

Resume Dos and Don'ts

Your resume is a marketing tool that lists a summary of your qualifications for employment. It will typically let the reader know what type of position you are seeking and will highlight your education, experience, skills and other relevant information. The best way to determine what should be included on your resume is to ask yourself what the potential employer would want to know about you to consider you for the position. The primary purpose of the resume is to get you an interview. Use the following tips to “wow” a future employer:

- Using resume templates is discouraged. Create your own unique document that is both appealing and easy to read and edit.
- Unless you have a very common name, consider eliminating your middle name or initial from your resume for easier name recognition. (Nicknames can be in quotation marks between your first and last name.)
- Only 1 telephone number needs to be listed. Be sure that your email address, voicemail message and social networking sites are professional.
- Resumes should be 1-2 pages in length. If you are just starting out in your field, or if you are seeking corporate employment, your resume should be one page. If you are seeking a nonprofit position, or you have a lot of experience, it can extend to two pages (with your name at the top of the second page). Consider using resume paper for career fairs and networking events.
- It looks best to have your name in bold, a couple of sizes larger than the body of the resume. Your address, telephone number and e-mail address should not be larger or in bold.
- List degrees and job titles, or colleges and employers, in bold font with limited underlining and italics.
- Font size generally works best at 11-point and in Arial or Times New Roman for easier reading with no greater than one-inch margins.
- List everything (jobs, degrees, internships, activities) in reverse chronological order by ending date.
- Experienced job seekers may wish to include a Profile or Summary of Qualifications at the top of the resume, with 4-6 bullets or phrases highlighting the skills and traits that would be of interest to the specific employer. Going back 10-15 years for jobs and activities is sufficient for a resume.
- Include your current degree program and anticipated graduation date, even if you have just begun your studies. List your degrees by month and year. If they are more than 15 years old, dates should not be listed.

- Only the name, city and state of your colleges and employers should be included. Details such as address, telephone number and supervisor will be listed on employment applications.
- Consider having your section titles in all capital letters and bold font, the same size as the text.
- Bullets should begin with action verbs and be in phrases, not sentences.
- List results and skills when possible, not just duties.
- Use the present tense of verbs to describe duties in your current job, internship or activities. Use the past tense when describing duties from previous jobs, internships or activities.
- Write in the first person but do not use personal pronouns such as “I.” Simply state what it is that you want (in your objective) or what it is that you do/did (in your jobs/activities).
- Do not split names and phrases between lines or split sections between pages.
- List other languages in which you are fluent or familiar. If you have traveled, lived in another country or studied abroad, include that information.
- List your GPA if it is 3.0 or above. If the GPA in your major is significantly higher than your cumulative GPA, you may list them both.
- Awards and scholarships are listed on resumes for undergraduate and graduate students, usually toward the bottom of the page. Academic accomplishments should decrease on resumes as relevant work experience increases, unless they are applicable to the position that you are seeking.
- Be sure that key words for your field are used in your resume.
- Do not include personal information such as birth date, marital status, social security or license or certificate number. Exclude hobbies, interests and religion /ethnic background unless they would be considered relevant to an employer.
- We no longer note that references are available upon request. Instead, have a page (with the same heading as your resume) that lists 3-5 professional references with their titles and contact information. Take this list with you to interviews or send it when requested.
- If you are changing careers, a functional (skilled-based) resume is usually most effective. Please consult with a career development specialist to determine the best style for you.
- Saint Louis University prefers that Saint be written out. For the city, St. is the most common spelling.
- Do not rely solely on Spell Check. It is sometimes inaccurate, and will not work on words in all capital letters.
- Carry additional copies of your resume to interviews.
- Have a Career Development Specialist in Career Services critique your resume!