

# A Guide to Writing a Resume

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## OVERVIEW

A resume is a short document that describes your educational, professional and personal qualifications and achievements that is given to an employer when applying for a job or internship position. (Dictionary)

There are many methods and styles of writing a resume. However, please note that this guide is from our FIU Career and Talent Development Department, from information gathered from quality resources and interactions with employers, students, and alumni.

## COMMON RESUME FORMATS

### Chronological

This style is the most common used formats by job seekers. It is mostly used by individuals who are staying in the same field, has relevant training and/or work experiences, relevant job titles, and are applying to traditional job industries. Also referred to as “reverse-chronological resume” because the information is organized from most recent to oldest.

- Advantages:
  - ✓ Easiest to write and organize
  - ✓ Information is quick to find and work experiences are described specifically
  - ✓ Emphasizes steady work record and educational backgrounds
- Disadvantages:
  - ✓ Reveals employment gaps
  - ✓ Emphasizes job duties rather than competencies.

### Functional

This style emphasizes skills areas based on a combination of experiences. It is used by individuals who are changing careers, re-entering the job market, applying for positions that they may not technically be qualified for, or whose backgrounds does not emphasize their abilities for a job. Skills categories (i.e. Leadership, Customer Services, etc.) are usually rank ordered to support career objective.

- Advantages:
  - Emphasizes marketable skills
  - De-emphasizes dates and unrelated job experiences
- Disadvantages:
  - Sometimes not preferred by some employers because of its non-traditional approach
  - Difficult for the reader to assess background

## COMMON RESUME SECTIONS

### Contact Information

Contact information includes: your name, address, phone number, email address, and LinkedIn URL or professional website if available. It is recommended that your name stand out by using 14-16 font (bold optional), and the rest of the resume information 11-12 font.

### Objective

The objective's purpose is to give individual's your resume a focus for a specific job title or job industry. The job title, job companies, and goals relevant to the job/internship position are clearly stated. Other options beside using Objective include:

- Summary of Qualifications: Summarizes job experiences and skills relevant to a job position or career in at least 4 bullet points.
- Career/Professional Profile: Summarizes job experiences and skills relevant to a job position or career in a 3-5 sentences paragraph.

### Education

This section outlines an individual's educational institutions and locations, degrees, and dates that degrees were awarded. Only the month and year for the degree are necessary. It is recommended that institutions that did not award degrees are not to be included. Dates are also listed from most recent to oldest. High school information is not needed once relevant experiences are gained.

### Experience/Work Experience

This sections outlines an individual's job companies and locations, job titles, and dates of employment. This can include both paid and unpaid positions, as well as internships. Dates are listed as month and year to month and year, or present/current if still employed. In the chronological format, positions are ordered from most recent to oldest with a recommended 3-5 bullet points of job duties and skills that include quantitative information and qualitative results. However, for the functional format dates are less relevant with more emphasis on themes or skill areas instead and job positions listed at the end.

### Volunteer Experience/Leadership/Clubs Organizations/Achievements

Other sections such as "Leadership", "Clubs /Organizations", "Awards" are sections that list other academic and professional involvements and credentials. For volunteering, clubs/organizations, and leadership involvements, each experience should include the name of the company/organization, your role, and the dates of involvement. Bullet points for description are optional. For achievements/awards/honors the name of the award, the company that gave the award and the date (this could be year only) are included.

### Skills

This section can be at the top or bottom. Technical skills such as Microsoft Office tools, Photoshop, HTML coding, as well as spoken languages (i.e. Spanish, French, German, etc.) are listed in this area. Be specific about which Microsoft Applications (i.e. Excel, Access, etc.) that

you know and describe proficiency (basic, moderated, advanced). Also describe your proficiency in spoken languages.

## **DO'S AND DONT'S**

### **Do**

- ✓ Have your resume reviewed at least 3 times
- ✓ Always submit your resume with a cover letter
- ✓ Review your resume for grammatical spelling and errors
- ✓ Update your resume often
- ✓ Stay consistent with your font style, size, and color
- ✓ Tailor your resume to each job/internship position using keywords
- ✓ Update your LinkedIn account and include the URL with your contact information
- ✓ Spell out abbreviations/acronyms first and then place the acronym in parenthesis
- ✓ Use numbers and date (i.e. budget money, number of clients, etc.) when describing job duties in (3-5) bullet points
- ✓ Describe results (i.e. increased company revenue by 5%) when describing job duties in (3-5) bullet points

### **Don't**

- ✓ Use resume templates as Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS) may delete it
- ✓ Wait to create your resume at the last minute
- ✓ Use personal pronouns (I, me, mine, our, etc.) in your resume
- ✓ Double-space or add extra spacing in your resume
- ✓ Add references or "References Upon Request" unless applying for federal positions or asked to send references by the employer
- ✓ Go over 2 pages
- ✓ Include personal information (age, birthdate, race, sexual orientation, gender, etc.)
- ✓ Include your picture
- ✓ Include high school information unless recently graduated from high school and have not gained sufficient experiences
- ✓ Include interests or hobbies (i.e. working out, singing, etc.)