



# Resume Guide

Your resume is your primary marketing tool when applying for a job or internship and when networking as part of a job search. It needs to grab the attention of a potential employer in **7 seconds or less!**

## Formatting Your Resume

### CHOOSING A FORMAT

#### Reverse Chronological Format (Recommended)

- Most common resume format, and most applicable to undergraduates
- Employment and education are listed from most recent to earliest
- Ideal when your most recent experience/education is in the same field to which you are applying

#### Functional Format (Alternative)

- Emphasizes skills vs. work history
- Ideal for people changing career fields or with gaps on their resume

#### Hybrid Format (Alternative)

- Combines elements of reverse chronological and functional formats
- Positions listed in reverse chronological format, but major skill sets emphasized

### GENERAL FORMATTING TIPS

- Avoid using a resume template. Templates limit your ability to manipulate and format resume content. If you would like help picking a fresh and professional design, make an appointment for resume assistance with the Compass Center.
- Choose one professional, easy-to-read font to use throughout the document. Examples include Calibri, Corbel, Candara, Garamond, and Cambria.
- Use at least 11 point font.
- Set left and right margins at between 0.5 inches to 1 inch; set top margin at no less than 0.5 inches, and your bottom at no less than 0.3 inches.
- Use bullet points to break up large blocks of text.
- Save your resume in a Word document, send electronically as a PDF file, and include your full name in the file name (i.e. Mary\_Smith – Resume.doc).
- Limit your resume to one to two pages.
  - General rule: 1 page for every 5 to 7 years of experience
  - Put the most important information on the first page



## Dos and Don'ts

- **DO** Highlight your most relevant experience and skills by putting them in the top half of your resume.
- **DO** Make your resume scan-able. Use formatting—**boldface**, *italics*, ALL CAPS, type scale, and strategic use of white space—to make key information easy to find. For resumes evaluated by an Applicant Tracking System (ATS), see the Writing Tips on page 3.
- **DON'T** try to provide every detail. Just provide enough information so a hiring manager requests an interview.

# Resume Checklist

## ☐ CONTACT INFORMATION

- Your **full name**.
- **City** and **state**. Do not include your street address if posting to a job board.
- **Phone Number** with professional voicemail greeting.
- **One professional email address**. If you have a personal email address that you monitor often, consider using that, since your @nwciova.edu email address will expire after graduation.
- *Optional*: links to your **LinkedIn profile**, **academic portfolio**, and **writing samples/publications**.

## ☐ EDUCATION

If your college education is more closely related to the position you are applying to than your previous work experience, list it as the first section on your resume.

- Write out **Bachelor of Arts in [Your Major]** or **Master of Education**.
- List the **college**, **location**, and **expected graduation**.
- Include **study abroad** or **off-campus study** experiences.
- **Do not include high school** degree or GPA after enrolling in college.
- Consider including **relevant courses** to further demonstrate how your degree has prepared you for your desired position.
- **GPA** is optional, but only list if 3.0 or higher.
- Include **Dean's List** and **academic honors** (with dates or semesters awarded).
- Add your **thesis title**, if applicable, or any other **key achievements, publications, or awards**.

## ☐ EXPERIENCE

**Jobs, internships, volunteer roles, or experiences relevant to the position you are seeking.** If your experience is more relevant than your education, put your Experience section first.

- List positions in **reverse chronological order**.
- Include the following: **position title, organization/ employer, location, and dates** (month/year) employed.
- List **key responsibilities** and **accomplishments** for each position, and quantify if applicable. Examples:
  - Oversaw 11 peers to prepare for service project
  - Managed \$250,000 in Northwestern investments
- Start your bullet point with an action verb in **past tense** if the position has an end date; put the verb in **present tense** if the position is current.

## ☐ OTHER SECTIONS (if applicable)

- Credentials, licenses, advanced practice specialties, clinical hours, and certifications
- Research experience
- Cross-cultural experience or international experience
- Leadership experience
- Technical/computer/design skills (list specific programs)
- Language skills (indicate level of proficiency)
- Volunteer experience, service, or community engagement
- Activities
- Honors and awards
- Presentations, publications, and professional affiliations



## Do Not Include

- **Personal information:** *Age, Date of birth, Marital status, Religious affiliation, Political affiliation*
- **Social security number**
- **A personal photo** (unless applying for an acting/theatre role)
- **Excessive use of graphics**
- **References to high school activities, leadership roles, and jobs after sophomore year in college**
- **The phrase "References Available Upon Request"**

# Optional Sections

## OBJECTIVE

Only include an objective if it is specific. **Avoid generic cliché statements** that do not add value.

**Bad example:** Seeking a social work position within a facility where I can use my experience to the benefit of my employer as well as gain knowledge and professional growth.

**Good example:** Licensed Clinical Social Worker with experience working with diverse populations in private practice, health care, outpatient, and inpatient treatment settings. Recently relocated to Minnesota.

## SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

A SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS or PROFILE is a way to provide an employer with a snapshot of your most desired professional attributes.

**Good example:** Social work student with experience serving the community, resolving conflicts, and providing guidance for those in need. Professional focus on domestic violence, adolescent development, and children's needs.

# Writing Tips

- Embed key skills in your resume.** Large companies often use an Applicant Tracking System (ATS) to screen your resume for keywords. Make sure you tailor your resume for each job by **reading the job description** carefully, **identifying the top skills** they desire, and **inserting those keywords** in your resume. Simplistic resume formatting is imperative if you are applying for a position that utilizes ATS. Talk with a Compass Center staff member for resources that can help you assess whether your resume is ATS scan-ready.
- Use strong action verbs to describe your experience.**
  - When describing your experience, accomplishments, and skills, use **bullet statements** that succinctly showcase your experience and skills, and use strong **action verbs** to lead these bullet statements.
  - Try to find good action verbs **geared toward your specific field:** <https://resumegenius.com/blog/resume-help/action-verbs>
- To make low-level jobs and activities stand out, specify and quantify**
  - Weak:** Worked for Northwestern College Maintenance Department
  - Better:** Cleaned dormitories at Northwestern College
  - Even Better:** Collaborated with a team of four to clean all dormitories at Northwestern College
  - Best:** Efficiently worked with a team of four to deep-clean and sanitize four dormitories in preparation for student arrival
- After you create a draft of your resume, make an appointment via Handshake with a staff member in the Compass Center.** We can help you think through what to include, assist with formatting, identify any typos or missing words, and help you produce a polished resume you are proud to send!
- If submitting your resume electronically, save as a PDF file with your name as the file name, and always send it with an accompanying cover letter.**

# Action Verbs

Accomplish  
Anticipate  
Commit  
Deliver  
Earn  
Endeavor  
Establish  
Exceed  
Execute  
Overcome  
Produce  
Raise  
Reach  
Realize  
Revitalize  
Spearhead  
Surpass  
Transform  
Win



# Nora Northwestern

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## EDUCATION

### Bachelor of Arts in Psychology

Northwestern College | Orange City, IA

- Minor in Sports Management
- Romania Semester | Fall 2019

May 2021

GPA: 3.6

Education

## HEADING LABEL (Ex. Relevant Experience, Work Experience, Internships, Leadership, etc.)

### Position Title

Month Year- Month Year

Organization/Employer | City, ST

- Accomplishments and results (quantify if possible). Try to include: what task you completed, how you completed the task, the purpose of the task, and key results
- Start each bullet with a strong action verb (lead, organize, facilitate, etc.) and aim for 2-5 bullets

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## CAMPUS INVOLVEMENT (Optional heading)

Rugby Team

Month Year- Month Year

Symphonic Band

Month Year- Month Year

Experience

## COMPUTER & LANGUAGE SKILLS (Optional heading)

Advanced in Adobe Photoshop; proficient in Microsoft Excel; familiar with Canva and InDesign

Conversational in Spanish

Skills