community-based research could go in this section or under Experience

5) Relevant Skills

This section focuses on the transferable skills you can bring to the job.

· Use subheadings to organize and group similar skill sets
· Include academic, volunteer, extracurricular and work experiences to describe how you developed / applied these skills
· Can be an optional section

6) Experience

Description of employment and volunteer experiences. Could also include experiential learning / internships / placements, community-based research.

· Go as far back as relevant - reverse chronological order
· Try dividing into subheadings to highlight best, not just most recent, jobs. (i.e. "Relevant Experience" and "Other Experience")
· Focus on accomplishments during the experience; include transferable skills

7) Optional Headings

Awards – Includes bursaries, scholarships, and other recognition
· Include a BRIEF statement describing the award (e.g. "Awarded for exceptional leadership in the community")

Volunteer Activities, Extra-curricular Activities, Special Achievements
· Professional affiliations, certifications, initiatives

Interests - Indicates your personality and uniqueness
· Only include if space permits and has a purpose (i.e. somewhat related, unique, demonstrates a personal characteristic)

References

Indicate "References available."

· Typically, you will be asked to provide a list of references at the interview

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