

A resume is a concise, formal document that summarizes your professional qualifications for a specific position or opportunity. Resume length, style, and content vary by field, experience level, and purpose (e.g., professional role, program or scholarship application, etc.), but a resume should typically be 1-2 pages of relevant, specific information. This handout is a general resource, so always tailor your work to your audience, industry, or position.

Note: Outside the U.S., the term “resume” may refer to a CV or different type of document. Academic positions may instead require a CV, which provides a more comprehensive overview of your scholarly work.

General Guidelines

When writing a resume, consider first creating a **comprehensive resume document** where you track all your work experience, education, and skills, including detailed information about position titles, work responsibilities, length of employment, etc. Expect to continually update your comprehensive resume document as you gain experience, increase qualifications, and apply for new positions.

When **tailoring your resume**, copy your comprehensive resume document to a new version as you draft, update, and tailor your resume for specific positions and opportunities. Review the job description and research the employer and the organization’s mission, values, and priorities. Identify how your experience and skills align with the position, and highlight that fit using clear, specific language and relevant keywords from the job description. This demonstrates familiarity with the role and can help your resume pass through applicant tracking systems (ATS) before reaching a reviewer. Additionally, employers often scan resumes quickly, so prioritize keywords and concise, relevant details and sections.

Content

Your resume should be organized into clear, concise sections that highlight your relevant qualifications. Resume order and content will vary by industry and experience, so arrange your sections strategically. For example, you might emphasize education if your degree is directly relevant to the position, whereas you might list work experience first if it is more relevant than your education. To understand the resume content expectations of your field, seek information and feedback from trusted colleagues, mentors, or advisors in your industry.

As you consider what content to include, be mindful that **personal information**, including photos and dates, may reveal protected class information such as age, gender, marital status, pregnancy, religious affiliation, or citizenship. Though most resumes use dates to establish a clear professional timeline, dates may be omitted strategically (e.g., when listing older experiences or minimizing employment gaps).

Contact Information

Place your name at the top of your resume as a header. Increase the font size to add emphasis and draw attention. Near your name, include your phone number and professional email address. Include other contact details such as your city and state, professional social media information, or website, if relevant.

Experience

The experience section of your resume highlights your relevant professional, academic, and service-based work (e.g., employment, internships, research, lab work, or volunteer roles). Your experience demonstrates how your responsibilities and skills align with the position or opportunity you are applying for. Each entry should include your title or role, the name of the company or organization, the location, and the dates of involvement, followed by a concise bulleted list of responsibilities and accomplishments. Each bullet should begin with a **strong action verb** and describe **what you did, how you did it, and the result or impact**. Whenever possible, **quantify achievements** (e.g., numbers, percentages, or other measurable outcomes).

- **Template:** [Action verb] + [task or responsibility] + [how/why/result] + [quantifiable details]
- **Example:** Developed a social media campaign, increasing audience engagement by 40% in 3 months.

Examples of Active Verbs:

Use present tense if describing a current responsibility and past tense for past experiences or responsibilities.

- | | | | |
|----------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|
| • analyzed | • coordinated | • managed | • presented |
| • assisted | • designed | • maintained | • provided |
| • collaborated | • developed | • operated | • scheduled |
| • communicated | • established | • organized | • streamlined |
| • compiled | • facilitated | • performed | • supervised |
| • conducted | • installed | • planned | • taught |

Education

In an education section, list your most recent degree or certification first, whether you have completed that degree or are in the process of doing so. Do not include information about your high school education or experience unless recent or directly relevant. As applicable, include the following details:

- Degree, major(s), and minor(s)
- Institution where you received your degree, including city and state
- Graduation date or anticipated graduation date (month and year)
- Thesis/dissertation title and advisor or chair (for graduate degrees)
- GPA or major GPA (optional, typically omitted beyond the undergraduate level)

Additional Sections

Depending on your experience, audience, and purpose, you may also include the following sections:

- Certifications or licenses
- Awards, honors, grants
- Volunteer or service experience
- Grants, fellowships, and scholarships (including the amount awarded)
- Relevant coursework
- Presentations or publications
- Professional memberships or affiliations
- Languages and other relevant skills (e.g., programming languages)
- References and their contact information (optional, sometimes a separate part of an application)

Format

Effective formatting shapes how your resume is read and remembered. Because a resume functions as a series of detailed lists organized into sections, clear structure and consistent design are essential. A well-formatted document enhances readability, highlights key information, and reflects professionalism.

Strong formatting also improves compatibility with applicant tracking systems (ATS) and screen readers, which may have difficulty processing complex designs. While templates can provide a helpful starting point, many include multiple columns, decorative graphics, or unusual fonts that reduce clarity or ATS readability. Choose a simple, professional layout that you can easily adapt to your needs.

Resume conventions vary by discipline and profession, so review examples from your field and seek feedback from mentors or colleagues to ensure your format aligns with industry expectations. When formatting, consider the following:

- Organize your resume into clearly labeled sections
- Use bulleted lists to provide additional details
- Order sections strategically (e.g., for a research assistant position, put research toward the top)
- List entries like employment history or degrees in reverse chronological order (most recent first)
- Choose fonts that are easy to read and accessible both online and in print
- Maintain consistent formatting for all headings and body text
- Balance white space and text to increase readability and emphasize important information
- Limit the use of color to avoid scanning or legibility issues
- Label your resume file clearly and professionally before uploading or submitting
- Upload your resume as a PDF to preserve formatting (unless another file type is requested)

Chronological or Functional Organization

The organization of a resume is generally either chronological or functional:

- **Chronological (experience-based):** Lists experience in reverse chronological order (most recent first), emphasizing consistent, relevant work or experience history and career progression.
- **Functional (skills-based):** Groups qualifications by skill category rather than by date, highlighting transferable skills. This format can be effective for applicants with limited professional experience, career changes, freelance or volunteer work, or gaps in employment.

When selecting a resume format, consider how an employer or program will evaluate your qualifications. A chronological format conveys stability and growth, while a functional one emphasizes capability and adaptability. Select the format that best fits your audience and purpose.

Note: This **chronological (experience-based) resume** template demonstrates general principles, but it is not reflective of all industries or styles. Remember to work with your audience, purpose, and context in mind.

Firstname Lastname

(123) 456-7890 • your_email@url.com • linkedin.com/in/yourURL

EDUCATION

Utah Valley University, Orem, UT April 20XX (Graduation Date)
Bachelor of Science/Arts: XXXX, Emphasis in XXXX
Minor in XXXX

- GPA X.XX
- Scholarships received at UVU
- Applicable clubs/organizations
- Relevant coursework
- Applicable certifications received (CPR, AED) and/or computer languages learned (SQL, C++)

Other University (If applicable), Location April 20XX (Graduation Date)
Associate of Science/Arts: XXX

- GPA X.XX
- Important awards and achievements

EXPERIENCE

Position June 20XX–Present
Company or Organization, Location

- [Action verb] + [task or responsibility] + [how/why/result] + [quantifiable details]
- [Action verb] + [task or responsibility] + [how/why/result] + [quantifiable details]
- [Action verb] + [task or responsibility] + [how/why/result] + [quantifiable details]
- [Action verb] + [task or responsibility] + [how/why/result] + [quantifiable details]

Position May 20XX–October 20XX
Company or Organization, Location

- [Action verb] + [task or responsibility] + [how/why/result] + [quantifiable details]
- [Action verb] + [task or responsibility] + [how/why/result] + [quantifiable details]
- [Action verb] + [task or responsibility] + [how/why/result] + [quantifiable details]

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

Position June 20XX–July 20XX
Company or Organization, Location

- [Action verb] + [task or responsibility] + [how/why/result] + [quantifiable details]
- [Action verb] + [task or responsibility] + [how/why/result] + [quantifiable details]

SKILLS/INTERESTS/ACHIEVEMENTS/ABILITIES (Choose one or more)

- Languages and proficiency (i.e., conversational Spanish, proficient in AI platforms, etc.)
- Certifications or licenses (i.e., Food Handlers Permit, AED Certification)

Note: This **functional (skills-based) resume** template demonstrates general principles, but it is not reflective of all industries or styles. Remember to work with your audience, purpose, and context in mind.

Firstname Lastname

(123) 456-7890 • your_email@url.com • linkedin.com/in/yourURL

SUMMARY STATEMENT

Concise (3–4 line) overview of your qualifications, highlighting key strengths, relevant experience, and goals. May be written in brief, descriptive phrases or full sentences.

[Example] Results-driven professional with 2+ years of experience in project coordination and team leadership. Recognized for developing effective public campaigns and supporting student mental health needs. Seeking to apply coordination and training expertise in an administrative support role.

SKILLS OR RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

Skills or Type of Experience

- [Action verb] + [task or responsibility] + [how/why/result] + [quantifiable details]
- [Action verb] + [task or responsibility] + [how/why/result] + [quantifiable details]

Coordinating [Example]

- Planned and organized successful campaign for university student representative
- Assisted in planning and organizing a monthly student engagement and mental health program
- Supervised student information event (200+ attendees)
- Developed and submitted grant proposal for student support services, earning \$5000 grant

Training [Example]

- Presented at student mental health conference
- Led monthly student wellness discussion groups for 4 years
- Developed and facilitated training materials for incoming student body president and cabinet

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

- Position, Company, Location, Dates of employment
- Salesperson, Campus Store, Orem, UT, August 2025 to present
- Cashier, Community Market, Logan, UT, May 2024 to May 2025

EDUCATION

Utah Valley University, Orem, UT April 20XX (Graduation Date)
Bachelor of Science/Arts: XXXX, Emphasis in XXXX
Minor in XXXX

- GPA X.XX
- Scholarships received at UVU

Other University (If applicable), Location April 20XX (Graduation Date)
Associate of Science/Arts: XXX

- GPA X.XX
- Important awards and achievements

ADDITIONAL SKILLS/INTERESTS/ACHIEVEMENTS/ABILITIES (Choose one or more)

- Languages and proficiency (i.e., conversational Spanish, proficient in AI platforms, etc.)
- Certifications or licenses (i.e., Food Handlers Permit, AED Certification)