

Resume Writing

At Monmouth, the Writing Center and the Placement Office, which is part of the Center for Student Success, provide help with creating resumes, cover letters, and Curricula Vitae (CV). The resume is your way of marketing your skills to employers. As such, it presents your qualifications and explains how these would be a good fit with employers' human resource needs—all in about one to one-and-a-half pages, while leaving enough space to make the material appear easy to read.

For those seeking academic, scientific, and technical positions, a CV, a much longer document, details the skills and accomplishments of importance in those fields. These documents are intended to be very detailed, as they take an exhaustive look at the candidate's achievements, degrees, certificates, research accomplishments, patents, publications, or other relevant skills. Note, there are also important formatting differences between a standard resume and a CV.

The Message Is You

Writing is all about audience; for a resume, some of that audience isn't in human form. Many resumes are scanned electronically, so it is very important that there be a match between an employer's needs and the words you use to describe yourself. Some career experts suggest refining your resume for each and every job listing, incorporating phrases that match those used in the advertisement or posting. This may mean you have several slightly different versions of your resume in your electronic files, so it's very important that key details, like job and academic histories, match exactly.

FORMATTING TIPS:

1. Fonts should be **Times New Roman, Arial,** or other easily readable fonts.
2. Convert your resume from a Word document to a PDF file to ensure proper formatting when e-mailing or uploading to a prospective employer. If you need assistance with converting your file to PDF format, you may contact the Writing Center.
If you use bullets in your resume, **consider also creating a version that has minimal formatting** and uses the above fonts. This can be offered when you are applying via a Web or e-mail interface in lieu of creating a PDF file.
3. Proofread multiple times for typos and unclear sentences or phrases. This sounds simple, but numerous employers say they get many resumes and cover letters with typos. Even a single typo conveys the wrong signal about you as a potential employee. At Monmouth, the Writing Center and the Placement Office offer resume review services.

Explaining Your Accomplishments

Students often find that their resumes are short on full-time job experience. However, that does not mean that they haven't had other types of meaningful experiences that potential employers might find relevant.

■ Include **courses** that provided the skills the employer is seeking, but also look beyond the classroom.

■ Your **extracurricular activities** or **volunteer work** also offered an opportunity to gain valuable leadership skills.

■ Don't overlook **internships, part-time or summer work** but explain how it is relevant to the job you're seeking. A summer job in a resort hotel may be of interest if you are applying for a hospitality management job but less interesting to an employer in the financial services industry. However, if your summer job involved client contact, management or priorities, on a tight deadline, or other transferable skills, these could be conveyed in a way that would impress a range of employers.

■ **Focus on action verbs** that convey value to an organization—show how you either saved an organization money, improved a process that saved some other resource like time, or improved customer satisfaction.

■ **Be confident but truthful**, and don't exaggerate. Employers frown on any misstatements made in connection with a job application. Even if you get the job, trust is a major career asset.

■ **Avoid vague phrases.** Most jobs expect you to be mature, efficient, and responsible (or some combination of the three). Explain your course work, job or internship responsibilities in a way that shows **how** you exhibited these qualities.

Your Academic Achievements

Starting with your most recent college experience, document the colleges that you attended, the degree(s) achieved, with date of graduation or your anticipated graduation. A GPA is usually not required (with the exception of some public sector and government jobs) but should be mentioned if it is of a high caliber and you're a student or recent graduate. Don't fudge GPA or academic honors; they are relatively easy to catch.

References

Have a list of references typed and ready for an interview, but generally don't include mention of references on a resume. Most employers assume that you have professional references. Make sure that your references have agreed to serve in that role, and keep them current on your search. Be sure that they have enough knowledge of your work or college experience to provide accurate information on request. Be sure to include:

- Names and titles
- Company name
- Addresses
- Phone numbers
- E-mail addresses

Beyond the Resume

Your Online Image Counts, Too

Be aware that employers are increasingly looking to a wide range of sources to find out information on applicants. If you have an account on social networking sites like Facebook.com or MySpace.com, your comments could be found in an online search. Personal blogs and Web sites are also accessible to potential employers. Many companies, not just those in security and financial services, look at credit scores in assessing applicants, so check your credit report for accuracy. Use a professional e-mail address for your job search (think jsmith112@monmouth.edu, not sexeeeLegs@monmouth.edu). Check the email account regularly so you don't miss correspondence.

For Your Safety

Fake job postings are a fact of life, and take several forms, from phishing scams to worthless work-from-home "opportunities." Don't provide confidential information, including a Social Security number or scan of your driver's license, in response to a job advertisement unless you have investigated the business and have gone through an interview. Don't agree to perform financial transactions or to accept merchandise as part of a job—many such "jobs" are fraudulent. Avoid jobs that don't clearly describe the nature of the work or the skills required. Be cautious about companies that charge fees for services. While there are legitimate job-search services, there are also businesses that charge inflated fees for services that are only minimally useful.

For a more detailed list of safety tips and popular scams, visit:
[Monster.com](http://help.monster.com/besafe/)
<http://help.monster.com/besafe/>

Resume and Cover Letter Basics Beyond Monmouth:

- **The Online Writing Laboratory at Purdue University**
<http://owl.english.purdue.edu>
- **The Writing Center at University of Wisconsin-Madison**
<http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/CoverLetters.html>

Services at Monmouth:

- **Career Services**
<http://www.monmouth.edu/university/career-services.aspx>