

# HOW **2** guide:

# Resume Guide

## Your Step-By-Step Resume Building Guide

*IMPORTANT NOTE: This guide is particularly helpful if you have never created a professional resume before. However, even if you already have one, we strongly encourage you to review the following information to ensure your resume is consistent with the preferences of potential employers (which we have tried to capture in this guide.)*

### What is a resume and why is it important?

A resume is a document that summarizes your professional qualifications. When a recruiter or hiring authority in a company sees your resume, it will be the “first impression” they have of you. They will also use your resume to see whether you are a good “fit” for the position, and how well you compare with other candidates. **The bottom line?** It is critical that your resume has the right look and content to get you noticed. A well-written resume can improve your chances of being considered for an interview.

Please keep in mind there is no one “right” way to make a resume. Opinions vary as to what looks good. The goal of this guide is to help you develop the **basic** content and format to create a professional resume. You may also want to refine your resume based on what is commonly accepted for the field you are entering.

### STEP 1: Developing Your Content - “Make a List”

The two main elements of a resume are content and design. Start by assembling all the information about your qualifications. Open a Word document and make a list of your experiences using the guide below:

- ❑ **Education** - Include the following:
  - Start with “Florida Gulf Coast University” and follow with the names of other universities or community colleges you attended
  - The name of the degree you are pursuing and when you expect to graduate (example: “May 2015”)
  - Any minors or concentrations
  - Any academic recognitions, such as Dean’s List or Honor Society
  - Your GPA if it higher than a 3.3
  - Any study abroad experiences
  - For those students with **no related** work experience, consider including a listing of coursework within your major or any major projects that are *highly related* to the field you are pursuing.
- ❑ **Employment:** While making this list, it is best to include every job you have ever had. You can refine this list later. Start with your current or most recent job and list them in reverse-chronological order. State the name of the employer, city, state, position(s) held, and dates of employment (month and year.) **DO NOT** include the name and contact information for your supervisor.
- ❑ **Internships or Field Experiences:** Record in the same format as your work experience.
- ❑ **Extracurricular Activities, especially leadership:** For example: membership in student clubs, fraternity/sorority, Student Government, etc.
- ❑ **Volunteer and Community Service:** Your Service Learning hours are perfect for this section!
- ❑ **Honors, Awards and Memberships in Professional Associations** (if any)
- ❑ **Related Skills:** These should be specific like web design skills or languages as opposed to “organizational skills.”

Generally speaking, **do not** include high school on your resume. **Exception:** Since **Freshman and sophomores** sometimes don’t have much work experience, they can include high school in their “Education” section and high school activities such as clubs, sports, student government, etc. However, remove high school information when you start your junior year, unless it is directly related to your career goal.

## STEP 2: Enhance Your Content – “Marketing You!”

Now it is time to build descriptions into your jobs and internships (and extracurricular activities, if applicable.) During this part, it may be helpful to ask yourself some questions about each of the experiences:

- ✓ What did you do?
- ✓ How did you do it?
- ✓ How well did you do it?
- ✓ What skills did you use to do it?
- ✓ Why did you do it?
- ✓ How much and how many?

The goal is not to have the details of your previous positions sound like a “job description.” Job descriptions describe a position— employers want to know about YOU! Use the checklist below to help with this process:

- Action-oriented** – This is very important. Each sentence should begin with an “action” verb, such as *coordinated, collected, planned, maintained, promoted, prepared, provided, merchandised, or managed*. Refer to the “Actions Verbs for Resumes” guide on the FGCU Career Services website.
- Accomplishment-based** - Were you ever recognized as employee of the month? Did you exceed your sales goals? Were you ever given additional responsibilities?
- Measurable** - If you supervised employees, how many? If you were in sales, what were your sales in \$ amounts. Quantify wherever possible.
- Detailed** – For example, if you planned events, describe what the events were and what was involved in the planning. Don’t expect the recruiter to figure out what you did. Tell them!
- Industry verbiage** – If you are pursuing a career in a particular field, your resume should contain words common in that industry (e.g. For a marketing position, terms such as *brand management, consumer behavior, marketing mix, consumer research, product development, campaign management* should appear on the resume, either through your work experience (preferably) or education.

### Quick Tips:

- Current jobs are written in the present tense (“coordinate”), past jobs in the past tense (“coordinated”)
- Do not refer to yourself by using the word “I.” It is understood the resume is about you.
- For very basic jobs or jobs in which the nature of work is evident by the job name (cashier, server, delivery truck driver, landscaper) do not go into great detail.

### What about an “Objective”?

In most cases, an objective is not needed since you will typically include your objective in your cover letter. An objective should only be used when it is highly specific. For example: “To obtain a position in pharmaceutical sales.” It may also be helpful when posting your resume on a job boards so that prospective employers know what kind of job you are seeking.

### Identifying your skills

Sometimes your past jobs are not related to your career goal. In most cases, it is still important to keep them on your resume, since it is part of your work experience. (If you don’t include them, recruiters will assume you were not employed during that time.) Use the following examples and checklist to communicate your **transferable skills\*** effectively to employers. Your goal is **to demonstrate how your previous experience TRANSFERS to the position you**

**are seeking.** Do the best you can. While it is true more experienced workers typically have more to say—students sometimes undersell themselves if they do not spend time in this critical area.

**Job or Experience**

**Transferable Skills To Highlight**

Administrative Assistant	<i>scheduled and coordinated team meetings, coordinated multiple projects simultaneously, developed divisional reports</i> on a monthly basis
Committee Member for Special Event	<i>worked in a team environment, achieved fundraising goal</i> of \$1,000
Public Relations Intern	<i>developed and distributed press releases, researched social media</i>
Retail Associate	<i>presented merchandise, resolved customer problems</i> , awarded “Associate of the Month” 3 times
Sports Team Captain	<i>maintain personal discipline, motivate team</i> of 25 Members, <i>set and obtained team goal</i>
Restaurant Server	<i>ensured customer satisfaction, multi-tasked under pressure, presented new menus</i> to team every month
Creative Writing Club Member	<i>wrote and edited</i> a variety of articles and essays, <i>designed and proofed</i> quarterly student publication
Dance Club President	<i>organized and lead</i> weekly rehearsals, promoted club through <i>group presentations</i> to local high school audiences of 100+
Childcare Provider (babysitter)	<i>planned activities, tutored on reading skills</i> for 3 children ages 3-5 years
Sorority Member	<i>oriented new members, followed and Implemented organization guidelines</i> for 40 members
Marching Band Member	<i>scheduled daily, weekly and monthly rehearsals, organized instrument transportation and insurance</i>

**STEP 3: Organize Your Content – “From the Top Down”**

Did you know that recruiters may only spend about 30 seconds scanning your resume the first time they read it? Therefore, you need to capture their attention right off the bat. The order of the categories on your resume should be arranged with the most relevant and marketable information on top. This is typically your education and related work experiences.

**Classifying your work experiences:**

For current students or recent grads, that means your education is listed first or reverse-chronological.

- √ Place your experience in reverse chronological order. Your most recent jobs should be at the top.
- √ Include month and year. Be consistent for all jobs you list.
- √ For summer or holiday jobs use “Seasonal” to cover multiple years (e.g. Seasonal 2008-2010)
- √ Consider using “Related Experience” or “Related Skills” to showcase unpaid experiences, projects or volunteerism specific to your career.
- √ Consider listing “Other Jobs” (part times jobs) separately. YES! It’s important to show you have held jobs outside of your chosen field it demonstrates that you have a “work ethic” and may provide “transferable skills” related to the job you are seeking

Most college students and recent graduates are best served using a “chronological” resume, where most of the content within each section is arranged by date.

## STEP 4: Design Your Resume – “Keep It Simple”

Human Resource professionals and recruiters typically scan resumes. This means you need to present your credentials in an easy-to-read format. Start with a Simple Word Document. **Do not build your resume in a template.** Most recruiters do not like templated resumes. Why? It usually does not display the information the way they like to read it. It may convey to the recruiter that you are not proficient in Word. Or, it may convey that you don’t even know how to write a resume. This may be perceived as unprofessional and unsophisticated. And, templates can sometimes be difficult for students to change.

Follow these guidelines and the samples provided:

- Keep consistent bullet formatting
- Use a common font (e.g. Times New Roman, Calibri or Arial)
- Make your section headings are distinct by using text treatments (like **bolding**, CAPS, and *italics*)
- Use bullet points to list your skills
- Margins should be 1” at most and content should fill the page
- Text size should be no smaller than 11pt.
- In most cases, and especially for recent graduates, **your resume should not be longer than one page!** (Typical exceptions to this rule include Education fields which prefer a CV or Curriculum Vitae which provides detail.)
- Do not list your references! Create a separate sheet. It’s also not necessary to include “References Available Upon Request”. Typically references are only requested by employers later in the hiring process.

### **DO NOT INCLUDE:**

**1-Personal Data** such as birthdays, social security numbers, photos, hobbies, etc.

**2-Personal References**-Do not list names and phone numbers.

**3-Personal Commentary** about your job. (“I really learned a lot...”)

## STEP 5: Review, Revise and Proof Your Resume

- ✓ No spelling or grammatical errors. **For highly competitive positions, a mistake on your resume may preclude you from further consideration .** Proof your resume several times. Have a friend or roommate proof it too. Do not rely on “spellcheck”.

## STEP 6: Managing Your Resume Document –“Which Format When?”

The resumes of potential candidates find their way to recruiters in many ways. Some recruiters may search online job sites like College Central Network or Monster.com. You might submit your resume as an attached email document or upload it to a company website. You may even deliver it directly into the hands of potential employers at a career fair or networking event. In all cases, it is important to select the correct file format.

**SENDING A RESUME VIA EMAIL:** The preferred file format is a PDF attachment. Cover letters should be included in the body of your email and/or attached separately. Name your files professionally (e.g. PSymthResume or PSymthCoverLetter).

**PRESENTING A RESUME IN PERSON:** In this case, file format is not as important as the quality of the printing and paper. Consider using a heavier paper stock and be sure the print quality is clear. Resume quality directly reflects upon your professionalism. The campus bookstore sells resume paper.

**UPLOADING A TEXT ONLY (Also known as a TEXT BASED, ASCII, SCANABLE OR E-RESUME):** Large corporations and institutions often use a scanning process to review and track resume submissions. While this resume format is not necessarily attractive, the use of plain text and key words can help your resume be identified by databases.