Resume Guide

UNIVERSITY OF
LOUISVILLE.

Career Development Center

louisville.edu/career

@uoflcareers

502-852-6701

Table of Contents

What is a Resume?

If you have ever applied for a job or internship, you likely have submitted a resume. But what is a resume and why do we need one? A resume is your personal billboard.
It is your opportunity to share your experiences and qualifications with an employer. It is your marketing tool designed to land you an interview.

Research shows that employers spend only a few seconds glancing over a resume. This means your resume needs to be engaging, concise, and easy to read. Employers search for keywords from the job description and need to be able to find the information quickly and easily. So you need to craft a resume, but what skills should you include? How should the document be formatted? Do you need to include color and different fonts to stand out?

There is no perfect resume format, but our staff at the UofL Career Development Center can help you create and refine a professional resume that will help you get noticed by employers.

This resume guide is your key to the basics of crafting a resume. If you feel you need additional help, stop by the Career Development Center during drop-in hours or schedule an appointment with your Career Coach in Cards Career Connection powered by Handshake.

Key Outcomes for Using a Resume
- Demonstrate how you meet the needs of the hiring audience
- Impress your prospective employer with a snapshot of your career, skills, and accomplishments
- Receive an interview offer from interested employer
- Create a guide for you and the hiring audience to prepare for an interview

Common Types of Resumes
- **Chronological Resume** – This is the most common resume format. Present education and work experience in reverse chronological order, meaning you list your most recent experiences first. Skills and accomplishments are described under each entry.
- **Functional Resume** – Your experience is explained under major skill headings rather than listing experiences chronologically. Experiences may be organized under categories such as "Leadership," "Program Management," "Supervision," etc. Use the job description as a guide to develop category headings. This format is seldom used.
- **Combination (Hybrid) Resume** – In many instances, the combination of both the chronological and the functional formats may be the most effective. This type of resume is useful for those who are changing career paths or re-entering the workforce after an extended absence. This format allows for experiences to be separated into different categories – related and unrelated – making the strongest impact by placing the most related experiences first, regardless of the dates during which the experiences took place. The hybrid resume is preferred to the functional resume when possible.

Resume Format and Design

When crafting your resume, it is important to keep your intended audience in mind. Oftentimes, your resume may go through several different channels and it is important to format it to get through all of those channels. The following recommendations are meant to get your resume through Applicant Tracking Systems, the Human Resource reviewer, and the Hiring Manager or Committee.

Your industry will determine some aspects of your resume format and design. Many fields will expect a traditional, black and white resume, while those in more creative fields (e.g. graphic design, marketing, advertising, etc.) will expect a resume with more color and personality.

Our biggest piece of advice: **do not use a template**. Whether you found it on Microsoft Word or purchased it from Etsy, templates are often difficult to manipulate and do not send well electronically. Instead, find an example resume format that you like and start from scratch on a blank Word document.

Length

What is the perfect resume length? You do not want your resume to be too short, indicating lack of experience and skill; however, you also do not want it to be too long and risk the employer not reading your relevant qualities. The recommended page length, for your resume, is 1-2 pages. Typically those finishing their undergraduate degree will have a 1 page resume while those finishing a graduate or professional degree may have 2 pages. **If you go onto a second page, you should utilize at least 2/3 of the page or condense your information down to 1 page.**

Margins

If you are having trouble fitting your content on your resume you can adjust the margins. The standard margins are 1" on all sides. If you need the space you can decrease the margins, but not smaller than 0.5" all the way around. When decreasing the margins, ensure the text doesn't appear too crowded.

White Space

As you begin adding content to your resume you might notice large open white spaces (space without text). Your goal is to use the white space as a tool to enhance the readability of your resume. When formatting your resume you want to avoid large open spaces, as well as too much clutter on one page. You can edit the amount of white space on your document by utilizing both sides of the page. For example, under your education header you can list your school and degree title on the left then list your graduation date on the right. This helps to make your resume easily readable and to balance the page.

Font Style and Size

There are a number of standard font styles that are acceptable for your resume, and you will see many opinions on font styles. While there is no right answer, typically the best fonts to use are sans serif fonts like Arial, Calibri, Helvetica, Tahoma, and Verdana. These fonts scan better than a serif font such as Times New Roman.

The main body should be between 10-12 point font. Headings should be slightly larger at 12-14 point, and your name should be the largest item on the page, typically at a size 14 or 16.

Try using *italics*, **bold** or CAPITALIZATION for section headings or job titles for visual appeal and readability. Stay consistent throughout your resume and avoid overdoing the formatting.

Color Use

Your resume will typically be sent electronically and will then be printed in black and white by the employer. Therefore, it is recommended that you format your resume in black and white, to avoid any issues with printing and losing content.

For some fields, it is acceptable to use a little color for your name or headers. A resume for a creative field has more flexibility in terms of color. The colors used should align with your personal brand.

Digital Formatting

When submitting your resume to an employer do not send as a Word document, unless specifically requested to do so. You should send your resume as a PDF to minimize formatting and compatibility issues.

You may be asked to upload your resume to an online Applicant Tracking System (ATS). In this case, you should also submit a PDF file of your resume. However, you might be asked to submit your resume within a text box, and for this you will want to have a "text only" version of your resume to copy and paste your resume into the text box. Below you can find step-by-step instructions on saving your resume as "text only:"

1. Open the final version of your Word document file. "Select All" then choose the "Copy" command.
2. Open Notepad on your PC or TextEdit on your Mac. Then choose the "Paste" command.
3. Review the resume and remove any unusual characters and fix spacing and format problems.
4. Add blank lines to improve the readability.
5. Use keyboard characters to deliver "text only" formatting. This might mean ALL CAPS for headings.
6. Save this "text only" version of your resume and have 2-3 people proofread for you.

Resume Content

You want to put your most important/relevant information towards the top of your document. You should consider this when determining how to organize your content. Below are common headers for content to include on your resume

Contact Information

Your name and contact information should be the first thing an employer sees on your resume. Your contact information should include:
- Name
- Email
- Phone Number
- Address (optional)
- Links to personal websites, portfolios, or LinkedIn (optional)

Your name should be the biggest thing on the page. You can use the name you typically go by, but remember that you must use your official name on all application materials. You can also choose to include your preferred name in parentheses.

Your contact information should include a reliable email address and phone number. Double check that you have your voicemail set up and your email address is professional and easy for employers to identify with you. You may choose to use your Louisville email, especially when applying to graduate programs or internships, but should also set up a professional email at Gmail, Outlook, etc. for your job search.

You may choose to include your address in your contact information although it is no longer necessary. It can be helpful to show you are from an area or have ties to an area, but otherwise, it is best to leave off. You can also include links to any personal websites or portfolios you have created or to your LinkedIn account. These website links can be left hyperlinked if submitting electronically so the employer can easily click on the link to visit your page.

Objective/Professional Summary

You might have heard of the resume objective statement, which tells a prospective employer your goals for submitting your resume. Most applications are now submitted online, responding to a particular job posting, so objective statements are less popular in most industries today. If you choose to include an objective statement, it is recommended that you make it as specific and targeted as possible. Include details about the position or field and the skills you can bring to the organization. Avoid generic statements that don't offer additional information to the employer.

Some people choose to use a resume summary, also referred to as a career summary, professional summary, or branding statement. This summary allows you to tell the employer what you have to offer and why they should hire you. Your resume summary should include knowledge, skills and expertise that meet the needs of the specific position in which you are applying. The summary can be in paragraph or bulleted format, and you may also bold or italicize keywords that you want to highlight.

It is not necessary to use an objective or a professional summary. This information can be included in your cover letter. Many people choose to save this space to include additional information in their experiences.

Education

Having a section dedicated to education allows you to highlight the relevant and often times required education and training needed for the position. The education section should include:
- Name of the institution(s), City, and State
- Official degree titles and major(s)/minor(s)
- Graduation date
- GPA and scale

After your first year of college, it is recommended you remove any information regarding your high school education. If you completed a degree from another institution, you will want to include that information under your current education. All education should be listed in reverse chronological order with your most recent experience listed first.

You should always include the official degree title for your program. Oftentimes, employers are seeking specific educational qualifications and your resume might not pass if your degree title isn't listed. This is typically something like "Bachelor of Arts," "Master of Science," etc. Check your department's website to find the official degree title for your program. You can choose to list your major along with the degree title (e.g. Bachelor of Science in Psychology) or under the degree as Major: Psychology. Include all majors, minors, and concentrations on your resume.

Include your graduation date with just the month and year it is anticipated. You do not need to include the words "anticipated" or "expected." You also do not need to include the date range for the time you have been at UofL.

Typically, it is recommended to include your GPA if it is above a 3.0. You can choose to include your major GPA or cumulative GPA but it is important to indicate which you are using and the scale (e.g. 3.5/4.0). Some applications may require you to include your GPA.

You may also choose to highlight honors and awards, relevant coursework (especially advanced or relevant elective courses), thesis/dissertation titles, or study abroad experience in your education section.

Experience

What experiences do you have that will highlight relevant skills and expertise needed for the specific position? When writing your experience section you want to focus on your skills and accomplishments instead of just listing work duties. We use experience as the broad term that encompasses all of your work experience, internships, campus involvement, extracurriculars, volunteering, etc. Experience included on your resume can be paid or unpaid. It is possible to have multiple types of experience sections.

For each experience, you will include:
- Organization Name and location
- Position Title
- Dates
- Approximately 2-4 descriptive bullet points

You will list the position title, company/organization, the city and state it is located, and the period in which you worked there. You do not have to indicate exact dates, instead, include the month and year for both when you started and finished. If you are using a chronological resume, these experiences will be listed in reverse chronological order. Under each experience you want to include 2-4 descriptive bullet points starting with a strong action verb describing your accomplishments. See more information on creating strong bullet points on pages 8.

Typical experience sections may include:
- Work Experience
- Course Project/Academic Experience
- Study Abroad (if not included in education)
- Campus/Community Involvement or Extracurriculars
- Research/Capstone

There are many other sections you may choose to include on your resume. You can add any sections that help to categorize your experiences. You do not have to include all of your work history. Only include information from high school if it is extremely relevant to the position for which you are applying or if it is your only work experience.

Technical Skills and Certifications

The skills section is intended for technical skills. Soft skills such as communication, teamwork, problem-solving etc. should be displayed through your bullet points (see pg. 8). Technical skills will differ for each field but may include things such as:
- Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Access)
- Web skills/programming languages
- Computer software (Adobe, Photoshop, InDesign, Publisher, Canva)
- Equipment (cameras, laboratory equipment)
- Certifications (Certified Nurses Aid, CPR)
- Language Skills (include proficiency level if needed)

References

References are not required for the resume. You do not need to include the statement "references available upon request." See our Reference Guide for more information and examples

Effective Resume Writing

We have already mentioned that content is the most important part of your resume, but what should you include? A strong resume has the content tailored to the job description, field, or industry. It is important to use industry-specific keywords or technical terms to enhance skills and experiences. If you can more clearly define your experiences, skills, and abilities, the employer will be more likely to move you forward in the hiring process.

When it comes to writing your experience descriptions, you want to mention skills and accomplishments that show you would be a good fit for the position. Your resume should be tailored to each specific position. Under each experience you want to list about 2-4 bullet points, not full sentences. An effective bullet point references skills or projects you completed that produced tangible results, usually positive results for an employer. Try to quantify your bullet points whenever possible! Add numbers to help strengthen your bullet points. There are three key elements to an effective bullet point: a strong action verb, what you did, and the results.

Effective Bullet Point Formula
strong action verb + what you did + result

Weak Example:
- Taught students English

Strong Example:
- Taught 18 fourth grade students grammar and composition resulting in an overall increase of 2 letter grades

See the list of action verbs on p. 10 All verb tenses should match the position. A present position should be in present tense while a past position should be in past tense. When creating your bullet points, think about the transferable skills you gained that would apply to the position for which you are applying. See a list of transferable skills on p. 12.

Dos and Don'ts of Resume Writing
- Be consistent with formatting and design
- Be positive and honest
- Get your resume proofread for spelling and grammatical errors
- Present your skills in the language of the employers, industry, or profession
- Do not use personal pronouns (I, me, we, us)
- Do not use abbreviations unless you have already identified the abbreviation (e.g. Student Activities Board (SAB) – you may then use SAB throughout).
- Do not mention salary expectations or wage history
- Do not list personal information including age, marital status, political affiliation, religion, or nationality
- Do not include a picture
- Do not list hobbies or social interests unless they are directly related to the position

Final Resume Checklist

Use this Final Resume Checklist to confirm your resume is ready to submit to an employer:

All information highlights skills and accomplishments
- ☐ Dates, titles, and locations are listed for every experience section item
- ☐ Each experience is described with multiple accomplishment statements which are brief and clear
- ☐ All descriptions in experience section use action verbs while providing comprehensive details
- ☐ All items are bulleted appropriately
- ☐ Font, size, and text formatting increases visual appeal
- ☐ Resume uses spacing to be eye-catching
- ☐ Resume is one or two complete pages
- ☐ Includes suggested components and additional sections to enhance resume
- ☐ Document has no instances of spelling or grammar errors

Career Development Center

The Career Development Center offers appointments free of charge for current UofL students. Students can meet one-on-one with staff members to discuss major/career exploration, get assistance with resume/cover letter writing, find an internship or job, and more!

For resume development and review, you should first stop by our drop-in hours, no appointment necessary! Meet with a Peer Career Advisor or Career Coach for a quick 10-15 minute chat about your resume. You can also submit your resume for review online through our Document Drop Program. Visit the Career Development Center website to submit your resume. If you need additional assistance, schedule an appointment with your Career Coach.

Drop-In Hours: Monday-Thursday, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the Career Development Center
Appointment Hours: Monday-Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Students: Log-in to Cards Career Connection powered by Handshake to schedule your appointment.
Alumni: Contact the Career Development Center to schedule an appointment.

Find more information about appointments, drop-in hours, and our contact information on our website.

PLEASE NOTE:
- Students from the College of Business are served by the Ulmer Career Management Center.
- Students from the J.B. Speed School of Engineering are served by the Speed Career Development Office.
- Students from the Brandeis School of Law are served by the Office of Professional Development.

Resume Power Words

Management skills	Communication skills	Clerical or detailed skills
analyzed	addressed	approved
assigned	arbitrated	arranged
attained	authored	catalogued
chaired	began	classified
contracted	contacted	completed
consolidated	corresponded	compiled
consulted	developed	dispatched
delegated	drafted	effectively
directed	edited	generated
executed	efficiently	implemented
excelled	expressed	insured
improved	formulated	monitored
increased	influenced	observed
managed	interpreted	participated
mastered	lectured	played a vital part
maximized	mediated	prepared
minimized	moderated	presented
oversaw	motivated	processed
planned	persuaded	proposed
prioritized	promoted	purchased
produced	publicized	recorded
recommended	recruited	retrieved
responsible for	reported	screened
reviewed	spoke	specified
scheduled	translated	specialized
strengthened	thoroughly	successfully
supervised	utilized	validated

Research skills	Technical skills	Teaching skills
achieved	assembled	adapted
collected	associated	coached
compared	assured	contributed
compiled	built	communicated
conducted	carried out	coordinated
critiqued	confirmed	emphasized
cut time/costs	devised	enabled
discovered	engineered	encouraged
evaluated	expanded	ensured
examined	launched	explained
gathered	maintained	guided
identified	operated	handled
inspected	overhauled	helped
interviewed	predicted	independently
investigated	programmed	informed
organized	remodeled	initiated
prevented	repaired	instructed
resolved	shortened	led
specialized	solved	made
summarized	trained	set goals
surveyed	upgraded	stimulated

Financial skills	Creative skills	Helping skills
administered	accomplished	advised
advanced	acted	advocated
allocated	acquired	aided
audited	conceptualized	anticipated
balanced	combined	assessed
budgeted	created	assisted
calculated	designed	cared
computed	established	clarified
concluded	explored	collaborated
estimated	fashioned	cooperated
exceeded	founded	counseled
marketed	illustrated	demonstrated
negotiated	instituted	diagnosed
obtained	integrated	educated
projected	introduced	expedited
raised	invented	facilitated
reduced	originated	familiarized
researched	performed	mentored
secured	revitalized	recognized
substantially	shaped	referred
sustained	visualized	represented

Formatting in Microsoft Word

1. **Don't use a MS Word template!** Microsoft Word has beautiful designs, but it may be difficult to make changes for your personal use. Instead, look at the resume examples on our website to create a resume that will suit your needs.

2. **Changing Margins.** Change the margins! Click on the 'Page Layout' tab and click on 'Margins.' You can choose one of the pre-set options or click on 'Custom' to create your own. Another option is to click on the line on the rule bar that indicates the margin and drag the line up or down, or side-to-side. We recommend anything between 0.5" to 1" margins.

3. **Manual Tabs.** Tabs are extremely helpful for formatting your document, especially when you want to align text perfectly without having to hit 'Tab' or the space bar to move it over. On the ruler, you can set a manual tab on the left, middle, and right side of your document by clicking the tab selector on the top-left corner of the ruler. Just keep clicking until it shows the type of tab you want and drag it to the margin you want to start typing from.

4. **Copying Formatting.** The Format Painter makes it happen quickly. Just select the portion of the document you want to copy by highlighting it and click the 'Format Paint' option (the little paint brush on the top left of the Home Tab). Then, select the section that you want to apply the formatting to.

5. **Bullet Points.** To create bullet points, you click on the 'Bullets' button on the Home Tab. If you click on the tiny arrow right beside it, you can select the shape of your bullet, but we recommend the solid black circle.
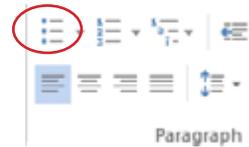
6. **Creating Borders.** In order to separate sections, some individuals like to add a horizontal bar in their documents. An easy way to do this is by highlighting the text and clicking on the 'Border' button. You can change the look of the line by clicking on the small arrow to the right of the 'Border' button and selecting 'Borders and Shading...'. This will open up a window for you to change the design, weight, and color of the line.

7. **Hyperlinks.** Adding a link to your website, portfolio, or social media profile? Right click on the text you want to add a link to and select 'Hyperlink.' On the menu screen, review the text shown in the 'Text to Display' field. Insert the web address in the 'Address' field, and click 'OK'. Check if the link is working by holding down the CTRL key and clicking the link to open it.

8. **Changing Font Case.** You can quickly change your headings' case by highlighting text and clicking on the 'Aa' button next to the font adjustment options. A dropdown menu pops up so you can make your selection. This allows you to change a word to all lowercase, capitalize the first letter of a sentence or every word in a sentence, or capitalize every letter.
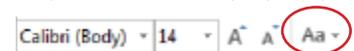
Transferable Skills Checklist

Over the years, you have developed skills from coursework, co-curricular activities, work, and life experiences. If you have researched topics and written reports or edited and presented papers for your classes, you have used skills that are not limited to just one discipline but are transferable to many different occupations or disciplines. A prospective employer expects you to be able to apply the skills you have learned in college and throughout your life to the work environment.

<u>Use the following checklist to help you identify some of your transferable skills.</u>

Communication Skills
- ☐ speaking effectively
- ☐ providing appropriate feedback
- ☐ writing clearly and concisely
- ☐ negotiating
- ☐ listening attentively and objectively
- ☐ expressing ideas
- ☐ persuading
- ☐ facilitating group discussion
- ☐ reporting information
- ☐ interviewing
- ☐ describing feelings
- ☐ editing
- ☐ public speaking
- ☐ responding appropriately to feedback
- ☐ using various styles of written communication
- ☐ conveying a positive self-image to others

Research/Planning/Investigation
- ☐ forecasting/predicting
- ☐ creating ideas
- ☐ developing evaluation strategies
- ☐ identifying problems and analyzing
- ☐ testing validity of data
- ☐ imagining alternatives
- ☐ designing an experiment or model
- ☐ identifying resources
- ☐ formulating questions
- ☐ gathering information
- ☐ solving problems and making conclusions
- ☐ setting goals
- ☐ observing and discovering
- ☐ extracting important information

Human Relations/Interpersonal
- ☐ developing rapport
- ☐ being patient
- ☐ being sensitive
- ☐ interacting effectively with peers and others
- ☐ listening
- ☐ persuading others
- ☐ conveying feelings
- ☐ being willing to take risks
- ☐ providing support for others
- ☐ teaching/instructing others
- ☐ motivating
- ☐ demonstrating effective social behavior
- ☐ sharing credit
- ☐ perceiving feelings and situations
- ☐ helping others
- ☐ working with diversity or multi-cultural issues

Organization/Management/Leadership
- ☐ initiating new ideas and tasks
- ☐ delegating responsibility
- ☐ handling details
- ☐ teaching/instructing
- ☐ coordinating tasks
- ☐ promoting change
- ☐ coaching/mentoring
- ☐ selling ideas or products
- ☐ counseling
- ☐ making decisions with others
- ☐ cooperating
- ☐ analyzing tasks
- ☐ keeping a group "on track"
- ☐ identifying people who can contribute to solutions