

EDUCATIONAL CAREER SERVICES

THE PURPOSE OF A RESUME

A vital part of an effective job search is the resume. A resume is a brief summary of who you are and what you can offer an employer. Although resumes vary in format and content, depending both on the type of position sought and the level of experience and education of the job seeker, most resumes contain some standard types of information. This information gives the potential employer an overview of your education, work experience, and other activities which relate to the position they have advertised.

HOW RESUMES ARE USED

Persons seeking employment and those advertising employment generally use a resume in several ways. First, those persons writing letters of application or inquiry about positions generally send along resumes in hopes of being invited for interviews. Second, persons actually invited for interviews bring along copies of their resumes and present them to each interviewer at the beginning of the interview. In that way, interviewers have an opportunity to glance over resumes again before speaking with job seekers. Third, many employers often require that resumes be submitted with initial letters of application. The resume is best used, however, at the time the person is applying for the position or interviewing for the position.

WHY RESUMES ARE USED

Resumes are used to save the time of employers who are seeking job candidates. Instead of using actual interview time to ask basic questions about candidates, employers can gain the same information from resumes and use actual interviews for more detailed and specific questions. In addition, by viewing resumes before selecting candidates for interviews, employers can screen out those candidates who are obviously unqualified for the positions advertised.

THE VALUE OF A RESUME

Job seekers should realize that resumes are valuable because they can get them into interviews. However, they can also serve to screen them out of interviews. Thus, experienced job seekers know that their resume must contain only that information which will get them into interviews. They must tailor their resume to insure that the potential employer will want to learn more about them in an interview.

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN APPLICATION FORMS AND RESUMES

Even if a job seeker is asked to complete a job application, it is wise to prepare a resume which will show the employer additional information or information which will be better expressed in a resume than on an application.

WHAT SHOULD RESUMES CONTAIN?

The basic resume can contain the following types of basic information:

Identifying Information

Your name at the top in larger print; your campus address and phone; your permanent address and phone.

Job Objective

Grade levels, type of district and position you are seeking.

Education

Listing of earned academic degrees, including type of degree (i.e., Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education), major and minor teaching fields (i.e., Social Studies and English) institution, date of completion, GPA (3.5/4.0). List the most recent degree earned first.

Certificates

Type of state teaching certificates you have earned (grade level, type, and state).

Education-Related Work Experience

Listing (in reverse chronological order—most current or recent first) part-time and full-time positions related to the work you are seeking, such as volunteer, summer, or part-time positions in day care centers, summer camps, your academic department on campus, park districts, etc. List your position/title, department/firm/agency, location (city and state), dates of employment (month and year), type of responsibilities, and possibly supervisor's name (unless it will be listed later in *References* section).

Professional Associations

Memberships (alphabetical order).

Professional Service

Service to local, state, regional, or national professional associations.

Awards or Honors

List awards or honors you have earned recently (last 5 years), such as recognition for academic accomplishments, scholarships, or civic contributions, etc.

Special Interests or Abilities

Mention interests and abilities which relate to the employment sought and which might be of interest to personnel directors, especially for coaching or supervising special school programs, sports, events, or clubs.

Date Available for Employment

Month and Year

References

List the names, positions/titles, fax/phone numbers, e-mail and web addresses of persons writing letters of recommendation for you.

Other Information

Publications, professional papers presented at conferences, other activities or interests related to the type of employment you may be seeking.

INFORMATION NOT TO INCLUDE ON RESUME

See the ECSO handout, "Pre-employment Inquiries," to learn what types of information are illegal to require of job applicants on application forms, in resumes, and in job interviews. Only information that is job-related may be required and should be included by job applicants.

TECHNICAL ASPECTS OF RESUMES

Length

The length of a resume depends on the age, experience, and qualifications of the job seeker. A good general rule for an undergraduate would be a one or two page limit. Graduate students or those already in the job market would be able to use a longer resume.

Photos

Although photographs were, at one time, included in resumes, employers are prohibited from requiring them because of the possibility of discrimination on the basis of age, gender, or ethnic group.

Professional Style

A professional resume used for job searching should be printed on high-quality resume paper. The resume should be formatted neatly and conform to good resume style. The resume should be easy to read and look professional. White space should be evident and the type of font used should be attractive and readable.

Submitting Your Resume

You can either print your resume directly onto high-quality resume paper or have it copied at a good copy shop. In addition, you will likely be asked to either upload or scan it into an employer's online application system.

Obsolescence

Since most resumes can quickly become obsolete just weeks after they are prepared (because of involvement in new activities, new publications, etc.), job seekers must continually keep their resumes up to date. This entails reviewing it before every interview and every letter of application or inquiry.

LEARNING ABOUT RESUME DEVELOPMENT

The ECSO has produced resumes that might be used by individuals seeking K-12 teaching positions. Go to our website at www.education.illinois.edu/ecso to view sample resumes. These resumes are also in the ECSO office.

In addition, the ECSO has available several good books about resume writing that you might find helpful. These books provide information about both format and content and frequently have sample resumes included in the texts. These books can be read in the ECSO.

Most campus and community bookstores have paperback books on resume writing. These books can generally be purchased at low cost.

Finally, the career director in the ECSO is available by appointment to review and critique your resume. Call, write, or visit the ECSO to schedule an appointment with the director.