

Working Professional Resume Style Guide & FAQs

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# FORMATTING GUIDANCE

The career center provides a template to help your resume follow the same resume standards as top business schools. That means a highly structured, 1-2 page, results oriented resume. We encourage you to follow the template and the formatting guidance closely as every detail matters.

You can easily download our template and copy/paste your content from prior documents and add additional content with the help of your career coach.

General Formatting

* Ensure consistency in font size, spacing, appropriate use of bold and italics, bullet placement, indentations, date, location, etc.
* Margins should be set to 0.5” on all four sides.
* Use Calibri font, 11 pt throughout except for Name (18 pt) and Summary Statement (11 pt) – if you are including one. Summary statements are not required.
* Use Calibri 18 pt for your name, make sure your name is in ALL CAPS and **Bold.**
* Contact information should be 11 pt, text should be centered and fit on one line. No street address.
* Use NCSU email, phone number in (999) 999-9999 format, and simplified (linkedin.com/in/yourname) LinkedIn URL.
* All resume text after Header section should be left justified, Calibri 11 pt.
* Do not use periods at the ends of bullets. Bullets are phrases, not full sentences. Therefore they do not need periods. Use semicolons (;) to separate thoughts/processes in the same bullet.
* Avoid resume bullets with “orphans” — single word on a second or third line. Try to make each bullet line go at least halfway across the page. Bullets should not be more than 3 lines.
* For dates in the Relevant Experience section you can either use Month YYYY – Month YYYY or YYYYY – YYYYY .
  + Ex: Jan 2020 – July 2024 or 2020 – 2024 .

Font, text and grammar:

* Do not use articles such as The, An, A, and avoid using first person language and personal pronouns.
* Use action verbs to open resume bullets (avoid “Responsible for”) — see list of action verbs that accompanies the resume and bullet samples.
* All action verbs in bullets should be written in the **past tense**, even for roles or projects you are working on currently. This ensures consistency in the document over time.
* Abbreviations to be used with numbers: K = thousands, M = millions, B = billions, use + for “more than” (*e.g.,* increasing revenueby$50M+ YoY), use < for less than (e.g., error rate of <10%).
* Numbers 0-9 should be written out (i.e., “nine”), numbers 10+ should be written as numerals (*i.e.,* 20).
* Make sure all hyphens or dashes are used consistently (as in between month and year dates).

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

# General

## Should I have multiple versions of my resume?

You may have multiple versions of your resume if you are exploring distinctly different career paths (*i.e.,* pharma sales and tech product management. It is not necessary to edit your resume for every application that you submit, but you should check that you are showcasing the keywords for your target role.

## How long should my resume be?

## Use one page if you have less than 3 years of work experience. 2 pages if you have more experience. Aim to have complete pages either way (no ¾ filled pages).

## When do I use a short hyphen versus a long hyphen?

A regular hyphen (-) is used for joining two compound words, hyphenating names, or to join numbers in a phone number, and is the shortest in length. Examples: co-created, well-deserved, (555) 555-4444, etc.

An en-dash (–) is used when denoting a range, as in a range of time (*i.e.,* May – September). Use the en-dash on the Jenkins resume, when referring to your dates of Relevant Experience.

# Contact Information

## Should I put my certifications and degrees after my name at the top of my resume?

Only put credentials after your name if you have a doctorate degree (Ph.D.), medical doctorate (M.D.), or law degree (J.D.). All other graduate degrees should be listed under the Education section, and professional certifications (*e.g.*, CPA, PMP) should be listed under Additional Information unless they directly relate to you target position and will be valued by recruiters in that field. Consult a career coach for guidance if needed.

## How do I list a preferred name that is different from my given name?

Use quotation marks to show your preferred name: Arnold “Arnie” Wolfpack.

## My name doesn’t fit — what should I do?

If you have a very long name, we recommend reducing the font size to 16 pt so it still looks similar to our template. Please use a first and last name (surname) on your resume and in all correspondence.

# Summary

## What should I include in my professional summary?

# The “Summary of Qualifications” provides a snapshot for targeting your résumé. It characterizes the general scope and direction of your career. It should draw the reader into the details of your experience. It should address your strongest points relevant to the opportunity. Preferably, use a paragraph and bullet combination. The paragraph should summarize your experience, while the bullets should summarize relevant skills. A Summary of Qualifications should contain:

# Number of years of industry experience

# Functional specialty or title

# Expertise, strengths, or specialization

# Characteristics that are useful for the particular job setting

# Avoid the phrases “Excellent interpersonal and communication skills” and “Results-oriented”. These are overused, thus are not differentiators. Instead, use adjectives that can be independently verified, e.g. “Proven team motivation skills”.

## What is an example of a professional summary?

# Accomplished leader with over 12 years of managerial and operations experience that drives results through a culture of high performance, continuous learning and team-oriented leadership; proven ability to effectively prioritize operations and conduct strategic planning and forecasting; directed significant programs, creating innovative supply chain solutions and systems improvement:

# Proven leader of teams exceeding 100 employees within the military and corporate America

# Recognized as an Exceptional Performance Leader by a Fortune #7 company

# Successfully managed customer relations with over 1600 pharmacy accounts and $160M in on-site inventory

# Bronze Star recipient for exceptional meritorious service in support of Operation Enduring Freedom

# Education

## How do I list a Fellowship?

Fellowships should include the name and reference either full tuition or partial tuition. Please ensure you are correctly identifying your funding source. Examples:

Jenkins Graduate Assistantship: Merit-based award of [full/partial] tuition and stipend Entrepreneurship (HiTEC) Scholar: Merit-based award of full tuition and stipend

Supply Chain Graduate Research Assistant: Merit-based award of full tuition and stipend McLauchlan Leadership Fellow: Selective, immersive leadership development program focused on experiential learning

## How do I list my dual degrees?

If you are in an NC State dual degree program, list your business graduate degree first, and then list the other degree you are receiving. Same guidance holds for a second graduate degree – list after the business degree.

**NORTH CAROLINA STATE UNIVERSITY** Raleigh, NC

**Poole College of Management,** Master of Business Administration (STEM MBA)May 20XX

**College of Agriculture and Life Sciences,** Master of Microbial Biotechnology May 20XX

**Poole College of Management,** BS in Economics May 20XX

## Do I include my GMAT score?

We recommend including your GMAT score if it was 670 or higher. Do not include GRE or other test scores.

## I have more than one concentration, how do I list them?

List your degree in bold followed by the concentration.

Certificates may be listed after concentrations but should not be bold. For example:

**NORTH CAROLINA STATE UNIVERSITY, JENKINS GRADUATE SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT**, Raleigh, NC May 2020

**Master of Business Administration (MBA), Marketing Management and Innovation Management**

Certificates in Decision Analytics and Supply Chain Management

## Should I include certifications?

Yes, if they are relevant to your target role.

# Experience

## What does a good bullet point look like?

A good bullet point should translate your experience to your target role leveraging keywords in the job description and insights from networking conversations about desired qualifications. Phrasing should be past-tense and connect a key action verb to quantifiable results:

Your resume bullets should be action oriented and designed to show impact and scope. When evaluating what types of experience to include and how to word those experiences, ask yourself

Three Key Questions:

1. Is it relevant to my target audience?
2. Is it detailed enough to differentiate me from others? How do you they know I was good at this?
3. Is it results-oriented? Who benefitted? How? By how much?

Effective resume bullets showcase your skills, industry knowledge, and accomplishments, helping employers see the value you bring. They go beyond listing responsibilities by highlighting how you achieved results and the tools or processes you used.

**ACR (Action + Context + Result)**

Use the following format to write your bullets. Quantify results whenever possible. Note results can be projections if you were not present to see the completed product/outcome.

**Action**: action verb describing your approach

**Context**: details of what you did highlighting processes, people, and/or software/tools

**Result**: what the outcome was, the projected outcome, or reason this provided value as part of a larger process

**Bullet Examples**

**Here are a few examples of bullets. There are two versions of each.** The first version shows a “basic” bullet without much detail or value add. The second, shows how the same skill/experience looks different and more impactful when specifics are added. In addition to tasks or projects, you can use this bullet structure to highlight transferable skills or mention awards and accolades in context.

**Ineffective**: Conducted several audits for many departments, reducing problems

**Effective**: Conducted 30+ department audits, increasing compliance rate by over 25% during a one-year period

**Effective**: Increased compliance rate by 25%+ during a one-year period by conducting 30+ department audits

**Ineffective**: Reviewed dealer financial statements in order to assess credit-worthiness.

**Effective**: Analyzed dealer financial statements, assessed prospect credit-worthiness, monitored payment practices and provided dispute resolution for $100 million credit territory; exceeded departmental receivables shortage goal by 25%

**Ineffective**: Kept customers informed from time-to-time on order progress

**Effective**: Created and followed self-developed customer contact strategy in order to maintain promised order delivery dates above 96%

**Ineffective**: Wrote laboratory safety training manual.

**Effective**: Implemented laboratory safety training and provided all direct personnel support for 12 full-time and 5 part-time employees. (Scope was quantified)

**Ineffective**: Received Spotlight Award

**Effective**: Recipient of selective, peer nominated award granted for exceptional teamwork, 3 years in a row

More examples:

Developed standards and metrics for financial models and maintained portfolio master asset management plan on 25 real estate investments across the MidAtlantic region, allowing for timely investment and disposition decisions.

Streamlined reporting to executive team by redesigning standard monthly, quarterly and annual project report templates, reducing meeting length by 50% and enabling better investment decisions.

Analyzed and built a Total Cost to Serve (TCS) model for single modality (protein biologics) of Supply Chain system from end-to-end, informing make vs. buy decisions; reduced costs by 20%.

Designed and developed a 3-phase, multi-modal onboarding program for new VPs across the enterprise achieving a 95 average NPS in the first year & receiving annual HR award for impact.

## Can I include my undergraduate internships?

If you have less than three years of full-time work experience, and/or if the internship relates directly to the position you are applying for, you may include undergraduate internships on your resume. Be sure to articulate quantifiable results and highlight your impact.

## What if I don’t have quantifiable results?

If you’re having trouble, meet with a career coach to discuss different ways of presenting impact. Quantifiable results can include increased revenues, decreased costs, improved compliance ratings, decreased production time, increased employee retention, sales goals, and many others. You can also include projected impact such as “Projected to increase revenue 10% YoY,” if you were not in that role when the project was completed.

## What if I have two positions for the same employer?

You should list them both under the same employer name, with dates for each position listed next to the position itself, and the date of your entire tenure appearing on the same line as the employer name and location. If you worked in multiple locations for the same employer, list them alongside each job title and next to the employer name say “various US locations” or “Raleigh, NC and Paris, France”, for example.

**RED HAT**, Raleigh, NC June 2014 *–* July 2019

*Product Marketing Associate (April 2017 – July 2019)*

* Bullet 1
* Bullet 2

*Media Specialist (June 2014 – April 2017)*

* Bullet 1
* Bullet 2

## I am still working for the employer, how do I list the dates?

List the dates from the start date through Present, like this: June 2020 *–* Present

## How do I list a practicum or externship on my resume?

There are two possible places to list your practicum/externship experience. We suggest listing under **Experience** if you lack work experience and/or are making a career shift and your practicum/externship would help demonstrate a new skill competence. However, you need to speak to real impact and accomplishments if you list a practicum/externship. Similarly, you may format the experience as below, and create a separate section titled “Projects and Leadership Experience.”

You may also choose to list under the **Education** section, as a part of your program:

*MMA Consulting Projects*

* *FoodBuy & Compass Group USA (Spring 2021) –* Designed and launched a social media campaign generating 75 new followers and 500 shares.

## I serve on a board of a nonprofit — should I list this here?

Absolutely — if the board service is relevant experience. Be sure to include some of the activities you have engaged in as a board member, and how it has impacted the community your organization serves. If it is not relevant to the target role, include it in the optional projects/leadership experience section or in the additional information section.

# Projects and/or Leadership Experience (Optional)

Note: You can also include projects associated with your degree or personal projects with meaningful impact that are related to your desired full time work targets. In that case you would name the section “Project and Leadership Experience.”

This section is optional and should only be included if you do not have enough work experience to fill one page.

## What should I list in this section of my resume?

List organizations where you held an elected or selected position (*i.e.,* a position of leadership or impact). You should only list a position if you had significant impact and can speak to actions and quantify results.

# Additional Information

## Which computer skills should I list?

List the skills that are relevant to your target industry / function. Separate by commas. Check with your Career Coach if you have questions. Make sure you list technical skills like data programming, statistical tools etc. (Python, R, Stata, C++). For Excel specifically, make sure to include high level functions you feel comfortable executing. This provides context for the reader (Vlookup, SumIfs, macros, etc).

## How should certifications appear?

Professional certifications should be listed as follows:

Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA); Certified Public Accountant (CPA); Six Sigma Black Belt, American Society of Quality (ASQ); Project Management Professional (PMP), PMI; Level I candidate in the CFA Program; etc.

## How do I list my language fluency?

English should never be listed on your resume — it is assumed you are fluent in English based on your program. For other languages, list with the preceding adjectives Fluent, Proficient, Native or Conversational to describe proficiency level (*e.g.,* Native Spanish*,* Fluent Italian, Business Proficiency in Mandarin, Conversational French).

## How specific should I be with my interests?

Interests are included to serve as “ice-breakers” and help you build a connection with a reader, so be as specific and unique as possible. For example, “hatha yoga practitioner” is more interesting than just “yoga”; “Eastern European cuisine” is more compelling than just “cooking”; “19th century English literature” is more

interesting than just “reading”; “ACC basketball” is more compelling than just “sports”.

## I am not a U.S. citizen, but I have U.S. work authorization. How can I let employers know I do not require sponsorship?

Use the Additional Section to list “Work Eligibility” and list your work authorization (e.g. H1B visa, TN visa)

## Recruiters may think I am not authorized to work in the U.S. based on my name and my international work experience. How can I let an employer know I am a U.S. citizen?

Use the category “Work Eligibility” and put “U.S. Citizen” or “Permanent US Work Authorization”, like this:

**Work Eligibility:** U.S. Citizen