

Tips and Tricks for an Effective Resume or Curriculum Vitae!

Welcome! This guide will serve as an intro to what we are looking for in a resume or curriculum vitae. It can be overwhelming, especially to know what to include (or exclude) on a document with limited space, and so we hope that this document will send you off in the right direction. Good luck with your PCSA applications this year!

1. What is the difference between a resume and a curriculum vitae? When do I use each?

A resume is typically limited to one page, or two if you have had an extensive or decorated career in your field. It lists key accomplishments and experiences of yours: degrees, work experience, volunteering, awards, and professional skills.

A curriculum vitae (CV) is like a resume but can be as long as needed to list all of your accomplishments and the necessary details about each. Usually, you will not need a CV unless it is specifically requested; most companies or applications are only interested in your resume to start with.

2. What should I include in a resume?

Generally, your resume should include as much information as possible without being bogged down by details. Use strong, concise action verbs when describing your work experience of yours. Take, for example, this sample resume line:

“...was responsible for ensuring deliverable of product x in a timely fashion.”

This is good, but we can make it better. Try this:

“...ensured product x was ready for manufacturing on time, allowing for y amount of sales for the company.”

The second example makes it clear that your actions had a tangible effect on the company, and that without you they may have lost out on those sales. In general, the more specific you can be about your accomplishments, the better.

3. What should be excluded from a resume?

When applying to opportunities in the United States, leave out personal information such as age, health, marital status, past salaries, or photos of yourself – these are generally frowned upon in resumes. Have references ready (letters of recommendation from an old employer, for example), but do not mention them in a resume; people will ask if they would like to see them.

Similarly, you will be tight on space in a one-page resume. You need to be able to narrow down the most important attributes of each of your work experiences/academic experiences and summarize those in one or two sentences maximum. For example, if you worked at a restaurant as a table busser:

“...was responsible for washing tables, taking empty plates, bringing water, folding napkins, sweeping floors, bringing out dishes, etc., etc. etc...”

This is a thorough list of what you did, but reading can be overwhelming. A better way to state these would be as such:

“...ensured customer satisfaction during the dining experience via prompt service throughout the evening.”

This summarizes your work tasks, while also putting the focus on the outcome (customer satisfaction).

4. How should my resume be formatted?

How your resume looks is arguably the most important part of the entire document. If it is too visually cluttered, employers may skip reading it entirely. You want information to be clear and direct to find. Check out this example resume:

NOELLY LEIVARS

New Haven, CT 06510 • 555 555 5555 • example@example.com

Professional Summary

Administrative assistant with excellent memory, known for following up with clients via email and phone to provide a complete service and record feedback. Experienced in instructing and coordinating activities to support staff and oversee materials for grants, contracts and budgets. Dexterous with various office equipments and programs.

Work History

Senior Administrative Assistant, 01/2022 to Current

Yale University – New Haven, CT

- Coordinates daily appointments, meetings and memorized agendas and travel logistics to ensure staff attended all compromises.
- Helps establish, select, implement, and coordinate office procedures and systems that improve overall efficiency by 15% yearly.
- Acts as a principal source of information to students, staff and faculty on upcoming events and statuses.

Administrative Assistant, 01/2017 to 12/2021

Emerald Tree And Shrub Care Inc. – Stamford, CT

- Handled phone calls, relayed messages, updated calendars, greeted guests and staff.
- Drafted, formatted and sent out documents such as reports and budgets on a timely basis.
- Provided daily and weekly sales figures, assisting with credit card information processing and reporting to five departments.

Administrative Assistant Associate, 01/2015 to 11/2016

PepsiCo – Stratford, CT

- Provided information to an average of 23 customers a day, answered questions and referred to appropriate resources.
- Reviewed and sent paper and electronic files, performed scanning, copying, filing, stamping and locating of documents.
- Entered data, generated reports and reconciled monthly statements.

Skills

- Travel arrangements
- Scheduling
- Correspondence
- Orders and inventory management
- Dictation
- Typing 60 wpm
- Data entry
- Event planning

Education

Bachelor of Arts: Business Administration, 12/2014

The University of North Carolina - Pembroke, NC

In this example resume, things are neat and orderly. The subtitles help categorize different information, making it easy to read. This person gives summaries of their prior work experience, enough to generate questions and interest but not too much to be crowded. It is conventional to put your name at the top and include some form of contact information (phone number, email, LinkedIn, etc.). Avoid bright colors. Muted colors are acceptable to emphasize titles and subtitles.

Finally, your resume can be organized in several different ways. The three most common are chronological, functional, and combination. A chronological resume is just how it sounds – your work and school experiences are listed from most recent to least recent, detailing your work history. A functional resume puts your most relevant work experience first, highlighting it to recruiters. A combination mixes these two formats. It depends on the situation whether you should use a chronological resume or a functional resume, but both are common.

5. *What if I still need help?*

Check out these articles for more resources. Any application can be daunting, but you've got this; good luck with future applications!

1. <https://capd.mit.edu/resources/resumes/>
2. <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/resumes-cover-letters/resume-format-guide-with-examples>
3. <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/resumes-cover-letters/10-resume-writing-tips>
4. <https://careerservices.fas.harvard.edu/resources/create-a-strong-resume/>
5. <https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/careers-advice/cv-sections>