



Résumé Writing Guide

YOUR RÉSUMÉ

Your résumé provides prospective employers with their first impression of you—it is your chief marketing tool. It helps prospective employers evaluate your skills, accomplishments, and educational background to see if they would like to interview you.

If you have several career interests and you are applying for several positions that are unrelated, you may want to develop multiple résumés with different objectives. The following pages will define different résumé features and résumé types to help you develop your own unique résumé.

Talk with a Career Advisor: Visit the Office of Career Services in Carroll Hall, Room 311 or email careerservices@vmi.edu to make an appointment with a career advisor to review your résumé.

RÉSUMÉ CONTENT

Your résumé is unique to you and a critical marketing tool; it should be individually tailored for each application. Cadets may create a “master” résumé with all activities and experiences that can be rearranged or modified for particular jobs. Remember: your résumé needs to show how YOU meet THEIR needs. **Consider using the RAT concept (Results, Accomplishments, Time) and not just your required duties.**

Prior to creating your résumé, make a list of your various experiences (work, internship, volunteer, etc.). Then, using that list, ask yourself how have you:

- Solved any problems?
- Demonstrated leadership?
- Motivated others?
- Saved the organization money?
- Created something new?
- Acquired industry knowledge?
- Created new systems or procedures?
- Made a process more efficient?
- Made a process cheaper?
- Improved a system?
- Successfully fulfilled your duties/responsibilities?
- Increased sales?
- Increased membership or participation?
- Accomplished a goal?
- Went above and beyond your duties?
- Used computer/ technical skills?
- Planned an event?
- Trained another individual?

Although there may be résumé templates online, be mindful that templates may be difficult to edit and limit your formatting options.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Your name, mailing address, cell number, and email address should always top your résumé (make sure that your email address and voicemail are professional). Use your permanent or college address depending on the proximity of your desired location. You may include a link to a professional blog or LinkedIn profile. This section

should align with your cover letter (usually, every résumé needs a cover letter).

OBJECTIVE/ SUMMARY STATEMENT

While optional, an objective or summary statement sets a positive tone and informs the employer of the position you are seeking and what strengths and skills you bring. It is especially beneficial when networking or attending networking events because it gives some background on your skills, strengths, and interests. Be brief and consider a job title, what you can offer the employer, a description of potential career path in a particular field, or your short-term goals.

Example: Dean's List international studies major with research and study abroad experience; seeking an internship with the US State Department for Summer 2020.

EDUCATION

Include all colleges and universities from which you have earned a degree and list in reverse chronological order (your most recent school listed first). Include your cumulative GPA and/or your major GPA, particularly if one or both are above a 3.0.

- If you've earned Dean's List, scholarships, or are academically distinguished, make sure you include this distinction with your degree information.
- You can also include study abroad information here as well.
- As a 2nd or 1st class cadet, you usually don't include your high school, unless you were involved in a significant or unique experience relevant to your career goal.
- For 4th and 3rd class cadets, you may include your high school information, particularly experiences related to your résumé summary.

Example: **Virginia Military Institute (VMI)**, Lexington, VA Expected May 2020
Bachelor of Arts, International Studies
Minor: Psychology
Dean's List (4), Cumulative GPA: 3.2, Major GPA: 3.5

St. Anne's College, Oxford University, Oxford, United Kingdom Summer 2019
Study Abroad

RELATED COURSEWORK

You may want to list appropriate college coursework in your résumé *if* you apply for a position that is unrelated to your major, OR *if* the coursework is unique/specialized in the career field.

Examples: If you apply for a writing position, but you majored in biology, it would be advantageous to list your writing courses to highlight your skills -
Related Coursework: Writing and Rhetoric I&II (ERH 101/102) and Technical Communication (ERH 314).

If you are applying for a civil engineering position with VDOT, you may want to include –
Related Coursework: Transportation Engineering (CE333), Transportation Planning & Design (CE436), and Construction Methods & Management (CE437).

WRITING EFFECTIVE RÉSUMÉ BULLETS

Effective résumés translate **Work Experience** and **VMI Activities** into language that employers will value and understand. Bullets are short, fragmented sentences that highlight transferrable skills used in your experiences and activities. A paragraph format may allow for more text on the page, but can make the résumé seem dense and more difficult to read.

Below are critical considerations when writing effective bullets:

1. Emphasize skills, accomplishments, and leadership over duties; you want to focus on how you went “above and beyond” your responsibilities.
2. State all information positively and relate your skills and background to the position/industry.
3. Each of your bullets should begin with a properly conjugated action verb and they should end with an outcome (view action verbs [here](#)). No “I”, “me,” or “my.”
4. Bullet points should be organized for the needs of each position you apply to; put the most relevant bullet points at the top.
5. When possible include quantities by number, duration, or dollar amount, and scope of your experiences to strengthen the impact of your message (e.g.: “supervised 12 employees,” “managed a \$2,000 budget”).
6. Be consistent with font type and size.
 - a. **Font:** Use standard, readable fonts like: Arial, Tahoma, Calibri, Trebuchet, or Times New Roman.
 - b. **Size:** The font size for your bullets should be the same size as the rest of your headings except for your name. Your name should be around 14-point font; the rest of your content should be no smaller than 10-point font.

Example: **Newspaper Internship**, Large Newspaper, Large City, State - Summer 2018

- Recorded and transcribed interview notes from three city council meetings
- Authored three 500-word articles published in June and July 2018
- Successfully increased followership of the Large Newspaper Twitter account by 400%

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Summarize your experiences by highlighting those that best reveal your skills and abilities in relation to the type of job you are seeking.

Example: **Investments Intern**, Summer 2018, Merrill Lynch, New York, NY

You can include paid work experiences, volunteer work, and internships. You do not have to mention all of your professional experiences; include those most relevant to the position. If you have several experiences that are directly related to the type of job you are seeking, you may list them under a separate category called “Related Experiences.” **If you are having trouble coming up with effective points, [Job Hero](#) has résumé samples that may help.**

VIRGINIA MILITARY INSTITUTE EXPERIENCE

This section highlights college and professional organizations and clubs in which you participated.

- This could include rank in the Corps of Cadets, clubs or organizations, RDC, Honor Court, Rat Challenge, research projects, or other projects.
- Include the name of the organization, any offices you held, and the dates you were a member.
- Include a brief description of your activities and accomplishments if these would be relevant to the position for which you are applying.
- Describe activities using language someone not familiar with VMI would understand.

Example: **Regimental Color Sergeant**, August 2019 – Present

VMI Corps of Cadets

- Promoted from Color Corporal to Sergeant.
- Executes the movements of a flag bearer in the Cadet Color Guard.
- Maintains the colors and supporting equipment.
- Supports various Institute functions by delivering, posting, and returning colors.

ATHLETICS

For participation on an athletic team, focus on transferable skills that you developed as a student athlete such as:

- Leadership
- Teamwork
- Discipline
- Time Management
- Communication
- Self-Motivation
- Strategy
- Detail-Oriented
- Goal-Oriented
- Able to Accept Criticism
- Commitment
- Coachable
- Works Well Under Pressure

Make sure to include:

- Sport, division, position, and timeframe
- Leadership experience (Captain, etc.)
- Athletic scholarships
- Awards and Honors (drafted, selected, recognized as, etc.)
- Events/Tournaments

Example: Student Athlete, VMI NCAA Division I Football Team, Defensive Back, August 2017 – Present

- Currently serve as one of four football captains.
- Gained valuable leadership and teamwork experience while managing a demanding academic schedule.
- Recipient of the 2019 Defender of the Nation Award.

HONORS / AWARDS

This is an optional section that will typically be near the end of your résumé. Entries in this category should include the name of the honor, name of organization providing the honor, and the date when the honor was conferred.

Example: Honors Scholar, VMI Honors Program, Fall 2018 – Present

SKILLS

Information about special skills that are relevant to your job objective can enhance your résumé, such as computer skills, language skills, research skills, leadership skills, and technical skills. You can include this information as a separate category or as part of other entries on your résumé. To express your skill level, phrases like “expert in/ master in,” “proficient in,” and “experience with” can be helpful.

Example: Computer Skills: proficient in MS Office Suite, AutoCAD, and Mathcad

VOLUNTEER WORK OR COMMUNITY SERVICE

Consider any volunteer experiences you’ve had while enrolled at VMI (i.e. Habitat for Humanity, Special Olympics, Relay for Life, Lexington Community Service Projects, Character Counts, etc.). Volunteer Work should be used as a heading when the volunteering relates closely to your career goal. If your volunteering is not related to your career goal, consider using Community Service as a functional heading.

Example: Cadet Facilitator | VMI Character Counts Program | Fall 2018 – Present

PERSONAL DATA

Do **not** include personal data such as gender, ethnicity, birthplace, or personal interests in your résumé.

REFERENCES

References are generally requested in a job application or after the interview process. Only include references in a résumé when the employer asks for you to do so. Otherwise, create a separate reference sheet with your contact information and the names and contact information for your references.

- Seek the permission of potential references before including them in your résumé or on a reference sheet.
- **Working on a résumé for the US federal government?** References should be included in this résumé. Please contact us for specific resources on writing a federal résumé.

RÉSUMÉ FORMATS

There are three general résumé formats: chronological, functional, and combination. The type of format you use depends on your particular background and the type of work you are seeking. Most importantly, your résumé should be well organized and easy to read.

Chronological Résumé Format (Most often used by college students and new graduates)

- A chronological résumé emphasizes your work and/or experiences and organizes your information around dates.
- You should use the chronological format when your work or activity experience is strong and relevant to your job objective, when previous job titles are impressive and job history shows growth, and when you want to emphasize your accomplishments.
- List jobs or experiences in reverse chronological order with your most recent position listed first.
- This format can be disadvantageous for those with gaps in employment or for those whose recent experiences do not showcase your related skills and abilities.

Functional Résumé Format (Used typically by experienced candidates and/or for those with employment gaps)

- A functional résumé organizes information under functional headings that highlight your major areas of accomplishment or strength.
- Experiences and skills are organized to support your job objective and are not limited by employment dates.
- You may draw upon all sources of experience (employment, volunteer work, college activities, and coursework) to describe your skills.
- Since the functional résumé emphasizes capabilities and skills, it can be useful when you want to enter a different career field or illustrate your transferable skills.

Combination Résumé Format (Used typically by candidates with a few years of professional experience, those who are changing careers, or STEM majors)

- A combination résumé is exactly what it sounds like: a combination of the chronological and function résumé formats.
- This type of résumé focuses on skills before returning to a chronological style with focus on experiences.
- A combination résumé format will highlight skills you have acquired at military college settings, internships, and other jobs, and connect those skills to your future goals.
- The combination résumé is also a good choice if you are an alumnus with up to mid-level experience in the posted job description. For example, a few years of experience after VMI, whether military or civilian.

See the list of Functional Headings listed later in this guide.

GENERAL RÉSUMÉ WRITING GUIDANCE

- Be brief; a one-page résumé for most college graduates is adequate. Employers spend seconds reviewing a résumé, so you will want your résumé to be concise and focus on the most important points. Federal, teaching, and academic résumés (CVs) may be longer.
- Margins should not be smaller than 0.5".
- Use action verbs to describe your accomplishments and void personal pronouns (view action verbs [here](#)).
- Be consistent with format, type style, and type size.
- Be consistent with verb tense and proofread for misspelled words and grammatical errors (have at least two others review your résumé).
- Use capital letters, bold print, or italics sparingly to highlight parts of your résumé.
- Make sure to follow any instructions set by the employer for résumé submission.
- During the editing process, you may find it helpful to save your résumé as a Word document.
- Before sending your résumé to an employer, you should save your résumé as a PDF.
- Use a consistent file naming system to help you keep track of your résumé documents. We recommend using the format that includes your name, the type of document, and when it was last modified.
 - *Example résumé file name:* Resume_TracyJackson_10.6.19
- With hard-copy résumés, do not fold or staple your résumé. It is helpful to have paper copies of your résumé at job fairs and interviews.
- Use language that those not familiar with VMI will understand.

FUNCTIONAL HEADINGS

Functional headings vary from résumé to résumé. Use functional headings that are relevant to your career goal. Also, consider what recent (within the last 4 years) experiences and skills that will be relevant to include in your résumé. Prioritize functional headings from most to least relevant.

Common Functional Headings:

Summary/ Objective
Education
Related Coursework
College Activities
Leadership
Skills
Community Service
Professional/ Work Experience
Honors & Awards

Additional Functional Headings:

Accounting
Advertising
Analysis
Certifications
Communication
Construction
Customer Service
Data Analytics
Fundraising
Legal
Management
Programming
Projects
Public Speaking
Research
Sales
Study Abroad
Volunteer Work
Writing

Tracy Ann Jackson

Permanent Address: Roanoke, VA

Current Address: Lexington, VA

Email: jacksonta@mail.vmi.edu **Cell:** (540) 111-1112

SUMMARY

Academically Distinguished Economics and Business major with substantive summer financial internship and leadership experience seeking opportunities related to finance.

EDUCATION

Virginia Military Institute (VMI), Lexington, VA

Bachelor of Arts, Economics and Business, May 2019

Minor: History; Concentration: Finance

Dean's List (6); Overall GPA: 3.7, Major GPA: 3.85

RELATED EXPERIENCE

Vice President, Fall 2018 – Present; **Junior Analyst**, Fall 2017 – Spring 2018

VMI Cadet Investment Group

- Manages a \$310,000 VMI Foundation portfolio of diversified stocks
- Analyzes, reports, and recommends stock investments to the group
- Corresponds with external agencies to present our team's progress
- Facilitated recruitment tutorials and conducted new recruit interviews
- Coordinates with advisors and officers to assess program direction and growth

Summer Intern, Summer 2018

Merrill Lynch, New York City, NY

- Assisted financial advisors in Merrill's Global Private Client Division
- Guided \$1,000,000 in assets by placing calls on behalf of intern team
- Researched investment philosophies and portrayed findings in a presentation
- Analyzed extensive data on prospective clients

SKILLS

Language: Spanish (Intermediate)

Computer: Microsoft Office Suite (Excel Advanced)

COLLEGE ACTIVITIES

Vice President, Fall 2017 – Present

VMI Chapter of Sigma Beta Delta Honor Society

- Facilitates involvement among cadets interested in Business, Management and Administration

Assistant Prosecutor, VMI Honor Court, Fall 2017 – Present

- Educates the Corps of Cadets on honor and integrity as a representative of the Honor Court
- Investigates breaches of the Honor Code to ensure the health and preservation of VMI tradition

Academic Mentor, Fall 2016 – Spring 2017

VMI Miller Academic Center

- Mentored freshmen by helping them identify academic priorities, set goals, construct and implement plans, and evaluate their progress

Reverse Chronological Résumé | Body = 11pt Tahoma font | Name = 14pt Tahoma font

The top half of the résumé demonstrates the candidate's potential to be successful in an entry-level finance position. The bottom half of the résumé adds additional information that tells the story of the candidate's experiences.

Brian Brooks

Permanent Address:

8. E. Washington St.
Roanoke, VA 24016

Current Address:

VMI Box 11111
Lexington, VA 24450

Cell: 540-111-1112 - Email: brooksb@mail.vmi.edu

OBJECTIVE	Dean's List Civil and Environmental Engineering major and NCAA athlete with substantive internship and leadership experience seeking a position at VDOT.
SKILLS	Engineering: Proficient in AutoCAD 3D, MATLAB, & Mathcad Language: French (Conversational), Arabic (Basic) Computer: MS Office
EDUCATION	Virginia Military Institute (VMI) , Lexington, VA Bachelor of Science, Civil Engineering, May 2020 Dean's List (5); GPA: 3.6
COMMUNICATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Guided a team of 10 cadets in concrete canoe project implementation• Presented water treatment research to governing board of engineers• Published weekly updates and information on timber building projects
ENGINEERING EXPERIENCE	Summer Intern , Summer 2018 Stearns and Wheeler, Roanoke, VA <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Designed solids handling portion of a wastewater treatment plant• Researched new technologies to be use in water treatment• Reviewed and edited Preliminary Engineering Reports• Met with clients, visited sites, and edited site plans Structural Team Leader , Concrete Canoe Project, September 2018 – Present Timber Framer , VMI Timber Framing Guild, April 2018 – Present Member/Participant , ASCE Conference, Roanoke, VA September 2018 Project Manager , VMI Transportation Class, January 2018 – March 2018
LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE	Training and Operations Lieutenant , August 2018 – Present VMI Corps of Cadets <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Plans and composes operation orders for battalion level activities• Organizes and supervises operations involving over 600 personnel• Coordinates with VMI administration to develop training schedules• Prepares weekly schedules for the student body• Instructs junior leaders in Corps of Cadets
COLLEGE ACTIVITIES	Student Athlete , August 2017 – Present VMI NCAA Division I Water Polo Team <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Balance a rigorous set of academic and co-curricular military requirements with a 20-hour per week training and competition schedule• Earned the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference Offensive Player of the week in March 2018 Team Member , February 2017 – Present VMI Ethics Club <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discuss a range of scenarios and ethical dilemmas during weekly meetings• Selected as the only freshman to represent VMI at the US Naval Academy's Ethics Case Competition in April 2017

Combination Résumé | Body = 10pt Arial font | Name = 15pt Arial font

This résumé demonstrates the value of posting skills followed by experiences using a combination résumé format

James Taylor

Current Address: Lexington, VA Cell: 540-111-2222 Email: taylorj@mail.vmi.edu

SUMMARY	Dean's List English major with writing and policy internship experience; seeking an internship for Summer 2020.	
EDUCATION	Virginia Military Institute (VMI), Lexington, VA Bachelor of Arts in English Dean's List (2); Overall GPA: 3.4; Major GPA: 4.0; Army ROTC Scholarship	May 2021
WRITING	Poverty & Housing Policy Considerations Independent Research <ul style="list-style-type: none">Currently researching the impact of public housing policy on impoverished communitiesCompleted research will be presented at the Undergraduate Research Symposium in March 2020	August 2019 - Present
	Operations Plan and Report Technical Communications Class Paper <ul style="list-style-type: none">Developed a policy and plan to implement new software at a large organizationPrepared summary and marketing materials for entry, mid, and executive level employees	April 2019
POLICY	Legal Intern United Planning Organization (UPO) Washington, DC. <ul style="list-style-type: none">Scribed meetings and drafted policy briefs for the Director of Legal AffairsPrepared and facilitated the Community Leadership Academy for 50 teenagersPresented on UPO programs during community events around the cityDeveloped an assessment dashboard in Excel to track attendance and identify trends	Summer 2018
COMMUNITY RELATIONS	Community Relations Intern City of Roanoke Roanoke, VA <ul style="list-style-type: none">Compiled research on community and non-profit organizations in RoanokeDesigned a brochure to promote the city government's resources for businesses	Summer 2019
COLLEGE ACTIVITIES	Club Athlete, VMI Rugby Team Club Member, VMI Rotaract Club	February 2018 - Present September 2018 - Present

Functional Résumé | Body = 11pt Trebuchet font | Name = 15pt Trebuchet font

This résumé demonstrates the value of posting more relevant experiences above the most recent experiences using a functional résumé format.

Amelia Martin

Email: martina@mail.vmi.edu Cell: (540) 111-1112

Current Address: Lexington, VA Permanent Address: Roanoke, VA

OBJECTIVE

NCAA athlete and Psychology major seeking a position as an Assistant Human Resources Manager at Target.

EDUCATION

Virginia Military Institute (VMI), Lexington, VA

Bachelor of Science, Psychology, Minor: Leadership Studies, Expected Graduation May 2020

Dean's List (2); Overall GPA: 3.1, Major GPA: 3.3

LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

Student Athlete, August 2016 – Present

VMI NCAA Division I Lacrosse Team, Defender

- Serve as the Team Captain, providing guidance and leadership to teammates while developing communication skills.
- Manage a full-time student course load and military requirements with an extensive training schedule.
- Earned the National Strength and Condition Association (NSCA) Athlete of Year Award.
- Named to the United States Intercollegiate Lacrosse Association (USILA) South All-Star Team Spring 2019.
- Developed a strong work ethic to meet personal goals.

Career Ambassador, January 2018 – Present

VMI Office of Career Services

- Serve as the CIC (Cadet in Charge) since August 2019, which includes training new Career Ambassadors and ensuring proper coverage for the office including nights and weekends.
- Greet visitors, answer phones, and ensure cadet sign-in, all while providing excellent customer service.
- Assist with events, including Employer Information Sessions, Career Fairs, and workshops.
- Market and promote the resources and services provided by the Office of Career Services.

INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE

Human Resources Intern, Summer 2019

RAINN, Washington, DC

- Completed data entry and database maintenance with a high degree of accuracy.
- Filed and organized records, ensuring records compliance.
- Complied and edited reports.
- Respected the confidentiality of the position.

COLLEGE ACTIVITIES

Club Member, Fishing Club, August 2018 – Present

Club Member, Bass Fishing Club, August 2017 – May 2018

SKILLS

Microsoft Office (Expert in Excel, Proficient in PowerPoint and Word)

Athletic Résumé | Body = 11pt Calibri font | Name = 16pt Calibri font

Along with the combination résumé, this résumé demonstrates how to include athletic experience on a résumé.
