RESUME TIPS

WHAT MAKES AN EFFECTIVE RESUME?

Your resume is the foundational document that you need for your career search. It is a summary of your accomplishments academically, experientially and through employment that shows a potential employer the skills you have developed.

Your resume may be your first contact with a future employer. If you make a positive impression and show how you would be a "fit" for the opportunity, you may be called for an interview.

TOP TIPS:

- Tailor your resume with keywords, backing up with evidence of accomplishments for every application to demonstrate your area of focus.
- Keep it to two pages — quality over quantity; however, there's no need to fill it just to get it to two pages. Keep a master copy to include all of your experiences, and include your LinkedIn URL so readers can get more information if they wish.
- Know your industry — this will help you in using relevant terminology.
- Write strong accomplishment statements using action verbs to articulate your capabilities versus your tasks or duties.
- Every experience counts! A one-day job shadow, a weekend volunteering opportunity or a part-time summer job all have transferrable skills employers are seeking.

COMMON MISTAKES

- Not tailoring to your audience or using keywords without proof.
- Keeping it simple and short so hiring managers read it (this can actually do the opposite, as it can be perceived as not putting effort into your resume).
- Spelling and grammar errors — this is the first product of work an employer gets from you. First impressions count!
- Not using your education section to present your skills and knowledge.
- Taking advice from people who are in different fields/industries who may not have information relevant to you.

FOR MORE SUPPORT:

- Drop in to a virtual online chat to ask questions or upload your resume for a critique. Register and attend: bit.ly/ssc-career-drop-in
- Attend a webinar for guidance during one of our resume presentations. Go to OSCARplus > Student Success Centre > Events for webinar listings and registration.
- Schedule an appointment on OSCARplus > Student Success Centre > Appointments > Careers for a resume critique if you have more complex questions to discuss.

MAC STUDENT – 1 (SAMPLE)
Current address (include at least city, province)   LinkedIn URL
Phone number   Email

HIGHLIGHTS OF QUALIFICATIONS (optional/job-specific)
- Experience related to the position (include number of years if applicable)
- Credentials/training/education relevant to the position
- Skills/strengths or knowledge relevant to the position with qualifying statements to back it up
- One or two skills/strengths that could be considered assets to the position
- Work ethic or values or technical skills relevant to the position

EDUCATION
Bachelor of ___   year – present
Major area of study; minor
McMaster University, Hamilton, ON
- Add any relevant subjects taken with a brief description.
- Add research/projects undertaken with brief description or results if possible.
- Add academic awards if significant.

EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE
Position Title (in bold)   (Summer) Dates
Name of company or organization, city, province
- Use one or two lines to describe your relevant activities in that position.
- Use action verbs to give your one-liners more impact.
- At least one of the one-liners should describe an initiative you took or an achievement you had with results.
- Consider using SAR formula (situation, action, result).
- Emphasize your transferrable skills (leadership, organization, teamwork, etc.).

EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AND/OR VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE
- List the positions you held in student and volunteer organizations; treat them like regular jobs. Examples of extra-curriculars can include: job shadow, MSU clubs, Faculty associations, etc.

Position Title   Dates
Name of club, charity, event, city, province
- Describe what you did in this position.
- Emphasize your transferable skills and any archievements.

Gilmour Hall 110 | (905) 525-9140 x24254

@MacSSC
studentsuccess.mcmaster.ca
studentsuccess@mcmaster.ca

TECHNICAL SKILLS (optional)

Can adjust headings to be more specific or general (Computer Skills, Language Skills, Business Skills, Additional Skills, Related Skills, etc.). This is where you can add any relevant "hard skills" or knowledge areas. Depending on the importance to the position, this heading may be on the first page.

- Programming Languages: C/C++, Visual C++, Visual Basic
- Graphic Programs: Corel Draw, AutoCAD
- Office Applications: MS Word, MS Excel, MS PowerPoint

INTERESTS (optional)

- Tennis: Competed extensively through Canada in various junior and senior tournaments
- Drama: Took major roles in high school and university drama
- Public Speaking: Joined the local toastmasters group to improve speaking skills

EXAMPLES OF ALTERNATIVE RESUME SECTION TITLES		
Objective Career Objective Professional Objective Career Focus Career Goal	**Profile** Key Competencies/Skills Highlights of Qualifications Career Profile Professional Qualifications Professional Profile	**Education** Academic Background Training Professional Education Additional Training Professional Development
Experience Relevant Experience Employment History Work Experience Additional Experience Professional Background Professional Experience	**Other Skills** Projects Career-Related Skills Computer Skills Technical Skills Certifications Specialized Skills	**Achievements** Accomplishments Awards Recognitions Scholarships
Professional Affiliations Associations Professional Memberships Professional Associations Memberships Affiliations	**Activities/Interests** Community Involvement Volunteer Activities Related Activities University Activities Professional Interests	**Academic Presentations** Publications Conferences Attended Conferences/Conventions Papers Presented Professional Presentations

Gilmour Hall 110 | (905) 525-9140 x24254

@MacSSC
studentsuccess.mcmaster.ca
studentsuccess@mcmaster.ca

CREATING EFFECTIVE ACCOMPLISHMENT STATEMENTS

Job candidates who can differentiate themselves through how they describe their experiences attract employers' attention. Create an effective resume by tailoring it to the position to which you are applying. Create accomplishment statements that give a clear impression of your capabilities and success:

1. IDENTIFY YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE AND SKILLS THEY WANT

2. REFLECT ON YOUR ACHIEVEMENTS

Consider your past experiences from work, internships, volunteering, community involvement, etc.
Beginning with your most relevant experience, identify your achievement(s).
Think of times when you…

- Solved a problem
- Received praise/awards
- Created efficiencies
- Exceeded expectations
- Achieved a goal
- Initiated something

- Received excellent praise/award
- Prevented an issue
- Improved something
- Selected for added responsibility/promotion
- Demonstrated leadership

3. FOLLOW THE FORMULA

Create accomplishment statements that give a clear impression of your capabilities and success.

> **One: Begin with an action verb** **+** **Two: Include details of what you did: who, what, where, how, how many?** **+** **Three: What was the result, purpose or benefit?**

One: Begin with an Action Verb
- Identify the skills that you used. Then, underline which of these skills were critical to your success. Use the list of action verbs in this booklet.
  For example: organized, initiated*, developed*, coordinated. Mark the skills that are most relevant with asterisks (*).

Two: Relevant Information — Include details of what you did: who, what, where, how, how many?
- Briefly describe the relevant information such as: actions taken, time, people involved. Be particular in including information that provides the relevant context.
  For example: Effective filing strategy, including over 10 years of records, used by staff.

Three: What was the result, purpose or benefit?
- Where possible, quantify your results.
  For example: Saved time for staff when solving client issues.
- Use words such as "improve," "maximize," "minimize," "enhance," "strengthen," "decrease," "increase," etc. to show results from your actions.

Gilmour Hall 110 | (905) 525-9140 x24254

@MacSSC
studentsuccess.mcmaster.ca
studentsuccess@mcmaster.ca

EXAMPLE ACCOMPLISHMENT STATEMENTS

The following are pairs of statements that identify the same role. Consider how the second statement of each pair is written as an effective accomplishment statement. Notice the difference it makes?

- Provided customer service.
- Provided customer service in a busy retail environment resulting in the creation of a loyal customer base and improved sales by 10%.

- Initiated reorganization of filing system.
- Initiated reorganization of filing system, which made client information more accessible to staff of non-profit organization.

- Initiated and completed system of data entry from manual to computerized.
- Initiated and completed system of data entry from manual to computerized system, resulting in improved account analysis and report generation for tax and other purposes.

- Maintained and updated files.
- Maintained and updated patient files for rehabilitation clinic with approximately 340 regular patients.

- Trained administrators and other staff.
- Trained administrators and other staff at physiotherapy clinic on MS Excel, saving outside training expenses of more than $1,000.

- Created manual for volunteers.
- Created procedure and responsibilities manual for volunteers at a community agency, which reduced overlapping duties and increased efficiency.

- Worked on product layouts.
- Revised merchandise layout and recommended changes that resulted in increased product visibility and increased sales by 33%.

- Work well in a team environment.
- Collaborated with team members to complete a group marketing project for final year commerce class, ensuring tasks were identified and completed by the team members on time.

Gilmour Hall 110 | (905) 525-9140 x24254

@MacSSC
studentsuccess.mcmaster.ca
studentsuccess@mcmaster.ca

COMMUNICATION/PEOPLE SKILLS

Addressed	Debated	Interviewed	Publicized
Advertised	Defined	Involved	Reconciled
Arbitrated	Developed	Joined	Recruited
Arranged	Directed	Judged	Referred
Articulated	Discussed	Lectured	Reinforced
Authored	Drafted	Listened	Reported
Clarified	Edited	Marketed	Resolved
Collaborated	Elicited	Mediated	Responded
Communicated	Enlisted	Moderated	Solicited
Composed	Explained	Negotiated	Specified
Condensed	Expressed	Observed	Spoke
Conferred	Formulated	Outlined	Suggested
Consulted	Furnished	Participated	Summarized
Contacted	Incorporated	Persuaded	Synthesized
Conveyed	Influenced	Presented	Translated
Convinced	Interacted	Promoted	Wrote
Corresponded	Interpreted	Proposed	

CREATIVE SKILLS

Acted	Designed	Founded	Originated
Adapted	Developed	Illustrated	Performed
Began	Directed	Initiated	Photographed
Combined	Displayed	Instituted	Planned
Composed	Drew	Integrated	Revised
Conceptualized	Entertained	Introduced	Revitalized
Condensed	Established	Invented	Shaped
Created	Fashioned	Modelled	Solved
Customized	Formulated	Modified	

DATA/FINANCIAL SKILLS

Administered	Budgeted	Forecasted	Projected
Adjusted	Calculated	Managed	Qualified
Allocated	Computed	Marketed	Reconciled
Analyzed	Conserved	Measured	Reduced
Appraised	Corrected	Netted	Research
Assessed	Determined	Planned	Retrieved
Audited	Developed	Prepared	
Balanced	Estimated	Programmed	

HELPING SKILLS

Adapted	Contributed	Familiarized	Rehabilitated
Advocated	Cooperated	Furthered	Represented
Aided	Counselled	Guided	Resolved
Answered	Demonstrated	Helped	Simplified
Arranged	Diagnosed	Insured	Supplied
Assessed	Educated	Intervened	Supported
Assisted	Encouraged	Motivated	Volunteered
Clarified	Ensured	Prevented	
Coached	Expedited	Provided	
Collaborated	Facilitated	Referred	

MANAGEMENT/LEADERSHIP SKILLS

Administered	Delegated	Incorporated	Presided
Analyzed	Developed	Increased	Prioritized
Appointed	Directed	Initiated	Produced
Approved	Eliminated	Inspected	Recommended
Assigned	Emphasized	Instituted	Reorganized
Attained	Enforced	Led	Replaced
Authorized	Enhanced	Managed	Restored
Chaired	Established	Merged	Reviewed
Considered	Executed	Motivated	Scheduled
Consolidated	Generated	Navigated	Secured
Contracted	Handled	Organized	Selected
Controlled	Headed	Originated	Streamlined
Converted	Hired	Overhauled	Strengthened
Coordinated	Hosted	Oversaw	Supervised
Decided	Improved	Planned	Terminated

ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS

Approved	Distributed	Ordered	Routed
Arranged	Executed	Organized	Scheduled
Catalogued	Filed	Prepared	Screened
Categorized	Generated	Processed	Submitted
Charted	Incorporated	Provided	Supplied
Classified	Inspected	Purchased	Standardized
Coded	Logged	Recorded	Systematized
Collected	Maintained	Registered	Updated
Compiled	Monitored	Reserved	Validated
Corrected	Obtained	Responded	Verified
Corresponded	Operated	Reviewed	

Gilmour Hall 110 | (905) 525-9140 x24254

@MacSSC
studentsuccess.mcmaster.ca
studentsuccess@mcmaster.ca

RESEARCH SKILLS

Analyzed	Diagnosed	Inspected	Reviewed
Clarified	Evaluated	Interviewed	Searched
Collected	Examined	Invented	Solved
Compared	Experimented	Investigated	Summarized
Conducted	Explored	Located	Surveyed
Critiqued	Extracted	Measured	Systematized
Detected	Formulated	Organized	Tested
Determined	Gathered	Researched	

TEACHING SKILLS

Adapted	Developed	Individualized	Taught
Advised	Enabled	Informed	Tested
Clarified	Encouraged	Instilled	Trained
Coached	Evaluated	Instructed	Transmitted
Communicated	Explained	Motivated	Tutored
Conducted	Facilitated	Persuaded	
Coordinated	Focused	Simulated	
Critiqued	Guided	Stimulated	

TECHNICAL SKILLS

Adapted	Debugged	Operated	Restored
Applied	Designed	Overhauled	Solved
Assembled	Determined	Printed	Specialized
Built	Developed	Programmed	Standardized
Calculated	Engineered	Rectified	Studied
Computed	Fabricated	Regulated	Upgraded
Conserved	Fortified	Remodeled	Utilize
Constructed	Installed	Repaired	
Converted	Maintained	Replaced	

Source: http://www.quintcareers.com/

Gilmour Hall 110 | (905) 525-9140 x24254
@MacSSC
studentsuccess.mcmaster.ca
studentsuccess@mcmaster.ca

OPTIMIZING YOUR RESUME FOR AN APPLICANT TRACKING SYSTEM (ATS)

ATSs are software that help employers and HR professionals manage the hiring process. If you've ever applied through a portal, you've encountered an ATS. It allows an employer to search by the specific criteria they requested (**degree, amount of experience, specific skills**).

Follow the instructions: Submit the requested file type (doc, .docx, pdf, txt, etc.).

Keep formatting simple: Avoid tables or graphics. ATS can't read graphics, and they misread tables. If you want to include graphics for visual appeal when a human reads it, just don't put text in the graphic for the ATS.

Option to submit a longer resume: Submitting a slightly longer resume that allows you to pack in more relevant experience and keywords and phrases could increase your chances of ranking higher in the system.

Note: Keep in mind that the resume will eventually be read by a person, so you still need to be concise.

Use keywords in the job description: Strategically incorporate industry terms, keywords and skills from the job posting. Make sure it makes sense because the actual recruiter who reads it later will frown on any repetitive, nonsensical use of these words.

Save your resume with a relatable name: Save your resume with a file name that is useful and meaningful to the recruiter. This helps the recruiter to find your resume quickly. For example: "YourName.Job.Posting.123"

Call your work experience "Work Experience": Software may completely skip over your work experience because you didn't label it as such.

Start your work experience with the employer/organization name: Applicant tracking systems search for company names first, followed by your title, followed by the dates you held that title.

Spell check, spell check and spell check again: ATS will skip keywords that are misspelled.

Formatting:

- Use standard fonts such as Arial, Georgia, Arial, Courier, Lucida, Palatino, Tahoma, Verdana,
- Avoid using special characters (like arrows) for bullets. Standard dashes or bullets are fine.
- Do not hide keywords in white font in your resume.
- If you are using a creative resume, ensure it is ATS readable.
- Use keywords logically and in different places on your resume.
- Avoid using borders, shading or symbols.

Resume Hacks:

- Obscure job title? Use an equivalent to match with the terms the hiring manager is likely to search for in the ATS. For example, Customer Service Representative (Guest Experience Facilitator). The real title is in brackets and its equivalent is listed first to catch the attention of humans and computers.
- Save time customizing. Word cloud generators identify keywords from job descriptions. Copy and paste five job postings into a word cloud to see most common keywords. (jasondavies.com/wordcloud/)
- Use a free resume analyzer to compare the posting with your customized resume. (jobscan.co)

Gilmour Hall 110 | (905) 525-9140 x24254

@MacSSC
studentsuccess.mcmaster.ca
studentsuccess@mcmaster.ca