Resume & Cover Letter Guide

KSC Career Services
ksc.sass@keene.edu
603-358-2500

CAREER
KSC
SERVICES

Resume Writing and Outline

Use this guide to create a resume that highlights your education, skills, experiences, and accomplishments for each position you apply to. Create a resume that can easily be read by both people and the company's application software.

You don't need a template to get started. Log in to Handshake to see a variety of resume samples by major, all created in Word or Google Docs.

RESUME SECTIONS

CONTACT INFORMATION
- Name should be in bold and 2-4 points larger than the rest of the text
- Include phone number and professional email; record a professional voicemail greeting
- City & state are optional; do not include street address or zip code
- Include any social media sites you use professionally (LinkedIn, Twitter, blogs, e-portfolios)

CHOSEN NAME AND GENDER PRONOUNS
Including your chosen name or gender pronouns on your application materials is a personal decision and can be a complex issue depending on state and local anti-discrimination laws. For additional support, consider consulting with the KSC Office Student Diversity, Belonging, and Equity, the Transgender Law Center, or Career Services. Check out WPI's LGBTQ+ Job Search Resources for additional helpful information.

Chosen Name
Resumes and cover letters are not legal documents, so it is acceptable to list your chosen name. Options:
- List the first initial of your legal name followed by your preferred name (ex. J. Sarah Jones)
- Put your chosen name in quotes after your legal first name (ex. John "Sarah" Jones)

Gender Pronouns
What to consider:
- Including pronouns will help the hiring team address you accurately
- You might ease your anxiety of being misgendered by adding pronouns to your application documents
- Including pronouns can normalize their usage
- There are also times when you may not want to disclose your pronouns: there can be unconscious bias in the hiring process and in the workplace
- If you decide to include your pronouns, you can put them after or below your name on your resume, and/or beneath your signature on your cover letter

EDUCATION
Degree
- Degree and major, college attended, college city and state, date or expected date of graduation
- Include specialization, concentration, and/or minor
- GPA is optional (3.5 or higher)
- Honors and awards
- Include study away experiences and describe transferable skills
- List degrees in reverse chronological order
- Are you working while in school? If so, include a statement "working # of hours a week while attending school full-time."

Relevant Courses & Projects
- List classes related to the specific job or internship; classes don't have to be major-specific
- Describe relevant projects, presentations, research papers, labs, or any hands-on class experiences

EXPERIENCE
Any experience, paid or unpaid, can go on a resume if it shows specific or transferable skills relevant to the position you are applying to.
- Experiences include jobs, internships, volunteer work, student organizations, leadership experiences, personal projects, etc.
- Your experiences can be organized into different sections based on the position you are applying for.
- Possible section titles might include Related Experience, Other Experience, Teaching Experience, Leadership Experience, Social Media Experience, etc.
- For each section, list positions in reverse chronological order: most recent will be first Include job title, company/organization name, city, state, and dates (month and year)
- Bullet your descriptions and begin each bullet point with a verb
- Use action verbs, keywords, and phrases from the job/internship posting in your bullet points
- Be specific in your descriptions including any accomplishments/outcomes; quantify where appropriate
- Verb tenses: present tense if you are currently doing something, past tense if you are no longer doing it

TECHNICAL SKILLS
This is an optional section for measurable skills and will be different for everyone, depending on major and experience:
- Technical skills include laboratory, computer/coding/software, social media platforms, art/design, languages, etc.
- Transferable skills like teamwork, communication, organizational and interpersonal skills should be included in the descriptions in your "Experience" sections

OTHER POSSIBLE SECTIONS
- Athletics, certifications, professional associations, etc.

Verb List

Communication Skills:

Address	Advise	Arbitrate
Arrange	Author	Correspond
Develop	Direct	Draft
Edit	Enlist	Formulate
Influence	Interpret	Lecture
Mediate	Moderate	Motivate
Negotiate	Persuade	Promote
Publicize	Reconcile	Recruit
Speak	Translate	Write

Creative Skills:

Act	Conceptualize	Construct
Create	Design	Develop
Direct	Establish	Fashion
Found	Illustrate	Institute
Integrate	Introduce	Invent
Originate	Perform	Plan
Produce	Revitalize	Shape

Financial Skills:

Administer	Allocate	Analyze
Appraise	Audit	Balance
Budget	Calculate	Compute
Develop	Forecast	Manage
Market	Plan	Project
Research	Survey	Verify

Helping Skills:

Assess	Clarify	Coach
Counsel	Demonstrate	Diagnose
Educate	Expedite	Facilitate
Familiarize	Guide	Refer
Rehabilitate	Represent	Support

Leadership/Management Skills:

Administer	Analyze	Assign
Attain	Chair	Contract
Consolidate	Coordinate	Delegate
Direct	Evaluate	Execute
Improve	Organize	Oversee
Plan	Prioritize	Produce
Recommend	Review	Schedule
Strengthen	Supervise	Train

Office Skills:

Approve	Arrange	Catalog
Classify	Collect	Compile
Dispatch	Execute	Generate
Implement	Monitor	Organize
Prepare	Process	Purchase
Record	Retrieve	Screen
Specify	Systematize	Tabulate

Research Skills:

Clarify	Collect	Critique
Diagnose	Evaluate	Examine
Extract	Identify	Inspect
Interpret	Interview	Investigate
Organize	Review	Summarize
Survey	Systematize	Test

Teaching Skills:

Adapt	Advise	Clarify
Coach	Communicate	Coordinate
Develop	Enable	Encourage
Establish	Evaluate	Explain
Facilitate	Guide	Inform
Initiate	Instruct	Persuade
Prepare	Stimulate	Tutor

Technical Skills:

Assemble	Build	Calculate
Compute	Design	Devise
Engineer	Fabricate	Maintain
Operate	Overhaul	Program
Remodel	Repair	Solve

RESUME FORMAT
- Create your resume in Word or Google Docs. Resume templates are often out-of-date. Do not include a picture of yourself
- Format should be simple and readable by software: no graphics or design elements unless you are applying for a job in a design field (Graphic Design, Architecture, etc.). Talk to a Career Advisor about which format makes the most sense for your situation.
- Margins should be between .5 and 1 inch
- Best resume fonts: Calibri, Helvetica, Arial, Georgia, Garamond, Cambria
- Do not use columns – they cannot be scanned by company software
- Bullet descriptions
- Bolding, italics, capitalization should be minimal and consistent
- Follow the instructions in the job/internship posting for the appropriate resume format: PDF, text, etc.

APPLICANT TRACKING SYSTEMS (ATS)
- Most companies use software to screen resumes: your resume should contain keywords and phrases from the job/internship description
- These systems can only read formats that are simple and clean-looking: don't include images, columns, different fonts and colors. If the software is unable to scan the document, your resume will not be seen by a human being
- Make an appointment with KSC Career Services to create a "machine-ready" resume

COVER LETTERS

A persuasive and engaging cover letter can work wonders in your job and internship search.

Even if they don't ask for it, including a cover letter never hurts. It's your chance to shine and show why you're the perfect fit for the position.

Log into Handshake to see examples of cover letters.

Template:
Date
Your Name
City, State
Phone Number
Email

Dear "Person's Name" or "Hiring Manager,"

First Paragraph:
- Identify the position you are applying to and how you found the position.
- Based on your research, briefly tell them why you are interested in the position and the company.

Middle Paragraph:
- Describe why you are a good fit for the position, highlighting specific skills and knowledge
- Include key words from the job posting
- Highlight one or two relevant experiences and accomplishments
- Mention any transferable skills and personal qualities that would add to your success in the position

Closing Paragraph:
- Restate your interest in the position and thank them for their time
- Include your contact information

Sign off:
Sincerely,
Your Full Name

REQUESTING REFERENCES

Plan ahead:

- When you are ready to start your internship or job search, choose and contact professors and supervisors who know you well and can talk about your work, strengths, and skills

Be professional:

- Make a formal request by phone, email or appointment.
- Example: "Would you be comfortable serving as a reference in my upcoming job/internship search?"
- Example: "Do you have time to serve as my reference?"

Explain why you have chosen them:

- For professors, remind them of the course you have taken, papers and/or projects you have worked on
- For supervisors, remind them of work you have done for them

Provide them with information about the internship or job and tell them why you are interested in the position:

- Give them a copy or your current resume
- When an employer asks to check references, provide them with a list of 3 or 4 references along with their preferred contact information.
- Always send a Thank You note to each of your references and keep them updated on your internship and job search progress.

Don't assume that any professor or supervisor will be a willing reference. Ask them first and, if they are willing, get their preferred contact information: email, phone number, and address. If they hesitate or are not willing, don't take it personally. There could be many reasons why they are unable to do it. Accept that and then identify and reach out to other people who also know your work and what you have done academically.

RESUME BUILDING MADE EASY: YOUR STEP-BY-STEP WORKSHEET

Ready to create an outstanding resume? Start by using our helpful worksheet to identify all the key elements you want to showcase. Then, easily craft your resume using Google Docs or Word. Need powerful words to describe your experiences? Our Resume & Cover Letter Guide's verb list has got you covered. And for formatting, check out our resume samples in Handshake. Let's make your resume stand out from the crowd!

Contact Information
Name:
Email (professional):
Phone:
City, State:

Education
School Name:
City, State:
Degree and anticipated graduation date:
Optional: GPA, Awards, Scholarships
Optional: Courses and academic projects that might be relevant to a specific job or internship

Experience
- For each section below, include any experience for the past 3-5 years; include names, dates, city, and state
- Using the Verb List in the Resume Guide, identify 3-5 skills you used for each experience and include a brief description

Part-Time Jobs/Internships
-
-
-
-
-

Student Activities, Organizations, Athletics
-
-
-
-

Community Service/Volunteer Activities

-
-
-
-

Technical Skills (computer, language, lab, other?)

-
-
-
-

Memberships (honor societies)

-
-
-

Certifications

-
-
-

Are there other things you have done that you would like to add to your resume?

-
-
-