

RESUME WRITING GUIDE

This packet is intended to serve as a starting point for creating or improving your resume. It includes sample resumes, as well as best practices and helpful resources for developing a successful document.

Saint Mary's University Career Services staff are available to assist you with creating and/or improving your resume. Call (507) 457-6695 or stop by 70 Griffin Hall to schedule an appointment.

Career Services and Internships

70 Griffin Hall

Ext. 6695



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This document is intended to guide you in creating your resume by outlining important types of information to include and tips for doing so in a professional and persuasive manner. Please note this is not intended as a template and the format employed may or may not best represent you. Consider meeting with Career Services to discuss how you might best layout your own resume.

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A sampling of action verbs is also included on this page. Be sure to use strong action verbs to begin each of your bulletted statements, previewing the skill to be exemplified through the accomplishment statement.

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Transferable skills are those that can be applied in a variety of industries and job functions. Considering which transferable skills you want to convey to employers is a great place to start when composing your resume. This list is a sampling of the types of skills you might highlight on your resume, in addition to those skills that are more specific to your major, intended industry, or job function.

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In this most commonly accepted resume format, job titles and employers are emphasized, starting with your most recent experiences to illustrate a progressive work history. Your skills and accomplishments are described through bulletted statements under each position. This resume type is recommended for people who have recently graduated with a bachelor's degree, those who are staying within the same career field, and candidates with few time gaps in their job history. This type is most often preferred by employers because it is easy to scan, highlights job titles, employers, and dates, and clearly ties candidates' skills and accomplishments to their work histories.

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This format is an option for candidates who have changed employers frequently, have gaps in their employment history, or are hoping to transition to a new industry or unrelated job function. Functional resumes enable candidates to highlight transferable skills, placing less emphasis on employment dates, job titles, and employers.

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I. Resume Purpose, Design, & Mechanics

The purpose of a resume is to market yourself to employers by succinctly summarizing your education, experience, and skills, ultimately aiming to convince employers to invite you to interview. When conceptualizing your resume, think of it as a marketing tool, rather than a simple work history, as it is intended to promote you as the perfect candidate for the opportunity at hand. As you write your resume keep in mind: “Sell it! Don’t just tell it!”

Resume writing is an art, not a science. There is no one correct way to formulate a resume, but there are some best practices and standards that Career Services recommends. Stand out from the crowd with high quality content and a clearly written, error-free document. Sequence the information from most important to least important with regard to your career objective. When constructing bullet points, aim to highlight accomplishments that exemplify the skills you possess and employers are seeking. Always write with the potential employer in mind!

- ❖ **Length:** With a few exceptions, most college students do have a one page resume when applying for internships or entry-level jobs. If you are an involved college student, have held several leadership positions, or have substantial relevant work experience you may have a two page resume. A well-spaced resume with relevant information on 2 pages is better than a 1 page crammed resume or a 1 page resume with font that is too small to read.
- ❖ **Margins:** Make your resume visually attractive. Use some whitespace to allow the reader’s eye to rest. Using .5 inch to 1.5 inch margins is recommended.
- ❖ **Font:** Use a font that is easy to read. Tahoma, Verdana, Times New Roman, Arial, and Courier New are good choices. A 10-12 point font size is recommended.
- ❖ **Consistency:** Keep the formatting consistent throughout your resume. For example, if you choose to bold a job title, make sure you bold every job title. Also, make sure that all of your bullet points, section headers, dates, etc. line up neatly on the page.
- ❖ **Accuracy:** Your resume, and all other job search materials, must be 100% error free. Be sure to carefully read through your resume, checking grammar, spelling, and punctuation. It is a good idea to have at least 2-3 people proof-read it as well.
- ❖ **Be Accomplishment-Orientated:** Employers hire you for your skills and want to read about times when you have successfully utilized the skills they are seeking. Describe achievements, rather than listing duties, quantify outcomes whenever possible, and be sure to highlight your proficiency in both technical (industry or job function-specific) and transferable skills.
- ❖ **Use Action Verbs:** Strengthen your bullet points by beginning each with an action verb that previews the skill to be exemplified in that accomplishment statement. This allows a potential employer to more easily scan your resume for what he or she is seeking.
- ❖ **Make it Clear and Be Succinct:** Eliminate the pronoun “I” at the beginning of each bullet point as this is assumed. Avoid introductory and wind-up phrases such as “My duties included...” and “My responsibilities were...”
- ❖ **Overall Appearance:** Ask yourself and others if your document is easy to read and professional looking. Print on high quality bond paper (24-pound, 25% cotton). White, off-white, ivory or light gray are the best colors. Avoid resume templates as the format is limiting. Do not fold or staple your resume. Also, consider that the average recruiter may scan your resume for 30 seconds or less. Make sure that your most important information stands out.

Four Key Steps To Writing A Resume

Step 1: Analyze the Job Description

Read job descriptions thoroughly and then highlight all of the keywords which indicate required and preferred skills, abilities, attributes, and qualifications. If an employer is looking for somebody who is innovative, punctual, and attentive to detail, use these same words in your resume.

Step 2: Generate a List of Accomplishments

Create an inventory of your accomplishments. These should include tasks that you enjoyed doing, did well, and of which you were proud. Include education/training, volunteer experience, jobs, projects, school assignments, travel, and group/team activities. Focus on the outcome of your efforts. Quantify your results if possible. Don't be humble! Resumes are promotional tools.

Step 3: Identify Relevant Skill Areas

What skills are necessary for the job? Frame your experience so that the focus is on skills and achievements that are desirable for that particular position. Expand on relevant skills and experiences and commit less space to describing other experiences.

Step 4: Write Descriptive Phrases

Using action verbs, see page 6, write short phrases to describe experiences that demonstrate your relevant skills. Remember, always place them in order of relevance. The most relevant information should always be on top.

Resume Tips For First Year Students

- You may include work, leadership, and academic achievements from high school. By your third year, college experiences should replace those from high school.
- Don't worry about having limited work experience. You may highlight other accomplishments, such as those listed on the Resume Headings ideas, page 8.
- First resumes require extra time to assemble. Expect to spend a few hours creating a rough draft, and make an appointment with a career services staff member to review your resume.
- Be patient with the process! Resumes are always a work in progress.
- Keep an inventory of your achievements. Save any positive written feedback you receive and other documents that illustrate your success. These come in handy when creating a resume and cover letter.

Resume Dos and Don'ts

Do

Focus on the specific results of your work, significant achievements, and recognition received

Use action verbs such as "created" or "coordinated" to describe your experience

Get feedback from several people, including a career counselor.

Have somebody you trust proofread your resume for spelling and grammatical errors. Use readable and common fonts

Remember to describe both your paid and unpaid positions or volunteer experiences

Exercise restraint rather than cramming too much information onto a resume

Tailor your resume to each specific position

Use high quality paper in a neutral color

Don't

Use phrases such as "Responsibilities included"

Use resume templates included in word processing software

Manipulate margins or font size to accommodate information in place of proper editing

Include routine job duties such as "making copies"

Use long sentences or paragraphs

Submit the same resume to every employer, regardless of the position

Write long and overly generic objectives such as, "To find a sales position at a medium sized corporation where I can grow and develop my management skills"

II. Key Elements of a Successful Resume

Your First and Last Name

◆ Phone number ◆ Email address ◆ Street address ◆ City, state & zip code

PROFILE

A profile is a list, in ten lines or fewer, of the skills and abilities you have mastered that would be useful for the job you are seeking. If an employer is specifically looking for certain skills, this can be a very effective way to illustrate that you have them. This may be titled “Profile”, “Qualifications”, “Strengths”, “Areas of Knowledge & Ability”, “Expertise”, or something similar. This section can be eliminated, used in addition to the career objective, or used in place of the career objective.

EDUCATION

Institution City, State (Expected) Graduation Month Year

Write out the full name of your (expected) degree; also list Minors and Concentrations

GPA: 4.0/4.0 (it is recommended that you include your GPA if it is 3.0 or higher)

Other possible information to include: **Study Abroad** experiences, **Relevant Coursework**, or **Academic Awards and Honors**.

EXPERIENCE, RELEVANT EXPERIENCE, INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE [possible titles/descriptive headings]

Organization, **Your Job Title** – City, State Month Year - Month Year

- The position header above is one example of formatting. Other formats can include using two lines or rearranging the order of the Organization, Job Title, Location, and Dates to emphasize the most important elements.
- You can bold or italicize your title or your organization—whichever is more relevant, but be consistent.
- In this section include bulleted accomplishment statements, which provide examples of times you have successfully used the skills employers are seeking.
- Start with a strong action verb, then follow with an explanation of what you were doing, describe how you did it, and, when possible, include any outcomes that you achieved. Remember, statements should ultimately convey your proficiency in one or more skill sets of interest to the employer by way of providing an example of when you have used them.
- Consider the following questions to help you create more effective bullet points: What was the result/outcome of your work? What were your accomplishments? How did you help the organization? What skills/knowledge did you enhance? How does this experience relate to your internship/employment goal?

Organization, **Your Job Title** – City, State Month Year - Month Year

- Bulleted statements should be in the proper tense (past or present tense) and use consistent grammar and punctuation.
 - Be specific by including quantity, frequency, population, and impact of your work whenever possible.
 - Make sure your resume is easy to read and not too text heavy. Avoid using colors, multiple fonts, pictures, being too brief, or making it too dense. Make it your own, but be professional.
-

ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE, LEADERSHIP, HONORS, ACTIVITIES, COMMUNITY SERVICE, VOLUNTEER, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT [possible titles/descriptive headings]

Organization, **Your Job Title** – City, State Month Year - Month Year

- Using multiple experience sections is optional and allows you to emphasize (by placing it closer to the top) your most relevant experience. Experiences within a section should be listed in reverse chronological order.
- Positions within this section should be formatted like previous experience sections, but may or may not include bullet points.
- In an additional experience section, you can include work experiences that may not be directly related to the job you are applying to, but add to your credibility by exemplifying a progressive work history.
- Emphasize your transferable skills, those that can be taken from one experience and applied elsewhere.

Organization, **Your Role (e.g. Member, Participant, Honoree, or Presenter)** – City, State Month Year - Month Year

- This section can also be an opportunity to share your experiences as a leader, honors received, community involvement, professional development activities, or membership in organizations. As illustrated, replace “job title” with the role you played.
 - Including bullet points is optional, depending on what you wish to convey to a potential employer.
-

ADDITIONAL SKILLS [List skills that are testable and concrete. Soft skills such as communication, organizational, and interpersonal skills should not be listed here, but rather incorporated into your bulleted accomplishment statements above.]

Technology: Try to include programs that would not be assumed based on education and include your proficiency level. For example: Advanced User of Microsoft Office Suite, including Outlook, Excel, and PowerPoint, as well as Adobe Photoshop.

Languages: For example: Proficient in oral and written German; Beginner knowledge of Spanish.

III. Action Verbs

Beginning each bulleted accomplishment statement with a strong action verb helps to highlight your successes and allows a reader to get a sense of your skills by scanning the page prior to reading each individual bullet point. It is a good idea to vary the action verbs on your resume in order to appeal to different audiences. Below is a list of verbs to help get you started.

Clerical or Detailed Skills

Approved	Collaborated	Expedited	Integrated	Organized	Revamped	Specified	Tabulated
Arranged	Compiled	Generated	Maintained	Prepared	Reviewed	Standardized	Typed
Attended	Consolidated	Identified	Mapped out	Processed	Revised	Streamlined	Updated
Catalogued	Distributed	implemented	Monitored	Proofed	Scheduled	Submitted	Validated
Classified	Executed	inspected	Operated	Recorded	Screened	Systematized	Verified

Communication Skills

Addressed	Composed	Debated	Drafted	Influenced	Moderated	Publicized	Resolved
Authored	Contacted	Delivered	Edited	Interpreted	Negotiated	Reconciled	Spoke
Briefed	Convinced	Described	Explained	Lectured	Persuaded	Recorded	Translated
Communicated	Corresponded	Directed	Expressed	Mediated	Promoted	Reported	Wrote

Creative Skills

Acted	Constructed	Designed	Established	Illustrated	Initiated	Invented	Piloted
Composed	Crafted	Developed	Explored	Implemented	Innovated	Modified	Planned
Conceived	Created	Discovered	Fashioned	Improvised	Integrated	Originated	Revised
Conceptualized	Customized	Dramatized	Founded	Incorporated	Introduced	Performed	Shaped

Financial Skills

Accounted for	Analyzed	Budgeted	Earned	Forecasted	Monitored	Projected	Researched
Adjusted	Appraised	Calculated	Estimated	Handled	Netted	Purchased	Targeted
Administered	Audited	Computed	Expanded	Managed	Planned	Reconciled	Transferred
Allocated	Balanced	Controlled	Financed	Marketed	Procured	Reduced	

Helping Skills

Advised	Assessed	Coached	Encouraged	Facilitated	Intervened	Provided	Resolved
Advocated	Assisted	Counseled	Ensured	Familiarized	Motivated	Referred	Served
Aided	Assured	Demonstrated	Evaluated	Fostered	Observed	Rehabilitated	Supported
Arbitrated	Cared for	Educated	Expedited	Guided	Protected	Represented	Volunteered

Management Skills

Accomplished	Authorized	Determined	Excelled	Initiated	Motivated	Prioritized	Revitalized
Acquired	Chaired	Developed	Executed	Led	Orchestrated	Produced	Scheduled
Administered	Contracted	Directed	Evaluated	Launched	Organized	Proposed	Spearheaded
Appointed	Coordinated	Enhanced	Increased	Managed	Oversaw	Recommended	Strengthened
Assigned	Delegated	Established	Improved	Maximized	Planned	Reviewed	Supervised

Research Skills

Analyzed	Collected	Critiqued	Extracted	Inspected	Located	Reviewed	Surveyed
Calculated	Compared	Diagnosed	Formulated	Interpreted	Organized	Solved	Tested
Charted	Concluded	Evaluated	Gathered	Interviewed	Reported	Studied	Trouble-shot
Clarified	Conducted	Examined	Identified	Investigated	Researched	Summarized	

Teaching Skills

Adapted	Communicated	Disciplined	Encouraged	Focused	Informed	Persuaded	Stimulated
Advised	Cooperated	Educated	Evaluated	Guided	Inquired	Presented	Taught
Challenged	Demonstrated	Elaborated	Explained	Incorporated	Instructed	Rated	Trained
Coached	Developed	Emphasized	Facilitated	Individualized	Interacted	Reinforced	Tutored

Technical Skills

Activated	Built	Designed	Engineered	Operated	Remodeled	Retrieved	Standardized
Applied	Computed	Detected	Installed	Overhauled	Repaired	Serviced	Upgraded
Assembled	Contrived	Devised	Navigated	Programmed	Replaced	Solved	Utilized

IV. Transferable Skills

Transferable skills are those that can be applied in multiple work settings. Consider incorporating them, in addition to those that are specific to your intended career field, by providing examples of when you have successfully used them in your bullet-
 ed accomplishment statements. Some examples of transferable skills include the following:

CLERICAL

- Bookkeeping
- Classifying
- Collecting
- Compiling
- Computing
- Examining
- Filing
- Organizing
- Recording
- Word processing

COMMUNICATION

- Editing
- Explaining
- Influencing
- Interpreting
- listening
- Mediating
- Promoting
- Speaking
- Translating
- Writing

CREATIVE

- Designing
- Developing
- Establishing
- Illustrating
- Imagining
- Improvising
- Inventing
- performing
- Revitalizing
- Visualizing

FINANCIAL

- Accounting
- Administering
- Allocating
- Auditing
- Balancing
- Calculating
- Forecasting
- Investing
- Projecting

HUMAN RELATIONS

- Advising
- Assisting
- Counseling
- Empathizing
- Facilitating
- Guiding
- Listening
- Motivating
- Representing
- Serving

MANAGEMENT

- Communicating
- Consulting
- Coordinating
- Delegating
- Directing
- Evaluating
- Leading
- Negotiating
- Persuading
- Planning

PROBLEM SOLVING

- Analyzing
- Appraising
- Diagnosing
- Examining
- Executing
- Planning
- Proving
- Reasoning
- Recognizing
- Validating

PUBLIC RELATIONS

- Conducting
- Consulting
- Informing
- Planning
- Presenting
- Promoting
- Representing
- Responding
- Researching
- Writing

RESEARCH

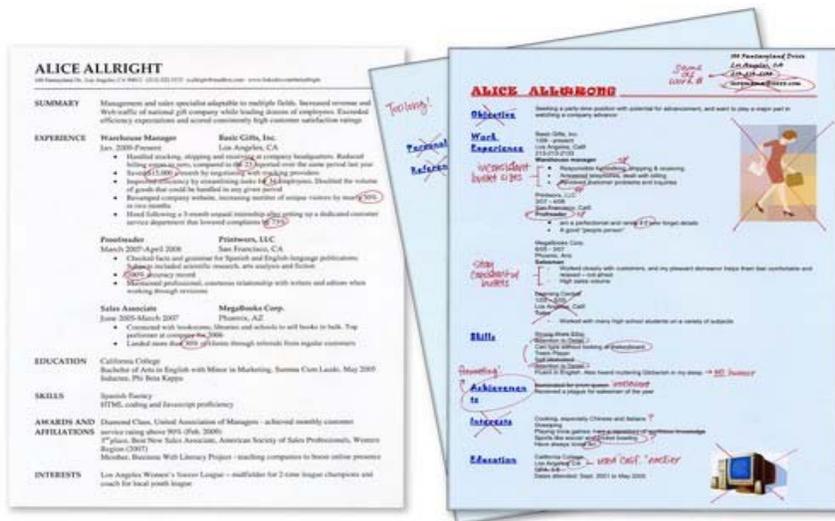
- Assessing
- Calculating
- Collecting
- Diagnosing
- Evaluating
- Examining
- Extrapolating
- Interviewing
- Investigating
- Synthesizing

TECHNICAL

- Adjusting
- Aligning
- Assembling
- Drafting
- Engineering
- Installing
- Observing
- Operating
- Programming
- Repairing

TRAINING

- Adapting
- Communicating
- Demonstrating
- Enabling
- Encouraging
- Evaluating
- Explaining
- Instructing
- Planning
- Stimulating



V. Resume Heading Options

Listed below are headings typically found on resumes. Choose headings based on their relevance to the employment opportunity and your objective.

OBJECTIVE	RESEARCH	FOREIGN LANGUAGES
CAREER OBJECTIVE	RESEARCH EXPERIENCE	LANGUAGE BACKGROUND
CAREER GOAL	RESEARCH INTERESTS	LANGUAGE SKILLS
EMPLOYMENT GOAL		MULTICULTURAL EXPERIENCE
JOB OBJECTIVE	LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE	
	LEADERSHIP SKILLS	AWARDS
SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS		ACADEMIC HONORS
PROFILE	COMPUTER SKILLS	ACHIEVEMENTS
STRENGTHS	COMPUTER EXPERIENCE	COLLEGE HONORS/ACTIVITIES
SUMMARY OF SKILLS	TECHNICAL BACKGROUND	ATHLETIC HONORS
SKILLS PROFILE		ACTIVITIES AND ORGANIZATIONS
	COMMUNICATION SKILLS	MEMBERSHIPS
EDUCATION	WRITING SKILLS	PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION
EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND	SPEAKING SKILLS	PROFESSIONAL ACHIEVEMENT
UNIVERSITY EDUCATION	PUBLICATIONS	
	ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS	INTERESTS
RELATED COURSES	SPECIAL SKILLS	
RELEVANT COURSES		RELATED EXPERIENCE:
COURSE HIGHLIGHTS	VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES	Business Experience
SPECIAL COURSES	COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT	Teaching Experience
LICENSURES/CERTIFICATIONS	VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE	Management Experience
		Sales Experience
STUDY ABROAD	PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	Design Experience
INTERNATIONAL STUDY	WORKSHOPS	Theater Experience
	SEMINARS	
INTERNSHIP- Examples:	SPECIAL TRAINING	WORK EXPERIENCE
Computer Internship		OTHER EXPERIENCE
Accounting Internship		OTHER EMPLOYMENT
Human Service Internship		EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

VI. Guidelines for Creating a Reference Page

A reference page is a list of professional acquaintances that are willing to talk with prospective employers about you and your abilities.

- Always print your references on a separate sheet.
- Listing three references is standard; listing an additional two is helpful.
- Start your reference sheet by duplicating the heading from your resume - name, address, phone, and email.
- Type the word "REFERENCES" centered under your heading.
- Type the name, title, address, phone number, and email address for each reference, either centered or aligned with the left hand margin. Be sure to ask each person's permission beforehand. Use the person's work contact information unless he/she indicates otherwise.

Use professional references (i.e. faculty, supervisors, academic advisors, etc.) rather than personal references (i.e. a friend's parent, uncle, mom).

Resume Checklist

STOP! Don't submit your resume until you have checked off this list!

- Have you set up an appointment with Career Services to get your resume critiqued?
- Is the resume pleasing to the eye: easy-to-read font, good layout? Can an employer learn the basics about you with a 10 second glance at your resume?
- Are your name, address, city, state, zip code, phone number and email address at the top of the page?
- Did you use bullets, bold, all capitals, and underlining to highlight key strengths?
- If you know your resume will be scanned, did you omit columns, underlining, and bullets?
- Is information listed in order of importance and relevance to the skills listed in the job description?
- Does the resume avoid generalities and focus on specific information about experience, context, and results?
- Did you check the spelling of every word and make sure the grammar and punctuation are correct?
- Do most phrases begin with action verbs such as "developed," "initiated," etc.?
- Have you been accurate and truthful about your accomplishments rather than being too modest or over zealous?
- Did you tailor your resume for the position by including key skills and experiences the employer wants?
- If you were the employer, would you call you for an interview?

Rachel R. Peterson

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Mr. Russ Evenson
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IX. Additional Resume Writing Resources

Saint Mary's University offers options for getting help in creating and perfecting your resume. Take advantage of one or both of the following services available to students.

Schedule an appointment today!

Career Services

70 Griffin Hall

Call 507-457-6695 or email

mhagarty@smumn.edu to schedule an appointment

SMU Writing Center

78 Griffin Hall

Call 507-457-1460 to schedule an appointment