

# Washington Semester Program Resume Guide

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. A resume template is located at the end of the guide.

## **Resume Guide Contents:**

Sections of a Resume:

- Contact Information
- Education
- Coursework
- Research/Course Projects
- Professional Experience
- Leadership/Volunteering
- Skills

Strong Verbs List

Template

## **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. Your name and section headers may be larger
- Use formatting, such as boldfacing, underlining, and italicizing for emphasis
- Abbreviate states with capital letters (i.e. 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

### **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
- Ensure experience and qualifications are accurately represented
- Avoid abbreviating names of organizations, titles and descriptors. Do not use "etc"
- Include your personal phone number
- List an e-mail address, and use your CMU email and/or a professionally named personal account
- 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, address, 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. Make sure that the phone number you list will be answered by YOU and has a professional outgoing voicemail message. You should list your email address and LinkedIn address in this section. You can also include links to a personal website or portfolio. **NOTE: If you are applying to a congressional internship, we recommend you include your permanent address if it demonstrates that you are a constituent of the district or city to which you are applying. If you are not from Pittsburgh but are applying to a Pittsburgh congressional position, it can be helpful to include your CMU address.** Otherwise, a physical address is not necessary on your resume. If there could be a question around your citizenship, it is fine to list that you are a U.S. Citizen (provided that is the case.)

### **You SHOULD NOT include:**

- Personal information: birth date, marital status, height, weight, personal identity information (social security number, passport info)
- Photographs

For example:

**Firstname M. Lastname**

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

## **EDUCATION**

Education should appear as the first section of your resume. Start with your most recent educational experience: Carnegie Mellon University. Bold university names and spell them out completely. List your Degree Program and Graduation Date. Do not include your high school.

### **Must include:**

Name of Institution and location  
Degree Awarded/To be awarded

Month & Year of graduation OR anticipated graduation date  
Major and Minors/Field of study

### **Optional to Include:**

GPA

Foreign Study and Exchange Programs

*Below is an example of the education section:*

#### **EDUCATION**

**Carnegie Mellon University**

Bachelor of Science in International Relations and Politics

GPA: 3.71

Pittsburgh, PA

May 2018

**University of Sussex Study Abroad Program**

Brighton, UK

Fall 2017

## COURSEWORK

Any relevant coursework that you include should be listed under a separate heading or subheading (within Education), as “Relevant Coursework” or “Selected Coursework.” Do not list every course you've taken, but highlight the courses that are most relevant to the positions/field that you plan to pursue. You can simply list the course name – do not include course numbers or “currently enrolled.”

For Example:

### RELEVANT COURSEWORK

Policy Analysis

Negotiation

Principles of Economics

Statistics

French Grammar

Creative Writing

Data Analysis

Ethics and Global Economies

Typically the “Relevant Coursework” section will follow the “Education” section of your resume.

## RELEVANT RESEARCH EXPERIENCE / COURSE PROJECTS

We also suggest that you select a number of academic and/or research projects to highlight on your resume. This serves to provide examples of your experience and to illustrate practical applications of your skillset, especially if you don't have much relevant work experience to feature yet.

For Example:

### ACADEMIC PROJECTS

#### **Money and Morality**

Carnegie Mellon University

Fall 2017

Pittsburgh, PA

- Produced a research paper that examined the effects of economic development in relation to societal issues
- Examined the period from Communist revolution to modern day, and its relationship to demographic change and women's status in society

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

We advise you to have your resume reviewed by your Career Consultant as she may provide feedback regarding the customization of your resume/experience section(s) and what content to include. “Experience” as a standalone title implies employment. If the information you have previously 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 (“Research Experience” or “Volunteer Experience”, for example.) Also, if your professional experience is directly relevant to the job(s) to which you are applying, consider ordering it before your research/course projects. If it's not directly applicable, it should come afterwards.

A header for each employment experience entry should include:

**Organization Name**

**Job/Position Title**

**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

**Atlanta Community Law Center**  
*Development and Planning Intern*

Atlanta, GA  
May-August 2015

- Updated donor database using Excel resulting in a 10% increase in donations
- Researched information on former donors to identify trends
- Performed administrative duties including answering phones, sorting mail and ordering supplies

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).

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. Also pay attention to the tense of your verbs. If the experience is over, use past tense. If you're still working at the organization, use present tense. (In the above example, the verbs would change to "Update", "Research" and "Perform" if you were still employed at the Atlanta Community Law Center.)

#### **FOCUS ON RESULTS - Experience & Projects**

Employers assess resumes 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 examples:**

- Analyzed methodologies of various studies conducted by different organizations, including the United Nations and the US Department of Justice, resulting in a presentation of an ideal methodology to be used to conduct studies in Bangladesh
- Provided support to the Advocacy department to conduct a literature review for content development for a proposed study on gender violence
- Led two labs every week, teaching and assisting 45 students with using the Minitab software package for data analysis
- Counsel students on personal and academic issues, and responsible for budgeting \$9,000 for the hall while working in a team of 6 other Resident Assistants
- Assisted 2 senior researchers on projects focusing on child labor and minority ethnic groups in Cambodia to help 200 children get out of child labor and admitted into school

## Leadership Activities / Honors / Volunteer Experience

### Leadership 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. Do not include high school activities.

### Honors

Honors, Scholarships, Fellowships, and Awards should be listed, if received. Depending on the type of honor, these honors may be imbedded 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 likely will **not** include high school honors).

### Volunteer Experience

List experiences that show your involvement in the local or global community, and specify the number of hours of service. This section can be particularly relevant if you are applying to a non-profit organization. Development organizations can be particularly interested in your experience volunteering in a foreign country, but generally you should not list personal travel on your resume unless you were involved with a service project or organization while abroad.

For Example:

#### HONORS & LEADERSHIP

**Dean's List**, Dietrich College  
**Chapter President**, Society of Women

Fall 2016, Spring 2017  
Fall 2017- Spring 2018

#### VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

**Outreach 360**  
-Taught English in a rural elementary school

Belize City, Belize  
June-July 2017

## SKILLS

List any relevant skills specific to your field including technical, writing, and knowledge-based skills you can apply to your field. Sub-categorize your skills whenever possible. List/label skills in order of proficiency (i.e. most to least proficient). Do not include soft skills such as "teamwork" or "leadership" in this section.

For example:

#### SKILLS

**Software:** MATLAB, Minitab, Advanced Excel and Powerpoint

**Programming Languages:** C/C++, Java, HTML

**Languages:** Spanish (fluent), French (intermediate)

**Professional Writing:** research grants, proposals, white papers

**Other:** data analysis, data visualization, social media marketing (Hootsuite, Sprout Social)

## 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

# Firstname M. Lastname

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

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## EDUCATION

### Carnegie Mellon University

Bachelor of (Degree Program)- Major  
[Optional- List high academic honors]

Pittsburgh, PA

Graduation Date (Month Year)

GPA: XX [Optional- List if 3.0 or higher]

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## RELEVANT COURSEWORK

Course Name

Course Name

Course Name

Course Name

Course Name

Course Name

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## ACADEMIC PROJECTS / RESEARCH

### Project Name

University Name

Location

Semester/Date

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

### Project Name

University Name

Location

Semester/Date

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

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## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

### Company A

Job Title

Location

Duration (Month -Month Year)

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

### Company B

Job Title

Location

Duration (Month -Month Year)

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

### Company C

Job Title

Location

Duration (Month -Month Year)

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

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## LEADERSHIP / VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

Title, Organization Name- Location

Duration

Title, Organization Name- Location

Duration

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## SKILLS

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

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

**Languages:** [Multiple proficiencies may exist. i.e.: German (Fluent), Hindi (Native Speaker)]

Contact your Career Consultant with questions and to schedule an individual appointment to review your resume:

Kristin Staunton  
Assistant Director  
Dietrich College  
[kstaunton@cmu.edu](mailto:kstaunton@cmu.edu)