



University of Phoenix®

Resumé guide

Five steps to writing an effective resumé

Creating a winning resumé starts by carefully considering the people (and computers) who will be reading it. First, this will often be an ATS, or applicant tracking system. Next, it's typically a busy HR recruiter with many other resumé to consider. Finally, it may be your future boss — who wants to know you can actually perform the day-to-day work.

In this guide...

YOU'LL LEARN FIVE STEPS TO WRITING AN EFFECTIVE RESUMÉ

- 1 Establish a focus**
- 2 Design and format clearly**
- 3 Summarize your qualifications**
- 4 Check for accuracy**
- 5 Get feedback and update**

1 Establish a focus

A FOCUSED RESUMÉ CLOSELY MATCHES THE JOB DESCRIPTION

A focused resum  can make all the difference. It's not just your qualifications — it's the words you use to describe why you're uniquely qualified. Focus begins by researching the jobs you really want and tailoring your resum  with keywords to fit that specific job — not just any old job.

For most job seekers today, a computer scans your resum  for keywords. For example, a software engineering role may scan for words like *automation*, *Python* or *engineering*. Then, an algorithm determines if your resum  appears to be a good fit for the role. This [article](#) can tell you more about how to use keywords.

- ✓ Use a tool like **LinkedIn** or **Indeed** to do a focused search for the top jobs you'd like to apply for.
- ✓ Analyze them for common **keywords**. Once you find the most common words related to the job you're targeting, build them in throughout your resum .
- ✓ Reflect on your skills and abilities. Write down a list of keywords that express what you bring as an employee.

Think of your resum  as an advertisement targeted toward your future manager. To get the specific job you want, you have to ask for it very specifically.



2 Design and format

LACK OF CLUTTER MAKES IT EASY TO SEE WHAT YOU OFFER, FAST

Clarity is kindness. The proper format can make it easier to skim and scan your resumé in seconds, not minutes.



Be brief

Let your resumé be one to two pages, max. Unless you're in a specialized field.



Make an outline

Start by creating section headers like Qualifications, Experience, Skills and Education. Put these in the order that leads with your most valuable assets.



Choose a design

There are many options for designing a resumé, both online or in software like Microsoft Word. Pick one that's uncluttered and not overused.



Get inspired

Here's an outline of a resumé for an **entry-level business job or change in careers.**

And one for those who may be more **experienced or returning to the workforce.**



Use a professional font and type size

The font (or typeface) you choose can make a positive or negative impact. Choose a businesslike font like Times New Roman or Arial. Keep font size to 10, 11 or 12 point and set your margins to no less than 0.5 inch.



No pictures, please!

Save your professional headshot for LinkedIn.

3 Summarize your qualifications

THERE'S NO ONE EXACTLY LIKE YOU, AND THAT'S YOUR STRENGTH

Part of writing your resumé is writing your summary of qualifications. This is usually the first paragraph at the top of your resumé, and it can be tailored to fit the role you're applying to. You can write a general summary now, then adjust it after reading a job description.



Start strong

Students can start with “Soon-to-be IT graduate” or other indication that you're about to join (or rejoin) the workforce.



Tailor your summary to the role

If the job description asks for someone who puts customers first, you might lead with “Customer-centric” in your first paragraph.



Use action words

Verbs like *managed*, *wrote*, *built*, *led* or *completed* are helpful ways to describe your experience and accomplishments.



Clearly define your skills

If you don't have a lot of career experience, showcase what you learned in school. Most University of Phoenix courses and programs teach defined skills like critical thinking and leadership. Think about the courses you're taking (or have taken) and include them.



Add any job-relevant credentials

You might include licenses, honors/awards, volunteering, etc., that show your qualifications and initiative.



TIP

Job descriptions are an “ideal” the employer is seeking. Just because you don't check *all* the boxes doesn't mean you shouldn't apply.

4 Check your resumé for accuracy

DON'T LET BAD GRAMMAR OR A TYPO COST YOU THE JOB

Employers will seldom hire a candidate based just on a great resumé, but they'll often reject candidates based on an error. Your resumé needs to be grammatically perfect, and clearly written in short sentences and without business jargon or fluff. Verify the accuracy of your dates of employment, education and skills.

- Q Double-check everything: Use spell-check, read your resumé out loud, and ask friends, co-workers or family members to put another set of eyes on it.
- Q Don't make these common mistakes: stretching the truth (this will come back to haunt you), using an unprofessional email address, misspelling your email, using repetitive words or unfamiliar acronyms, or putting photos or graphics on a resumé. Headshots are best saved for your LinkedIn profile.
- Q It's fine to write in the first person, but leave out the pronoun "I." This point leads back to **Step 3's advice** to use action words, like "led" rather than "I led."



5 Get feedback and update

A PROFESSIONAL TAKE ON YOUR RESUMÉ CAN BE WORTH IT

You've worked hard to put your best foot forward. But if you're not getting a response with your resum , it can help to seek expert feedback.



Working with a career coach or HR recruiter can also prove helpful. Show them the exact jobs you are targeting and ask if your resum  is a good fit for the roles you're pursuing.



As an active University of Phoenix student, you have access to **Career Services** including resum  templates and writing assistance.



Periodically do a resum  refresh! Update your current position, professional summary and skills as your career progresses. This is helpful in the event you need to find a new job quickly.

Still need help?

OUR CONTINUED COMMITMENT TO CAREER SERVICES FOR LIFE™

At University of Phoenix, our commitment to you doesn't end at graduation. Whether you're actively pursuing a degree with us or graduated long ago, you'll have access to career advisors and resources — from your first class to your last job.

You'll get access to personal career coaching, including job search planning, resum  fine-tuning, interview prepping and more. See all of your options at phoenix.edu/career-services.

ENTRY-LEVEL OR CAREER CHANGE RESUMÉ

Your Name*City, State, ZIP / Phone / Email***Professional profile**

Describe the expertise you can offer that's relevant to the job you're pursuing. This is a summary, so try to talk about the "big picture" of who you are professionally by focusing on the skills and value you bring to the organization.

Skills*Hard Skills*

List 3-5 skill sets or qualifications, such as certificates, software programs, a foreign language, etc.

Soft Skills

List 3-5 skills that are interpersonal or social skills, like organization, time management, leadership, etc.

Education

College or University, City, State | Exact Title of Degree

- Relevant Coursework – Course Name 1, Course Name 2, Course Name 3, Course Name 4, etc.
- Student Project Highlights – Describe a specific project/assignment that showcases the skills and concepts you learned in class

Experience

Company Name, City, State
Job Title

Start Date – End Date

- Use first bullet to describe context of your work environment or the scope of your role
- Include 2-3 bullets describing key responsibilities, notable achievements or positive results you contributed to
- A formula for writing bullets is action verb + description of task + result or purpose (example below)
- "Collected and recorded patient information, health insurance eligibility and patient demographic information to streamline patient database"

EXPERIENCED OR RETURNING TO THE WORKFORCE RESUMÉ

Your Name*City, State, ZIP / Phone / Email***Professional profile**

Describe the expertise you can offer that's relevant to the job you're pursuing. This is a summary, so try to talk about the "big picture" of who you are professionally by focusing on the skills and value you can bring to the organization.

Career highlights

- List 2-3 top career achievements (see example below)
- Spearheaded marketing campaign that increased revenues by \$20M within the first year

Experience

Company Name, City, State
Job Title

Number of years

Include a brief introductory paragraph highlighting your core responsibilities and context of your work environment, such as the size of your team, scope of responsibility, etc.

- Include 2-3 bullets describing key responsibilities, notable achievements or positive results you contributed to
- A formula for writing bullets is action verb + description of task + result or purpose (example below)
- "Repeatedly ranked among the top three regional sales teams for highest revenue achieved companywide, generating over \$2.4 million in new sales"

Education

College or University, City, State
Exact Title of Degree

Graduation Date