



UNDERGRADUATE RESUME WRITING GUIDE

What is the Purpose of a Resume?

A resume is a formal document that presents your relevant skills, experiences, and accomplishments to a potential employer in order to demonstrate your fit for a specific position. It illustrates your qualifications for the position by highlighting the skills you have developed and results you have produced in your current and former roles, allowing the employer to determine your potential for success within the organization. Your resume should be tailored to the specific position and/or industry to which you are applying.

Keep in mind: Your resume does not get you the job...it gets you the interview!

Guidelines for Writing an Outstanding Resume

- **Reverse Chronological Order:** Your resume should include your most relevant experience in reverse chronological order (most recent experience first). This is the resume type favored by US employers and used by GWSB undergraduates.
- **Length:** Employers prefer a ONE page resume for undergraduates with less than 8 years of experience.
- **Margins and Font:** We recommend 0.5 inch margins and 11 point Times New Roman font.
- **Format:** Use the Undergraduate Resume Template to ensure consistent indentation, capitalization, punctuation, font style, font size, spacing, and other formatting parameters. See a sample of the template on page 7 of this guide, and create your own resume using our downloadable template under “Resume” at <http://business.gwu.edu/careercenter/undergraduate/resources/> (Password: gwsbfowler15).
- **Avoid Clutter:** A resume with too much text and not enough white space may discourage an employer from reading it. *Employers typically spend only a few seconds scanning a resume to determine if it’s worth reading!*
- **Target Your Content:** Highlight your experiences and transferable skills that are most relevant to the industry and the position.
- **Incorporate Key Words from the Job Posting:** Keep in mind that scanner technology is often used to search for key words within resumes. Fill your resume with language and key words specific to the industry, job function and job posting. You can also refer to the industry-specific key words found in the Undergraduate Resources section of the GWSB website.
- **Use Action Verbs:** Each bullet should begin with at least one strong action verb. Employers often scan the first few words of each bullet, so catch their attention with strong action verbs that reflect your relevant skills.
 - Do not use any action verb more than once under the same job.
 - Avoid phrases like “Responsible for” and “Selected to,” which are more passive.
 - See Action Verb Table on page 6 of this guide for ideas.
- **Create Accomplishment Statements:** Don’t just list job responsibilities in your bullet points. Show the results of your work and how it helped the organization. Refer to “Writing Accomplishment Statements” on Page 2 of this guide for information on crafting Situation-Action-Results (SAR) statements.
- **Quantify and Qualify Results:** Include specifics through numbers and verbal descriptors. See “Writing Accomplishment Statements” on page 2 for more information.
- **Highlight Transferable Skills:** Transferable skills are skills that can be utilized in a wide variety of positions and industries. Include relevant transferable skills such as: project management, research, teamwork, relationship-building, communication and leadership.
- **Avoid Pronouns:** Personal or possessive pronouns (I, my, me, we, our) are not appropriate in a resume.
- **Be Consistent:** Show clear career and/or skill set progression.





- **Honesty is the Best Policy:** Do not exaggerate or embellish your experience, or otherwise include information that's not truthful.
- **Proofread:** Spellcheck does not always catch typos. Have at least 2 other people proofread your resume. *Some employers will not consider a job candidate if they see even one typo on the resume.*

Writing Accomplishment Statements

Situation-Action-Results (SAR)

Accomplishment statements (the bullet points under each position) are more effective when written in the Situation-Action-Results format, also known as SAR.

By using the SAR model to write your accomplishment statements, you will ensure that a reader understands, *in detail*, what you did, why you did it, and what happened as a result of your actions. Providing specific quantifiers and qualifiers will make your work and its results even more clear.

- **Before:** Worked with business owners to increase sales among university students.

This “Before” statement describes your job responsibilities only. It doesn't show *exactly* what it means to “work” with business owners, what skills you developed, and the results of your work.

- **After:** Developed and implemented an in-person marketing strategy with business owners around target universities that resulted in achieving the highest sales record in the last 38 years of \$119,385.

This “After” statement clearly and concisely shows the Situation, Action and Results.

To help you craft your own SAR statements, it is helpful to “interview yourself” about your position: Why was your work important? How did it help the organization? For a list of questions to ask yourself as you develop your SAR statements, see “Questions to Ask Yourself...” on page 5 of this guide.

Quantifying Results

As often as possible, use statistics, percentages, or numbers in your bullet points to demonstrate the scope of your accomplishments. This is especially important for students with more quantitative-based concentrations such as Finance and Accounting. For example:

- Completed competitive and strategic due diligence for a venture capital firm that led to acquiring \$25,000 in initial funding.
- Strategized an effective marketing plan to promote Rent The Runway on campus, resulting in 100% increase in sales for the Inaugural Ball with over 60 dress rentals in January 2015.

Qualifying Results

If you are unable to quantify results, use qualifiers to illustrate the outcome. For example:

- Created a training curriculum and led 20 workshops to teach chapter members how to properly recruit women for the chapter, enabling the chapter to collectively reach annual recruitment goals for the third straight year.
- Developed a pitch using advisory and assurance fact sheets to convince a hypothetical client that PwC offers the most effective services for the client's needs. Received positive feedback from PwC partners on presentation skills and pitch methodologies.





Elements of a Resume

HEADING

- Include name, mailing address, telephone number (home and/or mobile) and email address (in that order).
- If you have a *complete and updated* LinkedIn profile, include the URL after your email address. Be sure to create a customized URL under “Edit Profile.”

EDUCATION

- List all institutions and degrees: Include dates of completion in reverse chronological order. In general, high school information should be removed by sophomore year. However, if there is something distinctive/unique about your high school experience, consider including it.
- GPA: Include if 3.0 and above. Don’t include if less than 3.0.
- International Schools: You may provide a frame of reference. Example: “One of the top 5 universities in China” Or “Ranked as the top engineering university in India.”
- Include academic accomplishments: Merit scholarships, case competitions, special projects, and relevant coursework can all be included to showcase your skills and experience.

WORK EXPERIENCE

- Order: All work experiences should be listed in reverse chronological order. Include the employer name, city and state, job title, and dates of employment.
- Accomplishments, not just responsibilities: Remember to use SAR to write accomplishment statements, not just a job description.
- Be Creative: Experience does not only include paid or professional work experiences. You may also include leadership positions, volunteer work, course projects, independent endeavors, etc. Remember that the purpose of the resume is to highlight your most relevant skills and experiences, which may have been developed through roles other than formal employment.
- “Skills Gained”: For Juniors and Seniors wishing to include a “Skills Gained” line, include this immediately under the job title. For example, “Skills Gained: leadership, teamwork, forecasting, presentation, relationship building, Advanced Excel.” You can also highlight the main skill demonstrated at the beginning of each bullet point. Examples:
 - **Leadership**. Manage a team of seven women and host weekly meetings on campus with reps to provide weekly agenda and task lists; send meeting recap emails to remind reps of tasks that need to be accomplished.
 - **Teamwork**. Oversaw 20-person team responsible for designing, building, and racing a remote control car against competing extern teams. Managed 3 sub-groups by budgeting time for group tasks and reporting team status updates to group leaders.

SKILLS/ACTIVITIES

Highlight relevant skills, affiliations, interests, and other criteria that will make you stand out to employers.

Technical Skills

- List computer applications, languages and any other technical hardware/network skills that are relevant to the job for which you are applying. List them in order from most unique to least unique. For example, Microsoft Office Suite is almost an implied technical skill, so it may not be necessary to list. However, if a job posting calls for “Advanced Excel skills” and you have that skill, you should include it on your resume.





Languages

- Acceptable terms: fluent, proficient, conversational, basic knowledge.
 - *Fluent*: Equivalent to that of an educated native speaker.
 - *Proficient*: Advanced skill level. Able to speak the language with sufficient structural accuracy and possesses the vocabulary to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on practical, social, and professional topics, but uses the language less easily and at a less-advanced level than a native or fluent speaker.
 - *Conversational*: Intermediate level. Able to handle a variety of uncomplicated, basic, and communicative tasks and social situations. Can ask and answer questions and participate in simple conversations on topics beyond the most immediate needs.
 - *Basic*: Elementary level. Knowledge of vocabulary words, ability to speak simple phrases or sentences, has some difficulty understanding native speakers, elementary reading and writing skills.
- Examples: Russian (fluent), Spanish (proficient), Mandarin (conversational), Greek (basic)

Leadership / Affiliations / Interests / Volunteer

- **Leadership**: Include your most recent leadership roles and experiences outside of the work environment.
 - Avoid using experiences that are several years old or organizations that you have not been a member of for several years.
 - If you have extensive leadership experience, you might also create a separate “Leadership Experience” section.
 - Remember that you may also include leadership positions under the “Work Experience” section if they are particularly relevant to the position for which you are applying.
- **Affiliations**: List professional organizations and other community affiliations that support your career goals, including student organizations.
- **Volunteer**: List most recent and/or most relevant activities first. In general, employers like to see some type of volunteer activity on the resume even if it’s not directly related to the job you’re applying for.
- **Interests**: List interests that are specific, show sustained interest and activity, and/or are directly related to your career goals. Examples: completed New York City marathon (2013-2015), extensive travel throughout Latin America. Avoid including activities that might be considered controversial.



QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF WHEN CRAFTING SAR ACCOMPLISHMENT STATEMENTS

Use the following questions to help you recall your accomplishments in each of your past positions, including relevant internships and volunteer positions.

- Did you identify any problems or challenges?
- Did you resolve or minimize any problems?
- Did you discover and take advantage of any opportunities?
- Did you target a need for a product, service, plan, program, system, method, procedure, technique?
- Did you reduce costs, waste, time, or effort?
- Did you produce reports whose recommendations were well received by senior management, and whose suggestions were incorporated into their strategic planning?
- Did you uncover accounting errors and correct them, saving the organization money?
- Did you reduce the liability for the company by suggesting safety improvement, improved security?
- Did you create any original works: reports, brochures, newsletters, guides, manuals, proposals, contracts?
- Did you develop or design a new program, plan, service, product, process, project, system method, strategy?
- Did you improve (redesign, streamline or reorganize), administer or implement any projects, plans, programs, processes, services, products?
- Did you develop new markets, territories, clients, accounts?
- Did you increase or participate in increasing sales, profits, market share, volume, distribution, production, revenues, cash flow?
- Did you formulate or participate in formulating any management decisions, policies, goals, organizational changes, acquisitions, recruitment?
- Did you make any recommendations that saved money, made money, increased efficiency or productivity?
- Did you improve employee morale?
- Did you open or establish a new office, department, branch, facility?
- Did you improve quality or standards for hiring, products, services?
- Did you make a technical contribution?
- Did you facilitate or improve communication among employees, with clients, or with the community?
- Did you improve customer satisfaction or service?
- Did you train, coach, or mentor team members or clients?

When constructing accomplishment statements, it helps to think about the “big picture” (i.e.) how did the work you performed positively impact the organization as a whole? Who, or how many people, will ultimately benefit from your work?



ACTION VERBS:
Broken down by category
(in CAPS/italics)

ANALYZED	Consulted	Experimented	Promoted	Shared	Motivated	Cared	Exercised
Abstracted	Cooperated	Facilitated	Provided	Spoke	Negotiated	Catered	Expedited
Anticipated	Enlisted	Fashioned	Reduced	Stimulated	Persuaded	Delivered	Explained
Assessed	Ensured	Financed	Restored	Strengthened	Promoted	Dispensed	Facilitated
Ascertained	Facilitated	Fixed	Saved	Substituted	Reconciled	Entertained	Fostered
Audited	Fostered	Formulated	Stimulated	Supported	Resolved	Facilitated	Governed
Briefed	Handled	Founded	Strengthened	Sustained	Solved	Furnished	Guided
Calculated	Helped	Generated	Upgraded	Taught	ORGANIZED	Helped	Handled
Clarified	Located	Improved	COUNSELED/ INSTRUCTED/ LEARNED	Trained	Accumulated	Led	Headed
Compared	Participated	Increased	INSTRUCTED/ LEARNED	Tutored	Arranged	Listened	Hired
Computed	Preserved	Influenced	Validated	Assembled	Maintained	Maintained	Implemented
Concluded	Protected	Initiated	Adapted	OPERATED/ MAINTAINED	Balanced	Motivated	Instructed
Conceptualized	Referred	Innovated	Advised	Budgeted	Performed	Performed	Maintained
Correlated	Represented	Instituted	Advocated	Activated	Built	Prepared	Met
Critiqued	Served	Integrated	Aided	Adjusted	Catalogued	Procured	Mentored
Debated	Strengthened	Introduced	Applied	Adapted	Clarified	Provided	Monitored
Defined	Summarized	Invented	Assessed	Changed	Classified	Raised	Motivated
Detected	Supported	Launched	Briefed	Clarified	Collated	Recommended	Navigated
Determined	Sustained	Marketed	Cared	Corrected	Collected	Represented	Ordered
Diagnosed	COMMUNICATED	Modeled	Clarified	Continued	Completed	Responded	Organized
Discriminated	Addressed	Modified	Coached	Edited	Compiled	Satisfied	Oversaw
Dissected	Advertised	Navigated	Comforted	Eliminated	Composed	Served	Planned
Estimated	Answered	Originated	Communicated	Executed	Coordinated	Stimulated	Prepared
Evaluated	Briefed	Perceived	Conducted	Expedited	Copied	Supplied	Presided
Examined	Corresponded	Performed	Consulted	Facilitated	Correlated	Supervised	Prioritized
Figured	Debated	Pioneered	Coordinated	Fixed	Detailed	SOLD	Promoted
Graded	Explained	Planned	Demonstrated	Implemented	Developed	Advertised	Regulated
Identified	Expressed	Prioritized	Educated	Installed	Displayed	Auctioned	Reinforced
Indexed	Facilitated	Produced	Emphasized	Modified	Edited	Bartered	Resolved
Inspected	Interpreted	Promoted	Enabled	Navigated	Facilitated	Enlisted	Retained
Integrated	Interviewed	Proposed	Encouraged	Ordered	Filed	Facilitated	Reviewed
Interpreted	Lectured	Recommended	Enlightened	Oversaw	Gathered	Generated	Scheduled
Interviewed	Listened	Restored	Established	Performed	Graphed	Improved	Selected
Inventoried	Marketed	Refined	Exercised	Prepared	Identified	Led	Set
Investigated	Prepared	Revamped	Explained	Piloted	Indexed	Maintained	Solved
Judged	Presented	Set	Facilitated	Preserved	Inspected	Marketed	Strengthened
Maintained	Printed	Shaped	Familiarized	Prioritized	Inventoried	Motivated	Supervised
Mapped	Programmed	Simplified	Fostered	Produced	Kept	Negotiated	Taught
Monitored	Publicized	Solved	Guided	Programmed	Located	Persuaded	Trained
Observed	Quoted	Styled	Helped	Promoted	Maintained	Promoted	Updated
Perceived	Recorded	Streamlined	Implemented	Protected	Mapped	Raised	COLLABORATED
Predicted	Reported	Substituted	Improved	Ran	Met	Recommended	Coproduced
Projected	Responded	Visualized	Influenced	Reduced	Obtained	Recruited	Cooperated
Qualified	Rewrote	IMPROVED/ INCREASED	Informed	Regulated	Organized	Stimulated	Engaged
Ranked	Spoke	INCREASED	Inspired	Replaced	Planned	LED/MANAGED	Organized
Read	Taught	Achieved	Interpreted	Saved	Prepared	Allocated	Partnered
Reasoned	Wrote	Accomplished	Investigated	Screened	Prioritized	Approved	Met
Related	CREATED/ DEVELOPED	Acquired	Lectured	Serviced	Processed	Arranged	Participated
Researched	DEVELOPED	Advanced	Led	Set	Programmed	Assigned	Shared
Reviewed	Acted	Assured	Listened	Sustained	Ranked	Authorized	Strategized
Screened	Activated	Attained	Maintained	Transported	Recorded	Chaired	Synchronized
Scanned	Adapted	Completed	Manipulated	Upheld	Reorganized	Clarified	Worked
Solved	Assembled	Conserved	Mastered	Utilized	Reproduced	Coached	
Studied	Authored	Continued	Monitored	NEGOTIATED	Retrieved	Conducted	
Summarized	Built	Eliminated	Modified	Advised	Revamped	Consulted	
Surveyed	Clarified	Encouraged	Motivated	Advocated	Reviewed	Contracted	
Symbolized	Composed	Enlarged	Observed	Arbitrated	Revised	Controlled	
Synthesized	Conceived	Expanded	Perceived	Bargained	Scheduled	Coordinated	
Tabulated	Constructed	Facilitated	Persuaded	Closed	Set	Decided	
Verified	Corrected	Fostered	Prescribed	Concluded	Simplified	Delegated	
Visualized	Designed	Guaranteed	Programmed	Consolidated	Solved	Directed	
ASSISTED	Devised	Inspired	Promoted	Dealt	Streamlined	Dispatched	
Advised	Discovered	Maximized	Read	Expedited	Structured	Distributed	
Brought	Drafted	Minimized	Reduced	Facilitated	Synthesized	Educated	
Chartered	Eliminated	Motivated	Reflected	Handled	Systemized	Encouraged	
Collaborated	Established	Obtained	Reinforced	Lobbied	Tabulated	Enforced	
Contributed	Expanded	Overcame	Related	Mediated	SERVED/AIDED	Evaluated	
Consolidated	Expedited	Perfected	Restored	Merged	Attended	Executed	