

Step-by-Step Resume Guide & Templates

Your resume is a marketing piece that will help employers determine if your skills and experience meet the requirements to perform a specific job within their organization. Its purpose is to get you an interview. This guide will help you create a resume that clearly and concisely describes pertinent information about your skills, experiences, and accomplishments.

A resume is made up of sections that help employers learn about a candidate; some sections are essential, while others are considered optional. Through the resume writing process you will receive feedback from other people and ideas from sample resumes, but you must decide what best communicates the most important information about you to a potential employer and what will resonate most with the employer's hiring goals.

Examples have been included in this step-by-step guide to emphasize basic resume structure and to guide the development of your resume. Resume templates are located at the end of the guide.

Resume Guide Contents and Links to Sections:

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THE RESUME - FORMAT & CONTENT AT A GLANCE:

Format--The Basics:

- Use only one font for the body of the resume
- Use an easily readable font that is 10-12 point (Times New Roman or Arial). Your name may be larger
- Use formatting, such as boldfacing, underlining, and italicizing for emphasis only and not in combination
- Abbreviate states with capital letters (PA) when applying for positions within the United States
- If including a location outside of the United States, include City, Country
- Keep margins and spacing uniform/consistent
- Length: Master's Degree Students' resumes should be one page. PhD students' resumes should be two pages for industry job searches (see sample templates)

Content--The Basics:

- Within each heading, items should be listed in reverse chronological order
- Headings/sections should be listed in order of importance/relevance
- Avoid jargon that isn't universal to your field. Simple, common language is best when possible
- Ensure experience and qualifications are accurately represented
- Avoid abbreviating names of organizations, titles and descriptors
- Include your personal phone number
- List an e-mail address: use your CMU email and/or a professionally named personal account (ex: first_last@gmail.com)
- You should include your customized LinkedIn profile link in your contact information section
- Do not list references or "References available upon request"

THE SECTIONS OF A RESUME

RESUME HEADINGS

The top of your resume should highlight your name, email and phone number. Unlike the remainder of your resume, no heading is required for your contact information. All sections that follow should have headings that accurately describe their content. This guide will review the basic headings that you may include in your initial resume. You must evaluate the most important items from your background and determine the most appropriate order for the sections of your resume. Your career consultant can assist you in this process.

CONTACT INFORMATION

You should begin your resume with this information at the top. Be sure that the phone number you list will be answered by YOU and has a professional outgoing voicemail message. You SHOULD also list your email address (same rule applies, use one that you check often) and your customized LinkedIn URL in this section. It is optional to include a personal website or online portfolio.

For example:

Firstname M. Lastname

xxx1234@andrew.cmu.edu ♦ (412) 555-5555 ♦ www.linkedin.com/firstlast

You SHOULD NOT include:

- Personal information: birth date, marital status, height, weight, personal identity information (social security number, passport info), etc.
- Any pictures.
- References: It is not necessary to indicate references are available upon request. You should have contact information for your references, on a separate document, as some companies may require them. You should request permission from references (to serve as a reference) prior to sharing their information.

EDUCATION

Education should appear as the first section of a graduate resume. Start with your most recent educational experience: Carnegie Mellon University. Bold university names and spell them out completely. List your **Degree** (Complete and Proper Degree Name as it appears on your records) and **Graduation Date**.

Must include:

Name of Institution and location
Major and Minors/Field of study

Month & Year of graduation OR anticipated graduation date
Degree awarded or to be awarded

Optional to Include:

GPA
Selected Coursework

Foreign Study and Exchange Programs
Name and brief description of thesis topic (if applicable)

Below is an example of the education section:

EDUCATION

Carnegie Mellon University

Master of Science in Electrical and Computer Engineering
GPA: 3.71/4.00

Pittsburgh, PA
May 2015

Indian Institute of Technology

Bachelor of Science in Electrical and Computer Engineering
GPA: 9.0/10.0

Mumbai, India
May 2012

- **GPA:** If you include your GPA, make sure you include the scale (ex. 3.3/4.0 or 8.7/10.0). See your Career Consultant to discuss if you have questions.

COURSEWORK

Any relevant coursework that you include is recommended to be listed under a separate heading or subheading (within Education), as “Relevant Coursework” or “Selected Coursework.” Do NOT simply list every course you’ve taken. Only highlight those courses that are most relevant to the positions/field that you plan to pursue. If listing both undergraduate and graduate courses, labels should be included.

For Example:

GRADUATE COURSEWORK

Energy (Conversion and Utilization)
Combustion and Air Pollution
Advanced Thermodynamics

Energy (Policy and Economics)
Energy System Modeling
Industrial Ecology

It is sometimes of greater value to instead include the skills you learned in the courses in a more robust “Skills” section and/or projects from the courses in your “Academic Projects” section.

The location of the “coursework” section varies depending upon the contents of your other sections. Contact your career consultant for advice on the order of your resume content.

EXPERIENCE

We advise you to have your resume reviewed by your Career Consultant as your consultant may provide feedback regarding the customization of your resume section(s) and what content to include. As you gain experience you may have more narrowly focused sections such as “Academic Research Experience,” “Professional Experience,” etc. “Experience” as a standalone title implies employment. If the information you have included in an “Experience” section is not in fact employment, then you should rename that section to more accurately reflect the nature of the entry and/or move the entry to a more appropriately titled section.

A header for each employment experience entry should include:

Job/Position Title

Organization name

Location (city and state or equivalent)

Dates (month and year format or term and year for academic year related experiences)

Bold the most important piece of information which is typically your **job title or the company**.

For Example:

EXPERIENCE

Best Engineering Company

Hardware Engineering Intern

Palo Alto, CA

June-August 2014

- Led a four-week project evaluating the design of a product in development identifying a cost reduction of 10%
- Developed factory test requirements and participated in factory site visits to oversee successful testing
- Presented project proposal and findings to senior leadership, resulting in favorable feedback and recommendation for inclusion in the new product’s design

After the header, describe your experience and results using action-oriented statements. Start each statement with an action verb. You should use consistent punctuation for your bullets (remember, these bullet points do not require periods, semi-colons, etc.).

Try to write one phrase per line when possible, but no more than two lines per bullet point. Use bullets to indicate new lines. Review the [Action Verbs List](#) (enclosed) for assistance in selecting a variety of strong verbs for your resume.

PROJECTS

We also suggest that you select a number of academic and/or research projects to highlight on your resume. This serves to further provide examples of your experience and to illustrate practical applications of your skillset.

For Example:

ACADEMIC PROJECTS

Robot Design and Build

Carnegie Mellon University

Fall 2015

Pittsburgh, PA

- Designed and constructed circuits using a protoboard to power a beeper, LED, clock, memory chip, and two motors
- Combined circuits to create a mini programmable robot and successfully programmed the robot to complete a test course with zero failures or errors

FOCUS ON RESULTS- Experience & Projects

Employers assess your resume to determine if candidates have the appropriate proven results and experience for their organization/position. List your key achievements and add details which show your demonstrated results.

Begin sentences with action verbs (past tense unless it's a current activity/project) and be specific when detailing your results and the value you added to each experience.

Use this formula to get started:

Action Verb + Context (tell the what) + Result (Metrics, Outcome, and/or Impact)

Look at the following samples:

- Combined circuits to create a mini programmable robot that completed a test course with zero failures or errors
- Developed MEP 3D model using Revit, collaborated with architectural and structural groups to integrate models in Solibri and performed clash detection to overcome discrepancies in design and model
- Designed a carry-on suitcase that can increase storage capacity by 133% to reduce the need for checked luggage as part of a team of five
- Researched and analyzed the data of different cells to determine the optimal experimental parameters and to understand the diameter-dependent lithium storage performance
- Developing a tool using Qt for urban and highway driving that will enable more human-like autonomous behavior

When constructing the detail of this section, as a graduate student, your resume should encompass the most relevant experience from your undergraduate work to present day. The more current/recent and relevant (to your job/internship search) an experience is, the more detail you should provide.

SKILLS

List any relevant skills specific to your field including technical, lab, and knowledge-based skills you can apply to your field. Sub-categorize your skills whenever possible. List/label skills and foreign language proficiencies (if your proficiency levels vary). Do not include soft skills such as "teamwork" or "leadership" in this section.

For example:

SKILLS

Application Software: MATLAB, SolidWorks

Programming Languages: C/C++, Java, Python

Languages: English (Fluent), French (Conversational), Hindi (Native Speaker)

ACTIVITIES, HONORS, PUBLICATIONS, CONFERENCES & PATENTS

Activities

List memberships in campus and professional organizations or other activities that show involvement in your academic community or profession. Especially include those in which you had a leadership position.

Honors

Honors, Scholarships, Fellowships, and Awards should be listed, if received. Depending on the type of honor, these honors may be embedded within other sections or experiences OR if robust/varied enough, included as a standalone section. Select only those awards or honors that represent your strengths and are timely (i.e. you will not include high school honors).

Publications

Publications can be listed in a separate section if numerous, or under the relevant research/work experience.

Conference Presentations

Conference presentations can be listed in a separate section if numerous, or under the relevant research/work experience section to which they apply.

For example:

HONORS & LEADERSHIP

Dean's List, College of Engineering
Chapter President, Society of Women Engineers

Spring 2014-Fall 2016
Fall 2015- Spring 2016

OBJECTIVE/SUMMARY

The use of an objective/summary is optional.

If you decide to include an objective or summary, describe the career path that you are pursuing, and your skills/experiences that will enable you to add value to an organization. If your objective/summary isn't adding clarity and advancing your purpose and resume, remove it.

WHY INCLUDE A CAREER OBJECTIVE OR SUMMARY ON YOUR RESUME? If you have a diverse or varied background, it may help to focus your resume and provide clarity to an employer on your career goals, your related skills and the value you can add to the prospective organization.

Consider the following when writing an objective/summary:

- Focus on what skills, experiences and abilities that you possess that would bring value to the employer and position to which you intend to apply.
- Avoid broad/generalized statements such as, "To pursue the computer engineering field."
- Avoid listing several fields or positions.
- It is acceptable to have two resumes with two different objectives or summaries and to tailor resumes to different job searches.

Strong Verbs List

accomplished
achieved
adapted
addressed
administered
administrated
advised
aided
allocated
altered
analyzed
applied
appraised
approved
approximated
arbitrated
arranged
ascertained
assembled
assessed
assigned
assisted
attained
attended
audited
augmented
authored
automated

balanced
boosted
briefed
broadened
budgeted
built

calculated
captured
catalogued
centralized
chaired
charted
clarified
classified
coached
collaborated

collected
communicated
compared
compiled
completed
composed
compromised
computed
conceptualized
concluded
conducted
confronted
consolidated
constructed
consulted
contacted
contributed
converted
convinced
cooperated
coordinated
counseled
created
critiqued
customized

debugged
deciphered
decreased
delegated
delivered
demonstrated
designed
determined
developed
devised
diagnosed
directed
disassembled
discovered
dissuaded
distributed
documented
drafted
educated
elaborated

elevated
eliminated
empathized
empowered
enabled
encouraged
enforced
engineered
enhanced
enlisted
ensured
established
estimated
evaluated
examined
exceeded
excelled
executed
expanded
expedited
explained
extended
extracted

fabricated
facilitated
finalized
forecasted
formalized
formed
formulated
fostered
founded
fulfilled

gained
gathered
generated
grew
guided

helped

identified
illustrated
implemented

increased
inferred
influenced
informed
initiated
innovated
inspected
inspired
installed
instilled
instituted
instructed
integrated
interpreted
interviewed
introduced
invented
investigated

justified

launched
lectured
led
listened

maintained
managed
marketed
mastered
measured
mediated
mentored
minimized
modeled
moderated
modernized
monitored
motivated

negotiated

operated
orchestrated
organized
overhauled
oversaw

performed
persuaded
pioneered
pioneered
planned
prepared
presented
prioritized
processed
procured
produced
programmed
projected
promoted
provided
publicized
published
purchased

rated
recommended
reconciled
recorded
recruited
reduced
referred
refined
reflected
reformed
remedied
remodeled
reorganized
repaired
reported
represented
researched
resolved
responded
restored
retrieved
revamped
reviewed
revolutionized

salvaged
saved
schedule
screened
searched
secured
selected
served
shaped
sold
solicited
solved
spearheaded
specified
spoke
sponsored
started
stimulated
strengthened
suggested
summarized
supervised
supplemented
supported
surveyed
synthesized
systematized

taught
tested
traced
trained
transformed
translated
troubleshoot
tutored

uncovered
updated
upgraded
utilized

validated
verified

wrote



RESUME SELF-REVIEW



GENERAL FORMATTING

- Margins are the same for the top, bottom, and sides and no smaller than 0.5 inches, no larger than 1 inch
- Font size is between 10 pt and 12pt font for the body of the resume, the same font is used throughout the resume
- Bullet points and sections are aligned uniformly throughout the resume
- Dates are written consistently
- Bullet point punctuation is consistent
- A consistent format is used throughout the entire document and within each section
- Sections/headings are listed in order of relevance/importance
- Information within each heading/experience is listed in reverse chronological order



CONTACT INFORMATION

- Full name (First and Last), cell phone number and professional email address (CMU or professionally named private email) are located at the top of your resume



EDUCATION AND COURSEWORK

- College/university names are spelled out (i.e. Carnegie Mellon University not CMU)
- The official name of each degree and program is listed
- You have listed only the month and year you earned your degree(s) and/or expect to earn it/them (no date ranges)
- GPA is listed (where applicable) and GPA scale is included (i.e. 3.75/4.0)
- Coursework list is limited to the courses most relevant to your job search and does not include future coursework



WORK, PROJECT AND RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

- Organization/Company name and location are clearly listed (city, state in United States; city, country if international)
- Job title is clearly displayed (when applicable)
- Course name and/or project name listed (when applicable)
- Dates of experiences are listed for each position, company and /or project
- Dates and location are on the right side of the page, organizations and titles are on the left side of the page
- Each phrase starts with an action verb in the appropriate tense (present for current, past for completed experiences)
- Bullet points include accomplishments, results, metrics, outcomes, etc. whenever possible



SKILLS

- Relevant skills are listed (Programming Languages, Software, Lab Instrumentation, Foreign Languages, etc.).
- Skills are subcategorized, specific skills are listed in each subcategory (i.e. Programming Languages: C, Java, C++)
- Skills are labeled with proficiency levels IF you have a range of proficiencies within the skills listed
- No soft skills are listed



ACTIVITIES/HONORS/LEADERSHIP

- The activities, honors/awards, and/or leadership experiences relevant and timely

Firstname M. Lastname

firstlast@andrew.cmu.edu ♦ (412)555-5555 ♦ www.linkedin.com/firstlastname

EDUCATION

University Name

Master of (Degree Program)

GPA: XX/Scale (i.e. 3.5/4.0)

Selected Coursework: [Optional- list only the coursework that is most relevant to your job search 3-6 classes]

Location (City, State)

Graduation Date (Month Year)

University Name

Bachelor of (Degree Program)- Major

[Optional- List high academic honors]

GPA: XX/Scale (i.e. 3.5/4.0, 8.0/10)

Selected Coursework: [Optional- list only the coursework that is most relevant to your job search 3-6 classes]

Location

Graduation Date (Month Year)

SKILLS

Category 1: [List only skills in which you are proficient]

Category 2: [List only skills in which you are proficient]

Languages: [Optional- list spoken languages multiple proficiencies exist. i.e.: English (Fluent), Hindi (Native Speaker)]

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Company A

Job Title

- Verb + Context + Result
- Verb + Context + Result
- Verb + Context + Result

Location

Duration (Month -Month Year)

Company B

Job Title

- Verb + Context + Result
- Verb + Context + Result
- Verb + Context + Result

Location

Duration (Month -Month Year)

Company C

Job Title

- Verb + Context + Result
- Verb + Context + Result
- Verb + Context + Result

Location

Duration (Month -Month Year)

ACADEMIC PROJECTS

Project Name

University Name

- Verb + Context + Result
- Verb + Context + Result
- Verb + Context + Result

Location

Semester/Date

Project Name

University Name

- Verb + Context + Result
- Verb + Context + Result
- Verb + Context + Result

Location

Semester/Date

LEADERSHIP

Title, Organization Name- Location

Title, Organization Name- Location

Duration

Duration

Firstname M. Lastname

firstlast@andrew.cmu.edu ♦ (412)555-5555 ♦ www.linkedin.com/firstlast

EDUCATION

University Name

Master of (Degree Program)

GPA: XX/Scale (i.e. 3.5/4.0)

Selected Coursework: [Optional- list only the coursework that is most relevant to your job search 3-6 classes]

Location (City, State)

Graduation Date (Month Year)

University Name

Bachelor of (Degree Program)- Major

[Optional- List high academic honors]

GPA: XX/Scale (i.e. 3.5/4.0, 8.0/10)

Selected Coursework: [Optional- list only the coursework that is most relevant to your job search 3-6 classes]

Location

Graduation Date (Month Year)

SKILLS

Category 1: [List only skills in which you are proficient]

Category 2: [List only skills in which you are proficient]

Languages: [Optional- list spoken languages multiple proficiencies exist. i.e.: English (Fluent), Hindi (Native Speaker)]

ACADEMIC RESEARCH AND PROJECTS

Organization

Project Title and/or Research Position Title

- Verb + Context + Result

- Verb + Context + Result

- Verb + Context + Result

Location

Duration (Month -Month Year)

Organization

Project Title and/or Research Position Title

- Verb + Context + Result

- Verb + Context + Result

- Verb + Context + Result

Location

Duration (Month -Month Year)

CONFERENCES

Last Name, First Name. "Title of Presentation/Speech." Name of the meeting and organization, Location (City, State OR City, Country), Day Month Year (i.e. 12 May 2015). Descriptor of Presentation (i.e. Keynote Address, Conference Presentation, etc.).

Last Name, First Name. "Title of Presentation/Speech." Name of the meeting and organization, Location (City, State OR City, Country), Day Month Year (i.e. 12 May 2015). Descriptor of Presentation (i.e. Keynote Address, Conference Presentation, etc.).

PUBLICATIONS

Author(s). "Title of Article." *Title of Journal* Volume.Issue (Year): pages. Medium of publication. [note submitted, under review, etc. if not yet published]

Author(s). "Title of Article." *Title of Journal* Volume.Issue (Year): pages. Medium of publication. [note submitted, under review, etc. if not yet published]

PATENTS

[Last name, first name of the inventor.] [The year the patent was filed.] [The title of the invention.] [Country Patent Application number,] filed [Month Date, Year.] Patent Pending.

[Last name, first name of the inventor.] [The year the patent was issued.] [The title of the invention.] [Country Patent number,] filed [Month Date, Year,] and issued [Month Date, Year.]

LEADERSHIP

Title, Organization Name- Location

Duration

Title, Organization Name- Location

Duration

ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE or AWARDS/HONORS or VOLUNTEER WORK

List Teaching Assistant Positions, Competitions, Honors, Awards, etc. in associated sections as your experience dictates

Firstname M. Lastname

firstlast@andrew.cmu.edu ♦ (412)555-5555 ♦ www.linkedin.com/firstlast

EDUCATION

University Name

Doctor of Philosophy in (Degree Program)

Thesis: (State the title of your Thesis)

GPA: XX/Scale (i.e. 3.5/4.0)

Location (City, State)

Anticipated Date

University Name

Master of (Degree Program)

GPA: XX/Scale (i.e. 3.5/4.0, 8.0/10)

Selected Coursework: [Optional- list only the coursework that is most relevant to your job search 3-6 classes]

Location (City, State)

Graduation Date (Month Year)

University Name

Bachelor of (Degree Program)- Major

GPA: XX/Scale (i.e. 3.5/4.0)

Selected Coursework: [Optional- list only the coursework that is most relevant to your job search 3-6 classes]

Location

Graduation Date (Month Year)

SKILLS

Category 1: [List only skills in which you are proficient]

Category 2: [List only skills in which you are proficient]

Languages: [Optional- list spoken languages multiple proficiencies exist. i.e.: English (Fluent), Hindi (Native Speaker)]

THESIS

University Name

Thesis Title

- Verb + Context + Result
- Verb + Context + Result
- Verb + Context + Result
- Verb + Context + Result
- Verb + Context + Result
- Verb + Context + Result

Location

Duration

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Company A

Job Title

- Verb + Context + Result
- Verb + Context + Result
- Verb + Context + Result

Location

Duration (Month -Month Year)

Company B

Job Title

- Verb + Context + Result
- Verb + Context + Result
- Verb + Context + Result

Location

Duration (Month -Month Year)

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Organization

Project Title and/or Research Position Title

- Verb + Context + Result
- Verb + Context + Result

Location

Duration (Month -Month Year)

Organization

Project Title and/or Research Position Title

- Verb + Context + Result
- Verb + Context + Result

Location

Duration (Month -Month Year)

CONFERENCES

Last Name, First Name. "Title of Presentation/Speech." Name of the meeting and organization, Location (City, State OR City, Country), Day Month Year (i.e. 12 May 2015). Descriptor of Presentation (i.e. Keynote Address, Conference Presentation, etc.).

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PUBLICATIONS

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Author(s). "Title of Article." *Title of Journal* Volume.Issue (Year): pages. Medium of publication. [note submitted, under review, etc. if not yet published]

Author(s). "Title of Article." *Title of Journal* Volume.Issue (Year): pages. Medium of publication. [note submitted, under review, etc. if not yet published]

Author(s). "Title of Article." *Title of Journal* Volume.Issue (Year): pages. Medium of publication. [note submitted, under review, etc. if not yet published]

PATENTS

[Last name, first name of the inventor.] [The year the patent was filed.] [The title of the invention.] [Country Patent Application number,] filed [Month Date, Year.] Patent Pending.

[Last name, first name of the inventor.] [The year the patent was issued.] [The title of the invention.] [Country Patent number,] filed [Month Date, Year,] and issued [Month Date, Year.]

ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE

[List items like Teaching Assistant Positions, Grader roles, etc. here]

University	Location
Title/Role	Duration (Month -Month Year)
• Verb + Context + Result	

LEADERSHIP

Title , Organization Name- Location	Duration
Title , Organization Name- Location	Duration
Title , Organization Name- Location	Duration

AWARDS and HONORS

Name of Award	Date Received (Month Year)
Name of Award	Date Received (Month Year)
Name of Award	Date Received (Month Year)

VOLUNTEER WORK

Position , Organization- Location	Duration
Position , Organization- Location	Duration

Contact your College of Engineering Graduate Student Career Consultants with questions:

Grad-Engineer-Careers@andrew.cmu.edu

Request a Career Consultant Appointment via Handshake: <https://www.cmu.edu/career/handshake/>