

Resume Writing

USC CAREER CENTER

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WHAT IS A RESUME ?:

A resume is a brief highlight of your work or activity experiences, educational background, and skills as they relate to the type of job you are seeking.

It should highlight your accomplishments to show a potential employer that you are qualified for the work you want. It is not a biography of everything you have done.

Did you know?

Employers initially spent 10 to 30 seconds reviewing your resume.

HOW IS A RESUME USED?:

A resume is most often used when applying for employment. It can also be used to apply for:

- Internships
- Co-ops
- Summer jobs,
- Graduate or professional school,
- Leadership positions in an organization.

The purpose of a résumé

A resume is designed to get you an interview, not the job! Know your target audience and market yourself effectively to your reader!

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UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTH CAROLINA

Career Center

RESUME WRITING:

- **Your resume may take hours to prepare.** Give yourself time to write and rewrite.
- **A one-page resume is sufficient for most students.** Your resume doesn't have to list every position you've held or every activity in which you've been involved. If you have a lot of experience, only include what is relevant to the position for which you are applying. Go to two pages only if absolutely necessary.
- **Avoid templates/wizards.** Resume templates or wizards may seem helpful, but it can be very hard to make changes or move things around when using one. It is important to customize your resume to best represent your strengths. We recommend using a blank MS Word document that will leave you the flexibility you need.
- **Custom design your resume for each position.** You should change your objective with each position for which you apply, and if necessary, change the content and/or the format so that it best compliments each individual position.
- **Catch your reader's eye.** Readers prefer statements that begin with bullets, **bold print**, and indentions to guide their eyes quickly to the main points. Stick to one font so that your resume doesn't look cluttered, and organize the information so that it is visually appealing and easy to follow.
- **Accentuate the positive.** Your resume is the first impression most employers will have of you, and how well you write indicates what type of employee you might be. Highlight accomplishments, not mere duties. Don't just list what you did; show how it contributed to the organization. Quantify your statements with numbers, statistics, and percentages when possible.
- **Use action verbs** (e.g. created, delegated) instead of passive verbs (e.g. took, had). For past activities, use past tense verbs (supervised, developed). For activities you're currently engaged in, use present tense verbs (supervise, develop).
- **Do not include on a resume:** religion, race, gender, high school information (unless applying for an internship and it is relevant), marital status, height/weight, birthplace, date of birth, or a photograph.

Stop by the
Career Center
for feedback on
your resume.

RESUME APPEARANCE:

- Use light colored resume paper (white, ivory, or beige) that will copy cleanly.
- Use the same paper for your resume and cover letter.
- Maintain reasonable margins. In general, one inch margins are preferred. Apply to cover letters also.
- You may use simple lines to create a border. If you are interested in graphic design, use your resume to display your design skills.

RESUME FORMAT:

KRISTI JACKSON

kristij@gmail.com

Current Address:

USC PO Box 0000
Columbia, SC 29208
(803) 544-0000

Permanent Address:

9274 Whisper Lane
Greenville, SC 29301
(864) 574-4970

OBJECTIVE

An internship in the Armstrong Forensic Laboratory

Stick with 10 -12
point font size

EDUCATION

University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC
Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice, May 2014
GPA 3.4

HONORS

Deans list, Multiple Recipient
Presidents List, Multiple Recipient
Palmetto Fellows Scholar

RELATED COURSES

Introduction to Forensic Chemistry	Research Methods in Criminal Justice
Descriptive and Elementary Statistics	Criminal Law
General Chemistry I & II	Criminal Courts

CRIMINOLOGY EXPERIENCE

Lexington County Sheriff's Department, Lexington, SC
Major Crime Unit Intern June 2010 - August 2010

- Worked with the drug chemist in the laboratory with testing unknown illegal substances
- Worked alongside seasoned detectives on active cases including homicide, rape, criminal domestic violence, robbery and missing person cases
- Worked with Victim's Advocates in their duties of communicating with victims and helping victims understand the court process
- Participated in Bond court proceeding and Criminal Domestic Violence Court proceedings as a victims advocate representative

MANAGEMENT EXPERIENCE

Lane Bryant, Columbia, SC
Supervisor June 2009 - Present

- Trained and supervised up to four employees per shift
- Motivated staff to achieve weekly and monthly sales goals
- Increased leadership and conflict resolution skills
- Responsible for all operations of the store including, opening, closing, and inventory
- Provided quality customer service to all patrons

When describing
your previous experi-
ences, lead with
strong action verbs
and use industry-
related terms.

SKILLS

Language: Fluent in Spanish **Computer:** Microsoft Products
Equipment: Dictaphone, Camera, Microscope, Ultra Violet and Infra red technology

RESUME CONTENT:

Heading

Cap the top of your resume with:

- Full name (can put nickname in parenthesis if you wish)
- Complete address (may include both permanent and present address)
- Home phone number (can list work phone number as well - designate each with an "H" and "W")
- E-mail address
- Personal website (if appropriate)

Objective

The objective is an **optional** category that indicates the type of work you are seeking. Employers prefer objectives that are specific and concise (see examples below). If you know the exact position you are pursuing or field that you are considering, you may include an objective. Otherwise, you may omit this category.

- An internship in computer programming.
- A position in financial services.

Education

Degrees should be listed in reverse chronology. Include only those schools in which you earned a degree.

- Names and locations of schools or programs
- Graduation date
- Degrees or certificates
- Major, minor or cognate
- Grade point average (if 2.5 or above)
- Awards/Honors/Scholarships (consider a separate section if more than 3)
- Study abroad experiences

Example:

Master of Industrial Statistics, May 2011
University of South Carolina, Columbia SC

Bachelor of Science in Engineering, May 2009
Major: Chemical Engineering *Minor:* Economics

University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC

- *Major* GPA: 3.4 *Overall* GPA: 3.2
- Dean's List, President's List

Related Course Work

This category is optional and can also be part of the Education section. It is mainly used when you are lacking related experience but want to demonstrate specific knowledge. List the titles of courses you've taken that relate to the position for which you are applying.

RESUME CONTENT (con't.):

Experience

Include full-time and part-time jobs, summer positions, volunteer work, military service, internships, self-employment, research projects, and even activities if they are directly related to the position. In some cases you may wish to divide this category into two sections: one called Related Experience and one called Additional Experience. Experiences should be listed in reverse chronology.

Include:

- Your job title
- Employer name
- City/State of the employer
- Dates of employment
- Bulleted descriptions of your responsibilities

Honors, Activities, Research and Professional Affiliations

You may specifically want to list:

- Activities or leadership positions that demonstrate job related skills
- Honors or awards (Scholarships may or may not be relevant)

Skills

We recommend a separate section listing computer skills. Be specific, listing product names and version numbers if possible. Indicate your level of knowledge using such terms as "working knowledge of" or "proficient in."

Students seeking technology positions specifically should break this list down into subcategories such as programming languages, hardware, software, operating systems, databases, peripherals, etc.

If you speak more than one language, you should also list them here, indicating your level of oral proficiency in each.

Other

There is the option to add additional categories that reflect your uniqueness, such as interests or volunteer work, but consider the relevance that the category has to your objective and the position you are seeking.

Key Words are important!

Many companies use recruiting management software to screen candidates for job openings. Your key words should mirror the skills the employer listed in job description and duties.

Create a High Impact Resume

Use Optimal Resume, a web-based tool, free to current USC students.

Optimal Resume provides:

- Writing and formatting assistance
- Interactive examples
- Tutorial guidance

OPTIMALRESUME.COM
THE OPTIMAL FIRST IMPRESSION

REFERENCES:

- **Choose references:** Brainstorm a list of people who can speak highly of your past work performance, (job, class-work or research related). Ideally, your references should be those who supervised you or rated your performance, such as a previous boss or professor who knows you/your work very well. In some cases a colleague can also provide a strong reference of your work performance, particularly if you worked on a team project together. In general, you should provide a minimum of 3 references, but no more than 5.
- **Ask references:** Contact those designated and ask if they will give you a positive reference. Never provide anyone's name to a potential employer as a reference without first doing so.
- **Gather contact information:** Make sure you have the proper spelling of your reference's name, company name, official job title, and the address and phone number. For your own use, you may also get an e-mail address.
- **Prepare references:** To help your references speak intelligently about your background and strengths, you should provide them with a copy of your resume. They should also know what your goals are and the types of positions you are seeking.
- **Keep references informed:** Notify your references about *each* position for which you apply so they might anticipate a call and prepare to "sell" you based on the specifics of each position.
- **Thank references:** Notify references when you accept a position and send a thank-you letter.

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REFERENCES**Mr. Thomas (Tom) Smith**

Director
Citizens Against Sexual Assault (C.A.S.A.)
8981 Harden Street
Columbia, SC 29205
(803) 252-8888

Mrs. Susan Brown

Director of Residence Life
University of South Carolina
Columbia, SC 29208
(803) 777-0000
E-mail: sbrown@csd.sc Carolina.edu

Dr. Phillip (Phil) A. Jones

Associate Professor
Department of Psychology
University of South Carolina
Columbia, SC 29208
(803) 777-0001
E-mail: pajones@csd.sc Carolina.edu

Ms. Francis Patterson

Summer Staff Coordinator
Camp Wildwood
P.O. Box 590
Kings Mountain, NC 28746
(803) 367-9862

COVER LETTER:

Covers letters have three basic paragraphs:

1. Why are you writing to them and who are you?
2. Why are you the best fit for their organization and this position?
3. How will you follow up with them from here?

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October 22, 2010

Mr. John Anderson
Vice President
Verizon Wireless
Columbia, SC 29208

Dear Mr. Anderson:

I am writing to express my sincere interest in entry-level sales opportunities at Verizon Wireless. Currently, I am a senior at the University of South Carolina and will graduate in December of 2002 with a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology.

As you will note in my resume, I have strong language skills. My ability to communicate fluently in Spanish would allow me to conduct business easily with many of your international clients. Because I studied abroad for a semester, I am also aware of the cultural differences in Spanish-speaking countries. In addition to my language skills, I also have extensive experience working in fast-paced, dynamic environments. Not only does my current position require that I work with diverse groups of people, but I am also responsible for ensuring a standard level of service, training new advocates, and developing community education programs.

I will contact you in two weeks to confirm receipt of my resume and to discuss the possibility of meeting. I am excited about the opportunities at Verizon Wireless and feel confident that my skills will allow me to make an immediate impact on your organization. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Kristi Jackson

Always find out the name of the person receiving your letter rather than using "To Whom It May Concern."

Be aware of using too many sentences in a row that begin with "I." Instead, vary your sentence style.

Instead of simply repeating your resume in the second paragraph, add more specific details about your previous experience and/or activities.

Be sure to sign your letter using black ink.

THANK YOU LETTER:

KRISTI JACKSON
kristij@gmail.com

Current Address:
USC P.O. Box 0000
Columbia, SC 29208
(803) 544-0000

Permanent Address:
9274 Whisper Lane
Greenville, SC 2930
(864) 574-4970

November 19, 2010

Mr. John Anderson
Vice President
Verizon Wireless
Columbia, SC 29208

Dear Mr. Anderson:

Thank you again for the opportunity to interview for the sales position at Verizon Wireless this past Thursday. I appreciated your hospitality and enjoyed meeting you and your staff, as well as taking the tour of your office.

The interview confirmed my initial positive impressions of Verizon Wireless, and I want to reiterate my strong interest in working for your organization. I feel confident that my experiences combined with my education will allow me to become a successful part of your company.

Should you have any questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me at 544-0000. If I have not heard from you by next Friday, I will check back with you to see how your candidate selection is progressing. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Kristi Jackson

Thank-you letters should be sent to all individuals who interviewed you.

The letters should be sent within 48 hours of the interview.

A typed letter is the most professional format. Other options include a handwritten note on personal stationery or an email thank you, if you have previously corresponded with the interviewer(s) via email.

ACTION VERBS TO USE IN RESUMES:

accepted	conceptualized	enforced	initiated	planned	scheduled
accommodated	conciliated	enhanced	innovated	polled	screened
accomplished	conducted	enlarged	inspected	predicted	scrutinized
accumulated	confirmed	enlisted	inspired	prepared	secured
achieved	confronted	entertained	installed	presented	selected
acknowledged	constructed	escalated	instituted	presided	served
acquired	consulted	established	instructed	preserved	set in motion
acted	contracted	estimated	integrated	printed	settled
activated	controlled	evaluated	intensified	processed	sketched
adapted	conveyed	examined	interacted	produced	sold
adjusted	convinced	exceeded	interpreted	promoted	solved
administered	cooperated	exchanged	intervened	proofread	sorted
advertised	coordinated	executed	interviewed	proposed	spoke
advised	corresponded	exhibited	introduced	protected	staffed
affected	counseled	expanded	investigated	proved	standardized
analyzed	created	expedited	invented	provided	steered
answered	critiqued	experienced	judged	publicized	stimulated
anticipated	decided	explained	led	published	straightened
applied	defined	explored	learned	purchased	strengthened
appreciated	decorated	expressed	lectured	raised	studied
approached	delegated	extended	listened	ran	summarized
approved	delivered	facilitated	logged	ranked	supervised
arbitrated	demonstrated	familiarized	made	reached	supplied
arranged	described	followed	maintained	read	supported
assembled	designed	followed through	managed	realized	surveyed
asserted	detailed	formulated	manipulated	received	synthesized
assessed	detected	fortified	marketed	recognized	systematized
assigned	determined	found	matched	recommended	talked
assisted	developed	founded	maximized	reconciled	taught
attained	devised	furnished	mediated	recorded	tested
attended	directed	gained	merchandised	recruited	took
attracted	discharged	generated	met	rectified	trained
audited	displayed	governed	minimized	redesigned	transacted
augmented	dispensed	grouped	moderated	reduced	translated
authored	disproved	guided	modified	referred	traveled
authorized			monitored	refereed	treated
boosted			motivated	related	transmitted
briefed			multiplied	remodeled	understood
broadened			negotiated	rendered	updated
budgeted			obtained	renewed	upgraded
built			operated	repaired	used
cataloged			orchestrated	reported	utilized
categorized			organized	represented	volunteered
chaired			originated	researched	won
charted			oversaw	reserved	worked
clarified			participated	responded	wrote
classified			perceived	resolved	
collaborated			performed	reviewed	
commanded			persisted	revised	
collected			persuaded	scanned	
communicated					
compared					
completed					
complied					
computed					
conceived					
	distinguished	handled			
	distributed	hired			
	drafted	honored			
	drew up	identified			
	earned	illustrated			
	edited	implemented			
	educated	improved			
	effected	inaugurated			
	elected	increased			
	eliminated	indexed			
	encouraged	influenced			
	endured	informed			

Tip

When possible, quantify your action verbs, e.g. supervised 10 people, increased sales by 45%.

H. William Close (BA) Bldg.

6th Floor

Phone: (803) 777-7280

College of Engineering and Computing

(CEC) Career Center (satellite office)

Phone: (803) 777-1979

Email: career@sc.edu

Website: www.sc.edu/career

