

# CAREER SERVICES RESUME GUIDE





# INTRODUCTION

The careful preparation of job search tools, such as a resume, is an important ingredient to a successful search. Whether a resume is the primary document for highlighting your background or is intended to expand the scope of your search, it is a marketing tool that needs to showcase your professional background in a concise and engaging way.

## FOR THE CANDIDATE, THE RESUME:

- provides an introduction to a potential employer.
- highlights what you have accomplished in your field.
- sets you apart from other applicants.

## FOR THE EMPLOYER, THE RESUME:

- is a first step in screening candidates.
- helps the reviewer decide if your background fulfills job requirements and “fits” the organization.
- prompts a hiring manager to pick you for an interview.
- can be a roadmap for questions during the interview about what is or is not covered in your resume.

With a myriad of responsibilities, a hiring manager may only have a few minutes to review your resume before deciding to invite you for a face-to-face interview. An effective resume will help increase your chances by presenting employers with the information they need to assess the potential for a good hiring match. This guide offers information and suggestions about content, organization, and style to assist you in preparing a resume that mirrors the effort you have put into your professional preparation. It answers commonly-asked questions that come up as you gather information such as *“How many pages should I use?”* or *“What sections should I include?”* or *“How do I translate my curriculum vitae into a resume?”*

Although there are general guidelines you may use, there are only a few “absolutes.” It is important that the end result reflects your background and skills and demonstrates your potential for success in your chosen field.

## RESUME PURPOSE

- Market yourself to an employer**
- Highlight your accomplishments**
- Set yourself apart from others**
- Structure the interview**

# RESUME ORGANIZATION

Effective resumes are easily read and understood. Information can be organized in a number of ways with categories that can be quickly reviewed by employers. For new or recent graduates a reverse chronological format, which lists most recent information first, works well because it is familiar to employers. It is often the preferred format with hiring managers, since it clearly conveys the history of your training and employment.

Within all sections of your resume you will want to be completely truthful. While your resume is an opportunity to highlight your strengths and accomplishments, these should not be exaggerated. A resume with false information is essentially an unethical and dishonest representation of you. Additionally, if a potential employer discovers during the hiring process that you include false information your candidacy for that position could be in jeopardy. After hiring, if the falsehood became known, it could be grounds for dismissal.

## THE MAIN CATEGORIES THAT ARE REQUIRED ON ALL RESUMES ARE

- Summary/Objective
- Contact Information
- Education
- Professional Experience

## OTHER SECTIONS THAT YOU MAY CHOOSE TO USE INCLUDE

- Licenses/Certifications
- Technical Skills
- Professional Activities
- Qualifications
- Leadership and Community Service Experience
- Language Skills
- Honors and Awards

Your unique background and experience, as well as your job search goals, should guide the categories you select.





## RESUME ORGANIZATION

# CONTENT

Begin developing the resume areas that will describe your background by brainstorming a list of your professional training and work experience, academic coursework, and involvement in professional, community service or social organizations. Consider the skills you gained in each experience and whether they are transferable to future positions which interest you.

For many new professionals, volunteer experiences in community groups and professional associations—including student organizations—hold untapped potential to illustrate a wide variety of relevant skills and traits that have been developed. You are encouraged to think carefully about your volunteer work. Did you participate on a Pacific Oaks College committee? Were you an active campus leader at your undergraduate institution gaining valuable project management and interpersonal skills? Were you a collegiate athlete or a resident adviser? Have you worked tirelessly as an advocate in your community?

The language and format used to present your background is important.

### USE THE FOLLOWING TECHNIQUES TO CREATE CLEAR, CONCISE RESUME CONTENT

- Choose words and phrases deliberately. Use words that indicate movement, action, and energy such as those listed on the Career Tool, [Functional Skills and Related Action Verb Clusters](#), which can be found in the Career Toolkit on the Career Services webpage under the link: CV and Resume Guides.
- Be specific in providing key information such as the populations with which you have worked.
- Use professional jargon to clarify, not impress the reader. For example, you could highlight your abilities with a specific therapy or in a relevant clinical area.
- Focus on quality of content versus number of pages. A one-page resume with a tiny font and small margins is unreadable and will effectively get you ignored. So will a two-page resume that has wide margins with a large font and includes a lot of information that is useless to the employer. If you do add a second page, make sure it is at least half to three-quarters full.
- List all entries in chronological order with the most recent experiences first within the category. For example, list internships backwards in time within Training Experience.
- Include the month and year for beginning and end dates for all experiences listed, except completed degrees. For these, list the month and year in which the degree was conferred.
- Develop a responsibility statement that describes your position and summarizes your overall duties. This statement is narrative (do not bullet) and is placed right below your job title.
- Develop accomplishment statements to demonstrate how you contributed in each position using the STAR technique (see page 5). These are indented bulleted statements that begin with action words/verbs.
- Avoid leaving gaps and do not misrepresent yourself and capabilities.
- Proofread your resume and then have at least two different people proofread it as well. Those could be a Career Services advisor, faculty member, fellow student, or colleague. Not only will they help you locate grammar, formatting, or typing errors, they may spot areas where your descriptions are unclear or need more detail.

#### AN OVERLOOKED RESUME

**Volunteer experiences – both in community and professional groups – can be untapped sources of relevant work skills, leadership ability, and experience with certain organizations or populations.**



# RESUME ORGANIZATION

## CONTENT *CONT.*

To help you discover and identify the full range of your experiences and their value, several Career Tools are in the Career Toolkit on the Career Services webpage in the CV and Resume Guide section.

### FUNCTIONAL SKILLS AND RELATED ACTION VERB CLUSTERS

– Identify the functional skills or competencies you have and most enjoy so you can focus your resume on obtaining a position that fits your talents. Then build your resume with action verbs that correspond to skills in demand in the psychology field.

**BRANDING STATEMENTS** – Develop a concise, information-packed summary of your background to use in resumes and cover letters as well as when networking or interviewing.

**JOB SEARCH GOALS** – Focus your resume and job search efforts by defining the overall and specific goals you have at this stage of your career.

**WORK VALUES** – Discover your beliefs and values about the kinds of positions and work environments that will best fulfill your values.

### WRITING ACCOMPLISHMENT STATEMENTS

Employers also are interested in contributions and results achieved through your professional development as well as skills you acquired. What did you initiate or accomplish in your experiences? Whenever possible, select concrete examples that illustrate your success.

An effective technique to help you develop bullets that demonstrate how you have added value in your different positions and experiences is STAR. This approach will help you write accomplishment statements that address your contributions in four key areas: quality, quantity, productivity, or financial impact.

### BEGIN BY WRITING ANSWERS TO THE FOLLOWING:

**SITUATION** – How would you describe the circumstances or area in which you were working.

**TASK/BARRIER** – What was the task/barrier you worked to overcome.

**ACTIONS** – What steps/process/solutions did you use.

**RESULT** – What was the outcome of your efforts.

### NEXT, ARRANGE THIS INFORMATION TO ILLUSTRATE YOUR CONTRIBUTION.

- Counseled adults with severe mental illness in the areas of living skills and interpersonal relationships that resulted in several clients obtaining jobs due to their ability to demonstrate appropriate behavioral control.
- Planned and implemented 15 regional training seminars and a three-day annual conference for early childhood professionals.



### WRITING ACCOMPLISHMENT STATEMENTS

**Write effective bullets that highlight your contributions in past positions using STAR:**

**S – Situation**

**T – Task/Barrier**

**A – Action**

**R – Result**



### NEED HELP?

**Check out the Career Toolkit located on the Career Services webpage in the CV and Resume Guide section to explore the range of your experiences and their value in writing a resume.**



# RESUME ORGANIZATION

## STYLE

When it comes to style, consistency is a must. If you capitalize a job title or place it in bold type, continue this format throughout the document. A consistent look throughout a resume creates a neat appearance and enhances overall readability.

### OTHER STYLE TIPS INCLUDE

- Avoid using personal pronouns such as “I”, “Our”, “We”, etc.
- Use bold, all caps, or italics to distinguish the key elements of your entries such as your position title or place of employment so they stand out at first glance. Avoid the use of underlining or fancy bullets as they are harder to read. Keep your layout uniform and use font styles such as bold or all caps in a consistent manner.
- Use key words and phrases from the job description to which you are applying; avoid jargon that does not relate to the employer/industry.
- Use past tense for past experiences and present tense for present experiences.
- Do not abbreviate – spell out words like HR, Info, I/O, and CV.
- If you do have a second page, place your name followed by your email or phone number at the top. Right justify the page number.
- Print copies of your resume on a high quality printer and laser paper. Most resumes will be sent electronically, so you do not need to invest in expensive resume paper.



### KEEP IT SIMPLE

**Remember the adage, “Keep It Simple”  
Choose one font and use bold, all caps, or italics consistently throughout**

## FORMAT

Many organizations have increased their use of technology in their human resource processes to improve the efficiency of operations. Some employers now screen applicants by scanning resumes into an organizational database. Because a computer scans the resume as an image rather than text, it is important to stay consistent and simple.

- Create one inch margins at the top, bottom, left, and right. Adjust as necessary to keep all information together.
- Place the date of all experiences flush with the right margin. Use indented bullets for descriptive information under individual jobs, internships, etc.
- Use a font size of 11 or 12 point for the body of your resume. Select a simple, easy-to-read and traditional font such as Arial, Times New Roman or Garamond.
- Headings should be one to two points larger than your body type. Your name at the top of your resume can be 14 or 16 point with all other contact information written in 12 point type. Avoid using headers or footers.



### RESUMES ARE SCANNED

**Keep in mind – resumes are scanned, not read – by human eye or technology**

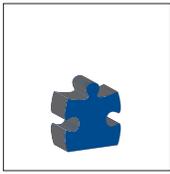


# ELECTRONIC RESUMES

You may be considering posting your resume on the Internet. Typically you will submit a scannable resume or complete a resume format found on a website. Your resume may then be found through a search mechanism and reviewed by potential employers. While you can make your resume available to a large number of organizations quickly in this manner, you may want to weigh the pros and cons of electronically posting your resume for anyone to see. If you are currently employed, for example, you may prefer to be more discreet in your job search. Keep in mind, too, that once you have put your resume out on the Internet you have relinquished control over how it is seen, by whom, and if they are viewing the most updated version.

A more effective strategy with internet job boards is to use them to find out who has posted job openings. Once you have identified appropriate job opportunities, bypass the internet job board and go directly to the employer's site to apply. This also allows you to properly research the company and customize your resume and cover letter before applying.

**INTERNET JOB BOARD**  
**The best use of Internet job boards is to research job openings. Then bypass the job board and go directly to the employer's site to apply.**



## RESUME SECTIONS

# CONTACT INFORMATION

Current contact information should appear at the top of the first page of your resume, preferably centered.

### IT SHOULD INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING IN THIS ORDER:

- Your first and last name and highest degree if greater than a bachelor's degree
- Your current home address
- The phone number at which you can be consistently reached. If you list two, indicate the difference between the two in some manner, such as "H" for home and "C" for cell phone before or after the number, which can be punctuated with a colon or put in parentheses
- Your current professional e-mail address, without any slang or cute user names

If your search will continue beyond the academic year, you should indicate the last date that you may be reached at your present address and telephone number as well as a permanent address and telephone number to provide alternate ways to be reached.



### EMAIL TIP!

**Set up a specific email for job search purposes only.**

# OBJECTIVE

An objective is a brief statement of your short-term career goals. There are many ways to demonstrate your focus and interest through an objective. You can target a particular type of position or setting or highlight skills you would like to use.

### HERE ARE TWO EXAMPLES:

- To obtain a counseling position in a large social service agency serving the Hispanic community.
- Seeking a position in a childcare environment that will foster growth and experience working with children with special needs.

The decision to include an objective on a resume is ultimately yours. There are a variety of views on this topic, and they are summarized below.

### ADVANTAGES:

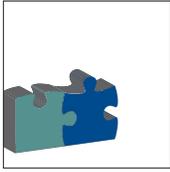
- Communicates a specific career goal or message which is particularly helpful if you are a career changer.
- Provides a framework to clearly highlight your supporting, relevant experience in the field of psychology.
- Gives an avenue to show how specific skill areas were developed through past experiences.

- Provides career goal information should your cover letter be separated or not passed along to other decision-makers in the organization.

### POTENTIAL DISADVANTAGES:

- May create the impression that you are not open to considering other opportunities in the organization that are related to your field.
- May be written so vaguely that it does not hold much value to a potential employer in determining what your career interests or goals are.
- May use valuable space on your resume that would be better used to highlight your past experiences.

A better approach to communicate your career goals and interests is to talk about them in your cover letter where you will have the opportunity to discuss how they relate to the mission of the organization and the responsibilities of the position in which you are interested.



## RESUME SECTIONS

# SUMMARY

Becoming much more common on resumes, summary statements capture the essence of what you bring to an employer. A strong summary creates an overall image of what you have to offer that is distinctive, just like brand marketing does for a consumer product or service. A summary can be based on a branding statement that you create to market yourself to potential employers in person or in written communication. This important process can begin once you have fleshed out your resume.

*Branding Statements*, offers a step-by-step process to help you develop your personal brand that will communicate a consistent and memorable message about why you are different from the competition. A branding statement will ensure that you project a professional image and describe how you will contribute to an organization. It also will spur other's thinking about how to help and guide you in your job search. The branding statement that you compose can simply be inserted as a summary on your resume. Remember that what is captured in the summary should be supported throughout the resume as you will have developed your branding statement with this information in mind.

### A BRANDING STATEMENT INCLUDES THESE FOUR KEY COMPONENTS:

#### WHO YOU ARE

- State who you are presently. Identify yourself by program, area of focus or industry. This begins to communicate why your candidacy is relevant to a particular search.

#### AREAS OF FOCUS

- Describe your skill areas and/or competencies that you have or are acquiring. As a student, this can include work assets or areas of interest in which you hope to gain more experience. Through this information, you are aiming to interest the reader in you further.

#### TYPES OF EXPERIENCES/TRAINING OR WORK ENVIRONMENTS

- List the areas of work or study that align with your current career goals. With this information, you are building credibility in yourself as a future or new practitioner.

#### STRENGTHS

- Reflect on what you do that adds value and how you contribute positively to a work environment. This is where you set yourself apart from others by listing your unique characteristics as a professional - attributes that follow you wherever you go.

#### AN EXAMPLE OF A BRANDING STATEMENT IS

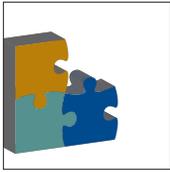
*"A masters-level Teacher Education student with hands-on experience in delivering services to autistic children as well as experience using evidence-based treatment for abused and neglected children. Keen interest and background in multicultural and diversity issues related to autism. Strengths include organizational skills, taking initiative and program development."*



#### BUILD YOUR PERSONAL BRAND

A branding statement contains these core messages:

- Who You Are
- Your Professional Areas of Focus
- Past Work Environments or Training
- Strengths



## RESUME SECTIONS

# EDUCATION

List the institutions you have attended in reverse chronological order with the most recent first, which will be Pacific Oaks College. Refer to yourself as a “Master’s Student in Marital and Family Therapy,” depending on your program. If you are in a program with a specific focus, list the specialization after the program name—e.g., “African American Family Studies Specialization.”

- For each entry include the name of the institution, city and state, degree type, such as B.A., B.S., M.A. and areas of concentration, month and year the degree was received and/or is anticipated.
- Avoid listing graduate coursework unless you are preparing a specialized MFT practicum resume.
- Include study abroad experiences in this section in the same manner as other entries and place them after the relevant institution where appropriate.
- List honors and awards in this section such as scholarships, fellowships or other awards under the appropriate institution. If you have several of these and space permits, you may also create a separate category titled Honors and Awards.



### LISTING EDUCATION DEGREES

**B.A. Human Development, Pacific Oaks College, Pasadena, CA – 2010**

**M.A. Marital and Family Therapy, Pacific Oaks College, Pasadena, CA – 2010**

# LICENSES/CERTIFICATIONS

Use this section to list license credentials and certifications that are applicable. Include the license type such as LPC, LMFT, QMHP, etc. and year received. You may state that you are eligible to sit for licensure once your application has state approval.



## RESUME SECTIONS

# PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

The Professional Experience section can encompass all of the experiences that have contributed to your professional development including internships, part-time and full-time jobs related to psychology, and research or teaching positions.

As mentioned previously, you may also elect to break this information into smaller categories for work experience outside of your field or community service and volunteer work. One rule of thumb is that if you have more than one or two entries in an area such as community service or have held a few jobs outside of psychology or mental health, then you may want to create a separate section for these. Here are some general guidelines:

### HERE ARE SOME GENERAL GUIDELINES

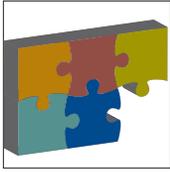
- Organize your entries in reverse chronological order.
- Be sure to include the organization name, city and state where it is located, your title, and month and year of starting and end dates.
- Keep bulleted statements or items in each section or list prioritized from top to bottom
- Research, teaching, or community service and leadership positions are like any other job listing and should therefore include: the month and year for the beginning and end dates of the position, the full name of the organization, the city and state where it is located, your job or position title, and the department or project name, if appropriate.
- For teaching and research experiences, you may name the faculty member, instructor, or supervisor you assisted right after your title.

**Pacific Oaks College, Pasadena, CA 2010**  
**Research Assistant – *Place Faculty's Name Here***



### CONSIDER ALL RELEVANT EXPERIENCES

**To save space on a resume, the Professional Experience section can include all experience relevant to your professional development – internships, part-time or full-time jobs, community service work, research, or teaching positions.**



## RESUME SECTIONS

# PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Professional Activities are similar to the next section, Leadership and Community Service, because they both describe volunteer experiences. This section, however, is for your work with professional organizations in your field through membership, board positions, committees, projects, and other types of service. Include the same key information and format used in other resume sections.

# LEADERSHIP AND COMMUNITY SERVICE EXPERIENCE

- When you consider what to include in this optional section, think about the knowledge, skills and abilities you gained that supplement your professional experience. This section is also valuable to communicate that you have leadership ability and are a well-rounded candidate with a variety of interests.
- Prepare entries just as you would for your professional experience by including the month and year for beginning and end dates of the position, the full name of the organization, the city and state where it is located, your job title even if it is as simple as Volunteer, and the department name, if known.
- As before, use a bulleted format to create a descriptive list of your activities that leads with strong action verbs.



## RESUME SECTIONS

# TECHNICAL SKILLS

This section can include computer skills such as a working knowledge of software like SPSS or the Microsoft Office suite of programs.

# LANGUAGE SKILLS

You can use this section to highlight language(s) and fluency in this area, for example, whether you are fluent, conversational, or have a basic knowledge and if your skill level extends to reading, writing, or speaking a language.

# QUALIFICATIONS

Sometime you will have skills that are relevant, but don't fall easily within a previous section. A heading such as this one can be useful for this kind of information. Your entries should be accurate and specific so this is not a section to lump ad hoc information.



# REFERENCES

References are usually required at later stages of a job search process, and are not supplied with initial application materials unless they are specifically requested. It is recommended, however, that you have a list ready of three to five references, including those who have written letters of recommendation as well as others who can speak about your abilities and work performance.

Always request permission before including someone on a reference list. Call the individual before you anticipate that an employer may contact your reference. Share a brief description of the position for which you are being considered and offer suggestions on how your previous experience relates to the future position. Place a follow-up call to thank the reference and politely inquire if he or she was contacted and how the conversation went.

References may include one or two faculty members from Pacific Oaks College, internship supervisors, job supervisors, or an academic advisor from your undergraduate institution. Each listing should include the person's name, title, and degree(s), the institution or organization and its address, phone numbers, e-mail address and a brief description of your relationship to the individual.

## ASK FIRST

**Always ask your references in advance if you can count on them to give you a strong positive reference.**

# PITFALLS IN RESUME DEVELOPMENT

Creating a stellar resume can be about what not to do as much as what you should do. Through the feedback of hiring managers, faculty, and graduates, the following pitfalls in building a resume have been identified.

## WE RECOMMEND THAT YOU DO *NOT*

- Send a resume with spelling errors, typos and poor grammar
- Name the document something other than your first and last name
- Include personal names of any clients with whom you worked
- Use immediate family members or friends as references
- Exaggerate skills or accomplishments
- Insert clip art, borders, or other complicated graphics
- Change the style of headings, layout, or fonts within the resume itself
- Finish a descriptive paragraph with “etc”
- List a degree that has not actually been conferred
- Add personal information such as marital status, birth date, or children’s names



**DO PUT YOUR NAME ON YOUR DOCUMENT**  
**Name your resume file with your first and last name, toddjonesresume2008.doc.**