



# COLLEGE OF HUMAN ECOLOGY

## Writing Resumes

### What is a resume?

A resume is a summary of your education, experiences, and accomplishments, which serves as a reflection of you.

### What does a resume do?

Often serving as the first impression of you to employers, a resume should showcase your skills and show that you are a qualified fit for a position. It should work hand-in-hand with your cover letter to highlight your strengths and experiences (see page 11 of the Career Exploration Guide for more information about pairing a resume and cover letter).

### How do I start a resume?

- After drafting a list of all of your experiences (this includes paid work, volunteer work, research experience, leadership roles, and clubs), begin to group these based on commonalities.
- List these experiences under each header in reverse chronological order (most recent first).
- Describe each experience in as much detail as possible, using 2 to 4 bullet points. Begin each sentence with strong, active verbs (see the CEC's Action Verb Categories handout for a list of powerful choices) in the present tense for ongoing experiences and past tense for experiences that are over.

### What do I include in my resume?

- Contact information: name, phone number, email address, current and permanent address (optional; if you do choose to include it, select the address most relevant to the location of the position you are applying to).
- Education: your universities (list all universities if you are a transfer student), college, degree, major, GPA (two decimals & if above a 3.00), expected date of graduation (month, year), semesters of Dean's List (or can be included in Honors and Awards).
- Experiences: these can be grouped under headers such as Work Experience, Research Experience, Volunteer Experience, Leadership Experience, Selected Experience, Extracurricular Activities (ask about our binders of sample resumes to see more examples). The categories you choose to include should be arranged based on what is most relevant to the position you are applying for. Extracurricular Activities and Interests are usually less relevant and can be moved toward the bottom of your resume.
- Skills: indicate knowledge of software programs (even Microsoft Office Suite!), technical skills and procedures (such as experience operating fMRI machines), and languages (specify level of fluency in speaking, reading, and writing). Reference the NIH Proficiency Scale for how to properly indicate your level of competency.

### Optional Components:

- **Objective**: your goal to obtain employment should be apparent to employers, unless you have little to no experience in the field or are positioning yourself to use your background in an unobvious way (for example, a Human Development major seeking a marketing position may want to briefly clarify how his or her skill set relates to marketing).
- **Relevant coursework**: to showcase an expertise in a field that is not otherwise evident (typically avoid putting introductory courses).

### Please keep in mind:

- Resumes should be no more than one page long. You can save all your experiences on a longer document called a "running resume" and pick the experiences you want employers to see for a specific resume.
- Margins can be as small as 0.5 inches and fonts can be as small as 10.5 in Times New Roman (if using a font other than Times New Roman, use a size that prevents your reader from straining to read your resume).
- Strive for consistency of verb tenses (ongoing positions should be in present tense), use or non-use of periods at the end of bullet points, and use of en-dashes instead of hyphens to separate dates.
- Sophomore year is the typical time to shift from including high school experiences to only college involvements.
- Send resume in a PDF file format when uploading or emailing to maintain the format of your document.

**Your Name**  
Email, phone number(s)

**Current address**  
Ithaca, NY 14850

**Permanent address (optional)**  
City, ST, Zip code

**Education**

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Cornell University, College of Human Ecology  
Bachelor of Science in your major, concentrations or minors  
GPA: X.XX (major is optional; cut off after two decimals, do not round up)  
Dean's List (can go here OR under Honors and Awards; be sure to specify which semesters)

**Honors and Awards**

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Dean's List  
Other awards (dates as applicable)

**Experience**

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**Company, City, State** Month 20XX — Present  
*Position*

- Company and position are interchangeable, as well as the bold-type and italics to break up text
- Describe in these bullets what your responsibilities are, avoiding long sentences
- Limit descriptions to no more than 5 bullets in order to keep it easy to read (ideally 2-4 bullets suffice)

**Company, City, State** Month 20XX — Month 20XX  
*Position*

- List experiences in reverse chronological order; list most recent experience first
- Convert your dates to months — it is easier to stay consistent and is more specific than using seasons
- Use strong action verbs, and use present tense for ongoing experiences and past tense for experiences that have ended (see the Action Verbs guide for a list of useful verbs)
- Quantify your achievements when possible — for example, how many people did you supervise, how many clients were you responsible for, how many samples did you collect, or how many floor plans and renderings did you create

**Company, City, State** Month 20XX — Month 20XX  
*Position*

- Break up your experiences into different headers to avoid a long list and to best categorize your experiences
- Some examples include Work Experience, Research Experience, Volunteer Experience, Leadership Experience, Selected Experience, Extracurricular Activities, etc.
- Put the most important and relevant categories on top, so your audience sees them first

**Extracurricular Activities (an example of a heading)**

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Club, position Month 20XX — Month 20XX  
• Other awards (dates as applicable)

**Skills and Interests**

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- List your technical skills here, such as software programs
- Mention the languages you speak and be sure to include your fluency
- Interests can also be listed here if you think they may help you stand out or start a conversation