



## Guide to Writing a Resume

A resume is a document that markets your professional skills and accomplishments to a prospective employer. Your resume should change to meet requirements of different positions and should be updated as you gain experiences. Your finished document should help you stand out from other applicants. To do this effectively you may decide to have more than one version of your resume, especially if you have varied career interests.

Keep in mind:

- Pay careful attention to spelling, punctuation, grammar, and style.
- Organize information in a logical fashion.
- Keep descriptions clear and to the point.
- Confine your information to one page, unless you are a teacher candidate or have several years of post-graduate experience.
- Use a simple, easy-to-read font.
- Tailor your information to the job, internship or other position you are seeking.
- Do not include demographic information on your resume (age, race, gender) or include a photograph.
- Limit your bullet points for each experience to 3-4.

Writing an effective resume can be a time-consuming process, requiring several drafts and patience on your part. This process will prove to be valuable during interviews, as it requires you to reflect on your past experiences, your skill set, and how it applies to your career goals.

## Resume Elements

### *Format*

There are many formats and layout styles from which to choose. Take a look at the sample resumes found on the Career Development Center's website to give you an idea of what a resume could look like. Pick a format that appeals to you and that effectively highlights your skills and accomplishments. Be consistent with your formatting – for example, if you bold organization names, do so throughout your entire document. This shows an employer that you are detail-oriented, which is an attribute many employers seek. Formatting tips:

- Font: easy to read and professional. Some acceptable fonts include: Times New Roman, Calibri, Arial, etc.
- Font size: 10-12 point; name should be larger
- Margins: .5"-1" around your whole document

### *Contact Information*

Your goal is to make it easy for employers to contact you. There are key pieces of information that you should include:

- *Name:* This should consist of your first name and last name. It is important to list your name in a way that makes it stand out; bolding, using larger text or both are effective ways to do so.
- *E-Mail Address:* Include a reliable e-mail address that is professional and appropriate and that is attached to an account you check frequently. If you are a senior, consider using a non-SJU e-mail address so that you do not miss out on any communication from employers that comes after you graduate.
- *Telephone Number:* Include a reliable telephone number with a professional voicemail message. When recording your message, keep in mind that your potential employer may be listening to it. Keep it brief and clear; simply state your name and indicate that you will return the call as promptly as possible. Avoid including your home phone number on your resume, which could be answered by other individuals.
- *Address:* It is likely that, as a student, you will have two addresses: your home address and your current address. If you choose to list both, be certain to identify each. It is also acceptable to list the address closest to your desired position.
- *Other information:* Some choose to list a web address to one's personal website or a personalized link to their LinkedIn account. If you choose to do either, be sure that is professional and appropriate in terms of content, because employers will use this to research you and your background.

### *Contact Information Example:*

#### **Anita L. Job**

anita.job@sju.edu  
(123) 456-0000

Current Address:  
1234 Hawk Street, Apt. 007  
Philadelphia, PA 19131

Permanent Address:  
1234 Home Street  
Anywhere, NY 9021

### *Section Headings:*

Your resume will be divided into sections that relate to your goals and past experiences. Your options are limitless when it comes to section headings. Pick headings that make sense to you and your unique background and that will convey to an employer how you will impact their organization. While some headings, such as sections such as contact information and education are required, others are optional.

### *Sample section headings include:*

- |                         |                         |                             |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| • Education             | • Volunteer Experience  | • Professional Associations |
| • Experience            | • Leadership Experience | • Publications              |
| • Related Experience    | • Activities            | • Presentations             |
| • Internship Experience | • Research              | • Skills                    |

### *Education*

List your most recent degree first, followed by those you may have obtained in the past. Once you reach junior year, only list a high school degree if it provides networking advantages (i.e., you are planning to intern or work near your home; your high school has a strong reputation). If you transferred to Saint Joseph's University from another institution without obtaining a degree from the institution, generally, you would only include Saint Joseph's University in this section. At times, you may choose to include the other institution if you feel as though it could be used for networking purposes.

The format for your Education section is:

- The name of the college or university, followed by city and state (be sure to spell out "Saint").
- Your degree and/or program, followed by the graduation date (be sure to accurately list your degree; check DegreeWorks for the correct name of your degree). The degree you list will be the degree from your primary major.
- Your major(s) and, if applicable, minor.
- List your graduation date in a month year format.

In some cases, you may also wish to include: academic scholarships and honors, relevant coursework, and GPA (if 3.0 or above). List Study Abroad in the Education section as well. List separately from Saint Joseph's University by the name of the institution first, and then program sponsor.

### *Education Example:*

#### **Education:**

**Saint Joseph's University**, Philadelphia, PA  
Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, May 2017

- Major: Finance
- Minor: Spanish
- Major GPA: 3.2/4.0
- Overall GPA: 3.0/4.0

**Birkbeck College, University of London**, London, England  
Studied Drama and Literature, Spring 2016

### *Experience Formatting:*

Each of your experiences should have a heading that includes four key pieces of information:

1. organization name
2. location (city and state)
3. job title
4. dates

This information is not optional, as employers are looking for this specific content. Be consistent with your headings, using the same formatting throughout your document.

### *Experience Formatting Example:*

**Saint Joseph's University, Career Development Center**, Philadelphia, PA  
*Marketing Intern*, August 2016-December 2016

## Effective Bullet Points

Remember to keep your reader in mind. Your bullet points should be accomplishments-based and convey how you've added value to the employer, customer, process, revenue, etc. Write concise, descriptive phrases that summarize the key components of each experience and convey the result of the task completed. If you do not have related experience, focus on your transferable skills, strengths and accomplishments. Follow this format when writing your bullet points:

Strong Action Verb + Example/Task + Result

### **Action Verbs:**

Use strong action verbs written in first person to start off your bullet points. For positions in which you are currently involved, use verbs in the simple present tense (Collaborate, Coordinate, Research, Communicate, etc). For positions you held in the past, use past-tense verbs (Created, Facilitated,

Conducted, Analyzed, etc). Make sure to focus on verbs that communicate the skill set that the employer is seeking. See the list of action verb suggestions at the bottom of this section for help.

Focus your bullet points on:

- Providing context to the employer
- Describing significant milestones, promotions, etc.
- Demonstrating how you add(ed) value as an individual contributor and/or as part of a team
- Articulating your tasks/skills/responsibilities along with the results

### *Context Bullet Point:*

A context bullet point will help the employer understand the type of employer you were working for, your general position, and your main task. For example:

**PaperSource**, Ardmore, PA

*Receptionist*, April 2016-August 2016

- Coordinated office and technical support for a small paper store specializing in invitations, stationary, and specialty printing.

### *Milestone/Promotion:*

Were you promoted from one position to another? Did your responsibilities increase over time as a result of your work ethic or outcomes? Make sure to mention that! Examples:

- Promoted to Orientation Coordinator in Summer 2015; supervised 80 orientation leaders.
- Received 2015 Outstanding Intern award, given to the intern who had the highest customer service rating over the summer.

### *Adding Value:*

Did you make a process more efficient during your internship? Were you able to handle annoyed customers with ease? Did your employer count on you as the point person for inventory because of your attention to detail? Can you quantify your results in numbers, percentages, dollars, etc? Examples:

- Raised \$500 for the American Cancer Society in a one hour bake sale.
- Increased Twitter following by 35% over the course of a three month internship.
- Introduced a new data entry system for tracking sales, resulting in less staff time spent on data entry; trained staff of 7 on new process.
- Communicated with customers regarding their experience; listened to problems and worked to solve them, ensuring high return business.

### *Tasks/Skills Responsibilities:*

What did you do during your job, internship, or leadership experience? Keep in mind, you should limit this type of statement. A reader will often be able to assume the nature of the tasks for which you were responsible based on your position title. "Adding Value" and "Milestone/Promotion" statements are much more effective in terms of communicating your unique contribution.

- Represented Saint Joseph's University to prospective students and parents through guided tours across campus.
- Coordinated meetings across campus; communicated with multiple offices to ensure all needs were met and that the room was set up properly.
- Observed patients during their treatment and maintained accurate records on their progress.
- Researched the effect that interaction with a political candidate has on voting rates in Philadelphia county.

# Action Verbs by Skill Set

Below you will find categories of skill sets that an ideal candidate may possess. Underneath each skill set, there is a list of action verbs that can describe your experiences related to those transferable skill sets.

## Communication/People Skills

- Addressed
  - Advertised
  - Articulated
  - Authored
  - Clarified
  - Collaborated
  - Communicated
  - Composed
  - Conferred
  - Consulted
  - Contacted
  - Conveyed
  - Convinced
  - Corresponded
  - Debated
  - Defined
  - Developed
  - Directed
  - Discussed
  - Drafted
  - Edited
  - Elicited
  - Enlisted
  - Explained
  - Expressed
  - Formulated
  - Incorporated
  - Influenced
  - Interacted
  - Interpreted
  - Interviewed
  - Involved
  - Joined
  - Judged
  - Lectured
  - Listened
  - Marketed
  - Mediated
  - Moderated
  - Negotiated
  - Observed
  - Outlined
  - Participated
  - Persuaded
  - Presented
  - Promoted
  - Proposed
  - Publicized
  - Reconciled
  - Recruited
  - Referred
  - Reinforced
  - Reported
  - Resolved
  - Responded
  - Solicited
  - Spoke
  - Summarized
  - Translated
  - Wrote
- 

## Creative Skills

- Acted
  - Adapted
  - Began
  - Combined
  - Composed
  - Conceptualized
  - Condensed
  - Created
  - Customized
  - Designed
  - Developed
  - Directed
  - Displayed
  - Drew
  - Entertained
  - Established
  - Formulated
  - Founded
  - Illustrated
  - Initiated
  - Instituted
  - Integrated
  - Introduced
  - Invented
  - Modeled
  - Modified
  - Originated
  - Performed
  - Planned
  - Revised
  - Revitalized
  - Shaped
  - Solved
- 

## Data/Financial Skills

- Administered
  - Adjusted
  - Allocated
  - Analyzed
  - Appraised
  - Assessed
  - Audited
  - Balanced
  - Budgeted
  - Calculated
  - Computed
  - Conserved
  - Corrected
  - Determined
  - Developed
  - Estimated
  - Forecasted
  - Managed
  - Marketed
  - Measured
  - Netted
  - Planned
  - Prepared
  - Programmed
  - Projected
  - Qualified
  - Reconciled
  - Reduced
  - Researched
  - Retrieved
- 

## Detail Orientation Skills

- Assured
  - Clarified
  - Classified
  - Corrected
  - Documented
  - Edited
  - Evaluated
  - Grouped
  - Itemized
  - Ordered
  - Organized
  - Outlined
  - Reorganized
  - Reviewed
  - Revised
  - Summarized
  - Synthesized
- 

## Flexibility Skills

- Adapted
  - Adjusted
  - Changed
  - Experimented
  - Explored
  - Managed
  - Modified
  - Reorganized
  - Restructured
  - Revised
  - Varied
- 

## Helping Skills

- Adapted
- Advised
- Advocated
- Aided
- Answered
- Arranged
- Assessed
- Clarified
- Coached
- Collaborated
- Contributed
- Cooperated
- Counseled
- Demonstrated
- Educated
- Enabled
- Encouraged
- Ensured
- Facilitated
- Familiarized
- Focused
- Furthered
- Guided
- Helped
- Individualized
- Informed
- Instilled
- Instructed
- Insured
- Intervened
- Motivated
- Prevented
- Provided
- Referred
- Represented
- Resolved
- Simplified
- Supplied
- Supported
- Taught

- Trained
- Tutored
- Volunteered

#### Management/Leadership Skills

- Administered
- Analyzed
- Appointed
- Approved
- Assigned
- Attained
- Authorized
- Chaired
- Considered
- Consolidated
- Contracted
- Controlled
- Converted
- Coordinated
- Decided
- Delegated
- Developed
- Directed
- Eliminated
- Emphasized
- Enforced
- Enhanced
- Established
- Executed
- Generated
- Handled
- Headed
- Hired
- Hosted
- Improved
- Incorporated
- Increased
- Initiated
- Inspected
- Instituted
- Led
- Managed
- Merged
- Motivated
- Navigated
- Organized
- Originated
- Overhauled
- Oversaw
- Planned
- Presided
- Prioritized
- Produced
- Recommended
- Reorganized
- Replaced
- Restored
- Reviewed
- Scheduled
- Secured
- Selected
- Streamlined
- Strengthened
- Supervised
- Terminate

#### Organizational Skills

- Arranged
- Catalogued
- Categorized
- Charted
- Classified
- Coded
- Collected
- Compiled
- Corrected
- Distributed
- Generated
- Filed
- Incorporated
- Inspected
- Logged
- Maintained
- Organized
- Prepared
- Processed
- Recorded
- Registered
- Responded
- Reviewed
- Routed
- Scheduled
- Screened
- Submitted
- Supplied
- Standardized
- Systematized
- Updated
- Validated
- Verified

#### Research Skills

- Analyzed
- Clarified
- Collected
- Compared
- Conducted
- Critiqued
- Detected
- Determined
- Diagnosed
- Evaluated
- Examined
- Experimented
- Explored
- Extracted
- Formulated
- Gathered
- Inspected
- Interviewed
- Invented
- Investigated
- Located
- Measured
- Organized
- Researched
- Reviewed
- Searched
- Solved
- Summarized
- Surveyed
- Systematized
- Tested

#### Strong Work Ethic Skills

- Accomplished
- Achieved
- Awarded
- Earned
- Improved
- Outpaced
- Outperformed
- Performed
- Promoted
- Produced
- Solved
- Surpassed

#### Taking Initiative Skills

- Achieved
- Anticipated
- Conceptualized
- Conceived
- Constructed
- Developed
- Devised
- Effected
- Engineered
- Established
- Foresaw
- Implemented
- Initiated
- Innovated
- Instituted
- Introduced
- Invented
- Organized
- Originated
- Perceived
- Recommended
- Shaped
- Started
- Stimulated

#### Technical Skills

- Adapted
- Applied
- Assembled
- Built
- Calculated
- Computed
- Conserved
- Constructed
- Converted
- Debugged
- Designed
- Determined
- Developed
- Engineered
- Fabricated
- Fortified
- Installed
- Maintained
- Operated
- Overhauled
- Programmed
- Rectified
- Regulated
- Remodeled
- Repaired
- Replaced
- Restored
- Solved
- Specialized
- Standardized
- Studied
- Upgraded
- Utilized

# Finished?

Review your resume to make sure it adheres to best practices and is ready for employers' eyes. Use the checklist below to critique your document, and then get it reviewed by a Career Development Staff Member by:

- Stopping by during Drop In Hours – please see our website for the most up-to-date hours
- E-mailing [careerhelp@sju.edu](mailto:careerhelp@sju.edu) for a review or critique
- Uploading to your Handshake account

## CONTACT INFORMATION

- Name, should be the largest item on resume
- Address (Current and/or Home)
- Phone number, no need to label
- Professional e-mail, no need to label

## EDUCATION

- College or university currently attending, including city and state
- Year of anticipated Graduation; does not say "anticipated"
- Degree, always spell out formal name, including Major and Minor
- Honors – Dean's List, Scholarships, etc.
- GPA if >3.0
- Relevant Courses, optional depending on available room
- Thesis, Presentations and Publications, when applicable
- Study Abroad, when applicable
- High School, optional for Freshmen and Sophomores. Omit entirely for Juniors and Seniors

## EXPERIENCE

- Work Experience, Internships, and/or Volunteer Work
- Four parts: 1) Job Title, 2) Organization, 3) City & State, 4) Dates (month and year format)
- Bullet points start with action verb, followed by example and result.
- Bullet points describe skills and accomplishments
- Present tense for current experience and past tense for previous experience
- Bullet points are limited to 3-4 per employer or experience

## OPTIONAL SECTIONS

- No objective statement or hobbies section
- Each section has a heading that makes sense for the information included within it
- Sections relate to the position being applied to
- Skills: computer, foreign language and level of proficiency for each
- Skills: does not include personality traits or attributes

## RESUME FORMAT AND STYLE

- Reverse chronological order (start with most recent first) in each section
- More relevant sections are placed before less relevant sections
- One page (may not apply to alumni, graduate students with experience, and education majors)
- ½ to 1 inch margins
- 10-12 point type size (name should be larger than content)
- Simple, easy to read font
- Appropriate use of bolds, italics, all caps and underlining to emphasize key points
- Concise and relevant; information tailored to the position you are seeking
- Organized and consistent
- Honest and accurate
- Avoids word repetition, use of "I" or first person pronouns
- Does not include demographic information, a photo, or salary expectations
- Does not include references or the language "references available upon request"