

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I get started? Should I use a resume template?

We encourage you **NOT** to use a resume template. Employers and recruiters can easily spot a resume template and they prefer resumes that are built from scratch. Templates also pose challenges when it comes to fine-tuning the resume format. We recommend that you simply open a blank Microsoft Word document and start typing. Focus on the style and format after you have written the content. For format ideas, see the example resumes on pages 2-5.

Should my resume be one page?

Research shows that recruiters and employers spend 18-60 seconds reviewing each resume. Just think, companies are often getting hundreds of resumes for each position they post! **In most cases, we recommend 1-page resumes for our students.** Consider speaking with a career counselor and/or people in your desired industry to find out the best length for your resume.

Should I include an objective statement at the top?

The objective statement is optional. If you do include an objective, it should be well-written and concise. A well-crafted objective statement can help the employer understand exactly what you are looking for and why. Consider including the specific job title that you are applying for, your top 2-3 skills or your long-term career goals. We suggest 2-3 lines max.

How many drafts should I write before I submit my resume?

Mistakes with grammar, spelling, punctuation and format can result in missed job opportunities. For most students and professionals, it takes at least four drafts before the resume is polished and ready to deliver to employers. You can make an appointment with our career counselors at career.unca.edu.

What about cover letters and references?

Most organizations will also ask for a cover letter and a list of references. These should each be a separate document. Please find the "Cover Letter Guide" and the "Reference Template" at career.unca.edu in the "How to Guides" section.

Resume Checklist

Use this checklist to ensure that you have a quality first draft. Once you've completed this checklist, visit the Career Center to have your resume reviewed.

- The resume heading includes my name, mailing address, phone number and email address.
- The layout and formatting is attractive, easy-to-read and consistent (body is 11 or 12-point font).
- If I included an objective section, it is located just below the resume heading. It is concise (3 lines max), includes the specific job I am seeking and mentions my most relevant skills and experiences.
- The education section appears first, before other experiences and includes: the degree (ie: Bachelor of Arts in French), the name of the school, location of the school (city, state), and the graduation date (ie: May 2015).
- High school is not featured in my education section (there are some exceptions where citing high school may be helpful).
- If my GPA (overall or major) is listed on my resume, it is 3.0 or higher.
- I listed my experiences in reverse chronological order. The most recent experiences are listed first, the oldest experiences are listed last.
- Each experience includes: job title, organization name, location (city, state), and dates I worked (months & years).
- I described my relevant experiences using bulleted accomplishment statements (See attached document titled Creating Accomplishment Statements). Each accomplishment statement starts with an action verb and focuses on results achieved or skills developed. I included measurable results such as numbers, awards, promotions, trainings and certifications completed.
- I have included work, volunteer, campus involvement, research and all other experiences relevant to my career.
- My resume includes keywords relevant to the job(s) I am applying for and specifically address the skills and experiences mentioned in the job description(s).