

Format

- Ensure the layout is easy-to-read and includes quantifiable details for a recruiter to notice when skimming your resume
- Write with 9- to 11-point basic font and ½- to 1-inch margins
- Confirm fonts, headers, bullet points and formatting are consistent throughout your resume
- Construct with a simple design as a Word document avoiding templates, images, headers, graphics and columns; Applicant Tracking Systems can't decipher these elements
- Avoid first-person singular or possessives like I, me and my
- Use past-tense verbs for past experiences, present-tense verbs for current roles

Order

- Place contact information including name, phone number, professional email address and LinkedIn public profile URL at the top of your document
- Arrange professional experience in reverse chronological order with your most recent job first
- Review individual industry practices to whether your education section should be placed above or below work experience. For example, nursing professionals should list education at the top of your resume, but others prefer it at the bottom under work experience
- If you are currently enrolled in or have recently completed a program relevant to your professional goals, keep your education section above work experience
- Skills, licenses and certifications should be placed near the education section while professional affiliations and volunteer experience should be placed after work experience

Content

- Quantify accomplishments as much as possible by using numbers, percentages and descriptive adjectives
- Use keywords from each job posting in your summary statement - a concise overview of who you are, skills and experience you have and where you are going
- Tailor descriptions to the job posting to which you are applying in a way that sells you as the perfect candidate for the job and highlights your transferrable skills
- Start bullet points with action verbs and try not to use the same action verb twice
- Summarize your role in the first bullet point of each job and describe the employer
- Highlight your accomplishments and impact of job responsibilities, not just duties and activities
- Include more bullets for your most relevant experiences and fewer bullets for least relevant
- Exemplify transferrable skills by including community, volunteer or other experience
- Avoid abbreviations, company-specific terms and repetitive language

Final Steps

- Double-check for errors in spelling, grammar, formatting and other inconsistencies
- Save the document in PDF format with a professional file name
- Ask a friend or mentor to proofread the final version with a fresh set of eyes