

Creating a Résumé

Your résumé is your professional summary. It provides potential employers with accurate, concise information on your education, experience and accomplishments. Your résumé should paint a strong picture of you as a potential candidate; it should also be cleanly formatted with significant attention to detail.

Sections of Your Résumé

Your résumé can have a variety of different sections. The following sections are presented in the order they typically appear for a college student/new graduate, but you may choose a different layout if it is more appropriate. You do not need to include any section that is not relevant, and you may opt to add sections not listed here.

Header

- This refers to your name, address, phone number and email address at the top of the page.
- Your name should stand out easily, without overwhelming the rest of the information.

Education

- For each institution attended, include: the name of the institution; city and state; name of degree (fully written out); date of graduation (or attendance); and major/minor.
- You may choose to include significant coursework, internships, research experiences, honors and off-campus study experiences.
- You may include your GPA if it is above a 3.0 (or requested by the employer).
- You may include your high school (list as “Diploma”), but most students omit it after sophomore year.

Experience/Employment

- You may choose to title this section in a variety of ways. *Experience* is the most general and usually suffices, especially if you have had an internship or other experiences related to your desired career. *Employment* is appropriate if you have only held a variety of unrelated summer jobs. If you have a combination of the two and wish to draw particular attention to your relevant experience, you may opt to have both an *Experience* and an *Employment* section.
- List your most recent experience first.
- For each experience, include the name of the company/organization; city and state; job title; and the dates of employment/participation.
- Include 2-3 bullets describing your main responsibilities and highlighting your major accomplishments, quantifying those accomplishments whenever possible.

Other Sections

- *Activities*: Include if you have been actively involved in a number of student organizations, athletics and the performing arts.
- *Service/Volunteerism*: Include if you have participated in service-oriented activities or courses.
- *Leadership*: Include if you have taken on significant leadership roles during your time at Alma.
- *Skills*: Include if you have special skills not demonstrated by your other sections, or you need this section to strengthen your résumé.



ALMA COLLEGE

Center for Student Opportunity

Formatting Your Résumé

Attention to detail is critical when formatting your résumé. If you want to have the most control over your résumé's layout and formatting, **do not use a pre-designed template**. While they may seem easier, templates do not allow you to revise and edit effectively. Pay attention to the following items and ask others to review your document, too.

Margins and Font

- Adjusting margins is a common way to fit your résumé onto one page. To keep your document from looking too full, none of your margins should be below 0.6".
- You may use any font, as long as it is crisp, clean and professional. Be sure to use the same font throughout your résumé. Arial and Times New Roman are commonly used standards.
- Font size should be between 10 and 12 point.

Alignment and Spacing

- Text should line up consistently throughout the document.
- It is common to list dates of employment/participation on the far right edge of the page. If you choose to do that, use the Tab key instead of the space bar. The same applies to any indenting you may do on the left edge of your document.
- Check your line spacing. Microsoft Word gives you significant control over the amount of space between each line, but you may have to make changes if you do not like the default settings.

Bold/Italics/Underline

- Be sure to use bold, italics and underlines consistently throughout the document.
- Experiment with ways these formatting tools can help draw attention to certain aspects of your résumé.

Spelling and Grammar

- Check your résumé carefully for spelling and grammatical errors.
- Do not use the pronoun "I" anywhere in your résumé.
- Pay attention to the tenses of your bullet points: past experience should be in the past tense, while present experience should be in the present tense.
- As résumés do not contain complete sentences, you do not need to put periods after your bullet points.

References

- Your references may comprise a second page to your résumé, or can be a completely separate, similarly-formatted document.
- For each reference, list name, title, company/organization, address, phone number and email address.
- Listing 3-4 references is standard; you should select supervisors, professors, advisors and others who can speak to your abilities.
- Be sure to obtain permission before listing someone as a reference.

Distributing Your Résumé

When printing, use high-quality résumé paper and mail in a matching envelope. When submitting electronically, save your résumé as a PDF and name it appropriately (ex: SmithRésumé.pdf).