

# Guide to Writing RESUMES

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## What *IS* a resume, anyway?

A resume is a document that highlights your education, experiences, and skills as they relate to a particular position. It is essentially used for every position other than a faculty opening, for which a curriculum vitae (CV) is used.

## What is the purpose of a resume?

Contrary to popular opinion, the purpose of a resume is to obtain an interview, not a job. A well-written resume will not get you a job but rather might help you to get a foot in the door through an interview—and that interview may lead to an offer.

## I've never written a resume. Where do I begin?

### **Find a job description that appeals to you.**

- Print the job description and highlight the skills, qualifications, and tasks the employer is looking for someone to fulfill.

### **Make a list of potential categories.**

- Your resume should include the following: contact information, objective/summary of qualifications, education, experience, techniques/skills, and publications (if applicable.) You may also wish to include awards, volunteer opportunities, professional activities, community service, etc.

### **Create short phrases to describe your experiences.**

- Use words that highlight your accomplishments and quantify results. List functions you've performed that relate directly to the job. Avoid weak language like "responsible for," or "in charge of." Instead, use strong action verbs to begin each phrase. (see attached examples)

### **Edit, edit, edit—and then have someone else edit your resume for you!**

- Your resume **must** be error-free, formatted consistently, and easy to read. Watch out for misspellings and typographical errors! Have your advisor, a counselor within OITE, and others review it for you.

## Do you have any samples?

The samples found on the OITE website will help you to draft and/or edit your own resume. While the names have been changed, these are resumes from actual trainees who found employment in their respective areas of interest. You may use these as a guide, but your words must be your own—do NOT copy these samples word for word!

## **I still have a few questions.**

Below is a list of frequently asked questions. If you have others, please contact OITE for a one-on-one appointment with a career counselor.

**Q: An employer requested a CV in a job ad I found, but it is not a faculty opening. Should I send a resume or a CV?**

A: Resume. The term “CV” is sometimes generically used to refer to any kind of personal qualifications document, but what employers are actually seeking is a resume. That is, employers who request “CVs” want to see categories typically included on a resume but **not** on an academic CV, such as skills or techniques, job descriptions for research you have conducted, etc.

**Q: Should I include personal information on my resume, such as marital status, number of children, social security number, age, etc.?**

A: No, not if you are applying for jobs in the United States. Including a social security number can be especially hazardous because of the potential for identity theft.

**Q: Should I list my current advisor as a reference if we don't have a very good relationship?**

A: No—but be prepared for a prospective employer to contact that person. You can let employers know that you are conducting your job search in confidence, but some may still try to contact your current advisor.

**Q: Do I need to print my resume on “good” paper when preparing to attend a job fair?**

A: If you wish, but clean, 20-lb. white paper is just as good.

**Q: Should I list my postdoctoral experience under “Education,” “Research Experience,” or both?**

A: It may depend on what you are applying for. If you are moving away from the bench, it may be fine to list your postdoctoral appointment under “Education.” However, if you expect to use laboratory skills day-to-day in your next position, list it under “Research Experience”—which should fall right after “Education.”

**Q: Should I list presentations I've given in lab meetings? What about departmental presentations?**

A: Lab meeting presentations: no; department-wide, Institute-wide: yes.

**Q: I am on an H1-B. Should I list my visa status on my resume?**

A: Deciding when to share your visa status with a potential employer is a personal decision. However, you may choose to wait until the interview stage to disclose your status, simply because that gives the employer an opportunity to review your credentials without considering sponsorship requirements—and it may be that they are willing to sponsor you after learning more about you and your abilities.

**Q: Should I use the first person on my resume?**

A: No. It is best not to use “I,” “me,” or “my” on your resume.

**Q: Does font style matter? How about size?**

A: Yes—the font used on a resume should be clean and easy to read. Arial and Times New Roman are used most often. Any font smaller than 11 pt. becomes difficult to read for some.

**Q: What if my resume extends beyond one page?**

A: That is fine. Consider both your education and level of experience. Generally speaking, graduate students have had more education and experience than undergrads, postdoctoral scholars more than grad students, etc. That said, going on to 2, 3, even 4 pages may be fine for you, depending on where you are in your science career.

**Q: Should I list organizations I've been involved with that would reveal my religious affiliation? Political affiliation?**

A: This is a personal decision—but be aware that it may introduce bias, depending on the point of view of the reader. Generally speaking, it is best not to include such information, unless you would not be interested in working in a place that would discriminate against a particular value, belief, or orientation you hold.

**Q: Should I list professional affiliations?**

A: Yes, if they are relevant to the position you are seeking. You may also choose to list fraternal or community service organizations if you think that participation in such groups demonstrates your civic mindedness and will be perceived positively by a prospective employer.

**Q: Is an objective required on a resume?**

A: No, but if used, it should be specific and demonstrate what you have to offer an employer. Alternatively, consider using a summary of qualifications or professional profile at the beginning of the resume to demonstrate focus.

**Q: Can I include volunteer work as experience?**

A: Yes, as long as you don't include it in a category entitled "Work Experience," or "Employment." The words "work" and "employment" denote paid experiences.

## List of Action Verbs

Management	Communication	Research	Technical	Teaching
achieved	addressed	clarified	analyzed	adapted
administered	arbitrated	collected	assembled	advised
analyzed	arranged	conceived	built	clarified
assigned	authored	critiqued	calculated	coached
attained	communicated	detected	computed	communicated
chaired	corresponded	diagnosed	designed	coordinated
conceived	counseled	disproved	devised	defined
contracted	developed	evaluated	engineered	developed
consolidated	defined	examined	fabricated	enabled
coordinated	directed	extracted	inspected	encouraged
decided	drafted	identified	maintained	evaluated
delegated	edited	inspected	operated	explained
developed	enlisted	interpreted	overhauled	facilitated
directed	formulated	interviewed	programmed	guided
encouraged	influenced	investigated	remodeled	informed
evaluated	interpreted	organized	repaired	initiated
executed	lectured	researched	solved	instructed
handled	mediated	reported	trained	lectured
implemented	moderated	reviewed	upgraded	persuaded
improved	motivated	searched		presented
incorporated	negotiated	studied		set goals
increased	persuaded	summarized		stimulated
inspired	promoted	surveyed		taught
launched	publicized	systematized		trained
led	reconciled	wrote		updated
managed	reunited			
motivated	renegotiated			
organized	reported			
outlined	researched			
oversaw	summarized			
planned	spoke			
prioritized	translated			
produced	wrote			
recommended				
reevaluated				
rejected				
reported				
reviewed				
scheduled				
strengthened				
supervised				
united				

<b>Financial</b>	<b>Creative</b>	<b>Helping</b>	<b>Clerical or Detail</b>
adjusted	acted	advised	activated
administered	applied	aided	altered
allocated	composed	assessed	assembled
analyzed	conceived	assisted	approved
appraised	conceptualized	brought	arranged
audited	created	clarified	catalogued
balanced	designed	coached	classified
budgeted	developed	coordinated	collected
calculated	directed	counseled	compiled
compared	established	dealt	described
computed	evaluated	demonstrated	dispatched
developed	fashioned	diagnosed	edited
estimated	formed	educated	estimated
forecast	formulated	encouraged	executed
forecasted	founded	enlisted	gathered
managed	illustrated	expedited	generated
marketed	instituted	facilitated	implemented
planned	integrated	familiarized	inspected
projected	introduced	guided	listed
reevaluated	invented	helped	maintained
reconciled	loaded	inspired	monitored
researched	molded	maintained	observed
sold	originated	modified	operated
	perceived	performed	organized
	performed	referred	overhauled
	planned	rehabilitated	prepared
	presented	represented	processed
	produced	supported	proofread
	refined	upheld	published
	rewrote		purchased
	updated		recorded
			reduced
			retrieved
			screened
			specified
			streamlined
			systematized

