



Southern Cross
University



Creating your resume

Your resume is your ticket to getting an interview. You must make the employer interested enough to move you to the next stage of the recruitment process.

With numerous applications to sift through, recruiters will tend to skim resumes to eliminate candidates who are clearly not qualified. An employer might spend less than two minutes reading your application. This means your resume must pass the skim test:

- Can the person hiring see my main qualifications and experience within 10 to 15 seconds?
- Does critical information jump off the page?
- Do I effectively sell myself on the top quarter of the first page?

Resume hints and tips

- Research the organisation and **tailor** your resume to the job you are applying for, pay attention to keywords that highlight how your experience and skills match the job requirements.
- Keep your resume concise and only include information that is relevant to the employer.
- Limit your resume to the preferred length of two pages.
- Create a design and layout that is simple, sticking to one or two font types for the whole document.
- Keep headings and sub-headings consistent in formatting, style and size.
- Do not include a photo or put clip art, cartoons, illustrations or artistic borders on your resume unless your research indicates that it is appropriate for the position.
- Do not include personal information such as age, marital

status, race, religion or health. Do include details of your visa status if you are an international student.

- Use reverse chronological format i.e. beginning with your most recent job and working backwards.
- Have someone read over your resume and double check dates, spelling, grammar and contact details. Do not rely on spellchecker.
- Follow instructions carefully and ensure you submit all requested information.
- Refer to SCU's Application Thesaurus Fact Sheet for a list of transferable skills and actions.
- Avoid images, charts and other graphics in your resume as they become garbled, or get omitted after passing through an applicant tracking system (ATS)
- See the CareerSuccess resources for sample resumes.

Building your resume

Include these sections to build an effective graduate resume:

- Contact details
- Career objective or career profile*
- Education
- Summary of key skills and achievements
- Employment history (include month/year start and finish dates, position title, organisation, achievements)
- Extracurricular activities*
- Other qualifications*
- Professional memberships*
- Referees (usually two unless three are requested).

*Optional headings



Careers and Employability
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Quantify your achievements

Numbers are powerful resume tools that make your achievements tangible and catch the recruiter's eye. With a little thought, you can find effective ways to quantify your successes in your resume.

For example:

- Wrote 25 news releases in a three-week period, meeting daily deadlines.
- Identified, researched and recommended a new internet service provider, cutting the company's online costs by 15 per cent.
- Wrote a sponsorship proposal that has brought in more than \$25,000 to date.
- Managed a student organisation budget of more than \$7000.
- Assisted with twice-monthly payroll activities, ensuring employees were paid accurately and on time.
- Suggested procedures that decreased average order-processing time from 10 minutes to 5 minutes.

Resume checklist

Check all items on the list before submitting your resume to an employer.

- ☐ Do you have your name and page number on the second and subsequent pages (footers)?
- ☐ If you are including a career objective or career profile have you placed it at the beginning?
- ☐ Are your current address, telephone numbers (with voice mail) and a professional email address correctly listed?
- ☐ Have you used reverse chronological order for your qualifications and employment history?
- ☐ Are your qualifications listed correctly and spelt correctly (i.e. Bachelor NOT Batchelor)?
- ☐ Do your words show results you have achieved, problems solved, or important learning experiences?
- ☐ Have you checked your punctuation, grammar and spelling?
- ☐ Have you shown and discussed your final draft with at least two people?
- ☐ Is the resume clearly set out and concise?
- ☐ Are your columns/tabs consistently spaced?
- ☐ Have you used capital letters, italics or bold print to effectively and consistently emphasise key headings (e.g. key skills and achievements)?
- ☐ Are your margins and spaces between paragraphs and headings consistent?
- ☐ Will your resume photocopy clearly and print effectively in black and white?
- ☐ Is your resume less than two pages long?
- ☐ In Word 'Page Set Up', have you ensured that the document is set to 'A4' and not to 'Letter'?
- ☐ Have you included page or section breaks to ensure that headings and associated details remain on the same page (e.g. keep key achievements on the same page as position titles for ease of reading)?
- ☐ Is your resume engaging, persuasive and positive in tone?
- ☐ Have you contacted referees to ensure they are willing to act as a referee?
- ☐ Have you sent a copy of your job application and resume to your referees?



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