

RESUME TIPS

HEADER

Your header font should be larger than the rest of your resume, and should contain, at a minimum, your contact information. If you are listing an email address other than your “@pitt.edu,” make sure it is professional. If you have a *complete* LinkedIn profile, include the link in your header (remember to make it a user-friendly URL).

EDUCATION

Your education is one of your most powerful selling points. Once you have completed your sophomore year, remove all high school information from your resume. At that point, you are using your college-level experiences and accomplishments to promote yourself.

RELEVANT COURSES and SPECIALIZED SKILLS

These sections should be customized with each resume you submit. Carefully review the position description and include courses and skills that are directly applicable to the position (you do not need to limit this list to courses in your major). You can also use this section to convey specialty or expertise in a specific area (or areas). If you are applying for an internship and have not yet graduated, listing relevant courses will help the recruiter know where you are within your program and assess your readiness for the position. Do not list introductory courses.

INTERNSHIPS and RESEARCH

These sections of your resume demonstrate your ability to take your classroom instruction and apply it in a real-world setting. If you do not have any internship or research experiences, you can list special projects or other experiential learning activities. Evidence of experiential learning is almost a requirement for applicants. Students entering the job market, especially in the natural sciences, without having completed an experiential learning opportunity are often passed over in the search process. Research experience is something that most graduate schools will require.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE and ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE

Any work experience that you have relating directly to your major should be listed under “Professional Experience.” All other work experience should be listed under “Additional Experience” or “Work Experience.” Many students think that unless experience is within their major, it should not be included. Any work experience that you have automatically conveys certain skills or traits including time management, ability to work as part of a team, leadership, responsibility/dependability, and loyalty.

CLUBS AND ORGANIZATION or LEADERSHIP

Two of the top items recruiters look for on a resume are extracurricular involvement and evidence of leadership. You should list all clubs and organizations to which you belong...and indicate any of those memberships where you hold a leadership position. Membership in clubs and organizations relating to your intended career area are encouraged. Be sure to include any community-based groups to which you belong.

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

If you offer your time for the benefit of your community, be sure to include it on your resume. In addition to gaining leadership experience, your involvement as a volunteer demonstrates your commitment to your community and good citizenship.

The 5-to-7 Second Rule

A recruiter spends an average of 5 to 7 seconds reviewing a resume before deciding whether the applicant is worth a closer look. Therefore, your resume should be organized in a way that maximizes “scanability,” by making your section headers easy to locate. Items contained within each section should be presented as succinctly as possible and should be relevant to the position for which you are applying. Additionally, align all of your dates with the right margin (by setting a right tab stop).

OPTIMIZING YOUR RESUME FOR ATS

Applicant Tracking Software (ATS) are a technology used by a growing number of companies to manage their employee recruitment (90% of Fortune 500 companies are using ATS). The increased use of ATS has significantly changed the way resumes and cover letters are constructed. It's estimated that 75% of qualified candidates fail to get interviews because they did not follow ATS guidelines?

The following information is designed to help you better understand what ATS do and how to prepare your resumes and cover letters in a way that increases your chances for an interview.

THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN PREPARING A RESUME:

- Match key words exactly. Also, if the description abbreviates a degree, "BS in biology," use that same abbreviation. If the description spells out a degree, "a bachelor of science in biology," spell it out.
- Do not put suffixes after your name (CPA, Jr, MBA) because the ATS could misread them as your last name.
- Do not include an objective at the top of your resume. Instead, include a "Summary of Qualifications" that contains keywords taken directly from the job description.
- Tailor your cover letter and resume to each individual job for which you are applying by identifying key words from the job description.
- Use a chronological resume (contains a chronological list of employers and accomplishments) instead of a functional resume (highlights work history and abilities).
- When possible, use accomplishment bullets instead of task bullets. Accomplishment bullets help to quantify or provide additional details about what you've done.
- The only information that should appear in your header is your name and contact information. Do not use footers, unless your resume is more than one page and you want to place a page number in the footer. (A two-page resume, if it contains relevant content, is sometimes helpful because it enables you to increase the number of keyword matches.)
- Pay attention to the preferred document type for the ATS (it will typically tell you in the instruction). When in doubt, save your files as ".doc" or ".docx" formats. Most ATS cannot read PDF documents, Google Docs, or resumes created using Microsoft Word templates.

SOCIAL MEDIA IMPLICATIONS:

- Some ATS looks at your social media accounts and prepare a composite profile based on information found, including photos. So, make sure your social media accounts are scrubbed. Remember, if it's something you would not want your grandparents to see, remove it from your account.
- Many ATS searches your LinkedIn profile for keywords, years of experience and other relevant information.
- Some ATS enables you to apply through LinkedIn.
- Develop a robust LinkedIn profile that not only includes information from your resume, but a large network of contacts.

