

Résumé Writing Guidelines

Updated April 2020

To honor best practices and provide consistent résumé writing advice, Experiential Learning and Career Success career coaches follow standards endorsed by writing style guides, career thought leaders, and certified résumé writers. While recruiters and industries may have unique preferences, we follow contemporary standards including:

Avoid templates as online application systems often interpret them as spam and toss the résumé.

Avoid text boxes as online application systems cannot “see” them — content within a text box disappears.

Create a letterhead including name (largest font on the page), city/state/zip, phone number and professional email. Street address has become optional, often replaced by an email.

Phone number is keyed with dashes (406-123-4567) or periods (406.123.4567) not with parentheses (406) 123-4567.

Resumes are best tailored to a specific job posting or industry. A résumé is a marketing tool and is more successful when designed to meet the employer’s needs by responding to the required job qualifications with error-free writing.

Abbreviations are used sparingly unless industry-standard (CPA) or noted in job requirements (**Experience with GIS**).

Objective statements have been replaced with a 3-5-line career summary which outline how the candidate’s education, skills, and experience match and could support the specific position.

Quantifiable data is powerfully persuasive (*“Raised revenue 75% ...”*) and illustrates how stated accomplishments made specific, measurable impact (*“... slashing overhead 36%.”*)

Bullets are accomplishment statements and share what and how you did something and the result. Bullets begin in parallel style with an action verb in past tense (manage) for past jobs and present tense (managed) for present jobs.

Graduation month and year (May 2021) are included, not attendance dates (2020-2024; 2020-present).

Education includes (**University of Montana**) school name, **degree** (Bachelor of Science), **major** (Computer Science), **minor (Mathematics)**, and **certification (Big Data Analytics)**. If course titles (Data Visualization; Machine Learning) would elevate your candidacy, include them.

Employment dates are displayed May 2020-August 2020, not “Summer 2020” as “Summer” or “Fall” could mean 1 week, 1 month, or 5 months. For lengthy employment, use years (2010-2020) avoiding backslashes (1/2010-4/2020).

Grade point average can be helpful if above 3.0 GPA. Be honest – an employer may ask for an official transcript.

Work (internship) experience will contain job title, company name, city, state, and employment dates. Bold the content that should stand out, either title or organization’s name.

Relevant jobs, memberships, and volunteer roles may be helpful if related to job requirements or company mission. These show leadership, professionalism, passion, and dedication to the field.

Personal data such as age, gender, race, marital status, or religious and political affiliation are omitted as they illegal to be vetted by an employer. Only include religious or political affiliation if the information could boost your candidacy.

Omit “References Available upon Request.” Create a separate “Reference Page” with matching letterhead at top. Ask for permission to include someone as your reference and keep them updated on your job search. Include on a Reference Page your reference’s name, title, company, address, city/state/zip, phone number, and email.