

Resumes for PhDs



Resumes are used by PhDs to apply for positions in industry, non-profits, government, and many other expanded (non-academic) careers in the US.

Formatting Essentials

Aim for **clean and consistent** formatting. Your resume should be free of clutter and easy to scan so employers are able to find what they want to see quickly.

Use **reverse chronological order**, and **do not include** your entire professional history, as in a CV.

Use a **legible font**.

For PhD-level job seekers, a **2 to 3 page resume** is considered appropriate, but always check position & industry conventions.

Essential sections include contact information, “Education” and “Experience” (research, teaching, industry, etc.); other sections might include: “Internships,” “Languages,” “(Selected) Presentations,” “(Selected) Publications,” “Awards,” “Technical Skills,” “Patents,” and “Volunteer Experience.”

Have a lot of experience? Try **breaking it up into separate sections** to increase relevance and readability, e.g. “Industry Experience,” “Research Experience,” etc.

A section “**Summary of Qualifications**” can be a good way to highlight key information at the top of your resume.

Inappropriate information to list on a US resume includes personal data such as marital status, family size, your photograph, age or date of birth.

Be sure to **proofread** and have others review your resume for typos and mistakes.

Describing Your Experience

Start with the **employer instead of yourself**. Build your resume around the job announcement: address specific qualifications and job duties.

Read the job posting carefully and **tailor your resume** to each application. Include **keywords** from the position description.

Use a **variety of action verbs** and incorporate succinct phrasing.

Answer the question, “**Why is this important?**” Why should hiring managers care about your research, teaching, and other academic experiences?

Show your experience through numbers and specific examples:

Instead of:

- “TA for CEM 262: Quantitative Analysis”

...use numbers, keywords & action verbs:

- “Led 5 inquiry-based lab sections of 25 students by introducing concepts and experiments.”
- “Collaborated with 8 teaching assistants to design sections, write exams, and compile problem sets.”

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Online Resources



The versatile **PhD**

Includes real examples of resumes, cover letters and other written credentials from PhDs hired into a variety of careers in the public and private sectors.

versatilephd.com

Note: First time users of Versatile PhD will need to log in through MSU; you can access the link on the Versatile PhD website.

MSU PhD & Graduate Student Career

Resources: Help preparing your written documents.

careersuccess.msu.edu/phdcareers/search/resumes

MSU Career Services Network Written

Credentials Resources: A list of tips for creating a resume and access to appointment scheduling with career advisors.

careernetwork.msu.edu/resources-tools/resumes

Intro to Resumes for CV-Minded Academics

(GradHacker): Article describing the methods and reasons to turn a CV into a resume for the job search in a specific area.

bit.ly/1gKVoqC

Resumes/Cover Letters (Stanford):

A resource with sample resumes and guides on how to construct an effective resume or cover letter.

stanford.io/1I7sRPn

Resume Writing and Samples (Illinois):

Includes a list of resume samples and the common types of resumes.

grad.illinois.edu/sites/default/files/PDFs/ResumeSamples.pdf

Graduate Students' Resume Writing Guide

(Dartmouth): A step-by-step guide to creating an effective and active resume.

graduate.dartmouth.edu/careers/services/resume.html

Resume Writing For Graduate Students

(Penn State): A resource listing the necessary sections and information a resume should include. This resource also highlights the differences between a CV and a resume.

bit.ly/1kPc4QP

Sharing Success In New Ways (Inside Higher

Ed): Explains the main differences between a CV and a resume for PhD-level candidates

bit.ly/NPbYtT

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