

Resume Guide

This guide provides basic information regarding resume writing. We also *strongly* encourage you to attend Career Development Office (CDO) workshops on resume writing and to post your resume to [HarrisLink](#) to receive feedback from a CDO counselor before submitting your resume to an employer.

INTRODUCTION

A resume provides a brief snapshot of the experiences that qualify you for a specific role and/or organization. A good resume presents an employer with a succinct and persuasive summary of your accomplishments, knowledge, and skills. The goal of a resume is to encourage the employer to invite you for an interview.

Keep the following in mind when preparing your resume:

1. Keep it concise! In general, you have less than 20 seconds to make a positive impression with your resume. One page is ideal for candidates with less than seven years of full-time work experience; resumes of more experienced candidates' should not exceed two pages.
2. First impressions are key. A well-written resume (in conjunction with a targeted Cover Letter) is your most important vehicle to convey your writing skills to give the organization a sense of what you bring to the table.
3. Tailor your resume to the job for which you are applying. You may also consider creating a separate resume for each industry (“consulting”), position type (“analyst”), or sector (private, public, non-profit).
4. Proofread, proofread, proofread. In addition to using the spell-check function and reading your resume aloud, ask your peers, mentors, and CDO counselors to review your resume for grammatical errors.

Your resume is not a static document. It should evolve as you enhance your skills and competencies. Continue revising your resume throughout your graduate studies and professional experiences to reflect new accomplishments and milestones.

Step 1

Skill & Interest Evaluation

It is important to think broadly in the initial steps of resume preparation. Assess your most proficient skills, interests, and industry-specific knowledge. You may have gained valuable and relevant experience in a variety of settings—academic, personal, professional, and extracurricular. If you have not already done so, participate in a CDO workshop on skill identification and schedule time with a CDO counselor to discuss your existing skills and those you would like to further develop throughout your time at Harris.

Step 2

Market Research

Once you have assessed your interests and skills, it is critical to conduct [Industry Research](#). Building a professional network requires a thorough understanding of the knowledge and professional backgrounds most likely to be required in your positions and industries of interest. It can be very helpful to review job postings to become familiar with position titles, descriptions, preferred qualifications, and hiring trends.

Tips for Conducting Market Research:

- When perusing positions, chart key and reoccurring skills that are of interest to you, in addition to those you may need to develop and/or strengthen.
- Compare these to the results of your Skills & Interests Evaluation in Step One.
- Once you understand the types of organizations, positions, and sectors of interest to you, it is very important to start communicating with professionals in those fields. Reach out to alumni, current professionals, faculty, and/or students with experience in your areas of interest and request an [informational interview](#).

Step 3

Accomplishment and Outcome Statements

You are now ready to review your research and draft your accomplishment and outcome statements. These will be bulleted below each job title or position, focus on the outcomes/impact of your achievements, and convey that you have the necessary skills and knowledge to succeed in a specific position and field.

Remember, this is not a job description.

1. Each bullet should begin with a strong and descriptive action phrase relevant to the job description. Brainstorm and write up any relevant experiences where you have used that skill. For example, if a key skill for a policy analyst is “Conduct independent research” this could serve as your first action phrase. (Tip: Use appropriate verb tenses to describe previous and current accomplishments.)
2. Once you have identified your action phrases, use the following prompts to build your bullets:
 - Who (management, peer collaborations)
 - What (project outlines, deliverables, steps)
 - Why (purpose of project)
 - Where (technology and systems used, global/local impact)
 - When (period of time, how often)
 - How (tools, organizing, skills used)
 - Impact (outcomes, results, savings, revenues)
3. Quantify whenever possible. Numbers and percentages catch employers’ eyes. They also demonstrate your experience in achieving goals and remaining aware of personal/team impact (dollars raised, length of projects, number of team members). Numbers with \$ or % signs and all numbers 10 and above are written as figures.
4. Key words: Include skills in each bullet that match key words in the job description. Key words might include: policy analysis, project management, finance/budgeting, writing/editing, quantitative/qualitative analysis. (Tip: Two of the best sources to identify key phrases to include in your resume are job descriptions and the websites of employers of interest to you).

Sample Accomplishment Statements

“Conducted quantitative and qualitative analysis on policies related to environmental sustainability in four major U.S. cities to produce white paper for senior leadership.”

“Advised political candidates on policies related to education, urban planning, and public health via written recommendations in bi-weekly policy briefs.”

“Managed program grants from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Department of Education, and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, totaling \$2.5 million during 2011; led program grant growth to \$3.1 million in 2012.”

“Led team of six researchers and oversaw successful completion of project research, market data collection, and execution of draft policy proposals.”

Format

While there are multiple approaches to resume writing, we recommend reviewing the [Resume Templates](#) available on the CDO website and the following formatting guidelines:

1. Use standard fonts (Times New Roman; Helvetica; Tahoma; Garamond) and sizes (10.5 or 11 point)
2. Margins
 - Top and Bottom: minimum of .6 inch, maximum 1.0 inch
 - Left and Right: minimum of .6 inch, maximum of 1.0 inch
3. With the exception of the header, the text should be left justified.
4. Use *Italics* for book or thesis titles.
5. **Bold** and CAPITALIZE section headings (e.g., **EDUCATION, EXPERIENCE**) to help employers distinguish among various sections of the document.

Sections

Personal Information

Center your name, home and email addresses, and telephone number at the top of the resume and, if you have two pages, at the top of the second page as well. If your LinkedIn profile is updated and markets your experiences effectively, you may also include this information at the top of your resume. You might want to make your name stand out by bolding it or slightly increasing the font size. **Note:** U.S. resumes do not include age, sex, ethnicity, nationality, or marital status.

Education

Most Harris students list education first on their resume to demonstrate their current academic commitment and direction. In cases of significant work experience (7+ years), he/she may list professional experiences first.

Degree Information

1. List the full name of your most recent (or anticipated) degree first.
2. Indicate your status as a current student by stating “Candidate for” before your anticipated degree (e.g., “Candidate for Master of Public Policy”).
3. If you graduated with honors, magna or summa cum laude, report it next to the type of degree earned. If you have an extensive list of honors, you may also want to list them in a separate “Honors” section.

Coursework/Written Works

Below your degree title, list coursework pertinent to the job or field to which you are applying as “Selected Coursework.” For instance, the intensive quantitative core coursework completed your first year at Harris is very appealing for a position requiring strong analytical skills. If you completed a thesis relevant to the position and/or organization, you may briefly describe it here as well.

Experience

As a general rule, first list the organization and the division on the far left-hand side of the page, then the city/state on the far right-hand side of the page. On the next line, list your job title on the left and the dates of the assignment on the far right. If the job title is more impressive than the employer, you may wish to reverse the order.

For example: In describing your position as a policy analyst at a small non-profit organization, it may be more significant to emphasize your job title instead of the organization name, especially if you are applying for a position related to policy analysis. If the organization is not well known, you may add a descriptive phrase (e.g. consulting firm) following the organization’s name.

Remember: remain consistent throughout your resume to avoid confusing the reader. If you have room under each position, you can use section headings to delineate relevant activities to the position for which you are applying.

SUGGESTED SECTION HEADINGS

- Qualitative and Quantitative Research
- Project Management
- Consulting
- Writing/Editing
- Teaching
- Grants Management
- International Relations
- Policy Analysis
- Budget/Fiscal Management
- Leadership

If you have experience you wish to include that is not directly related to the job, title the category “Additional Experience.” It is imperative to highlight that you acquired transferrable skills in these positions.

Skills/Certifications

This section may include computer, foreign language, certifications and any additional skills relevant to the position. When listing foreign languages, include your proficiency level (e.g., Advanced Spanish).

Publications/Presentations/Professional Affiliations

You may include a section titled “Selected Publications/Presentations” to reference specific publications, poster presentations, or conference papers. See the *Chicago Manual of Style* for guidelines on listing publications. Only include professional affiliations if you can describe your contributions and involvement.

References

1. List three to five references on a separate document (using same font as resume).
2. Strive to use current and recent supervisors, professors, or university advisors familiar with your work. Avoid using a family member as professional references.
3. Include your name and contact information in the heading. List each reference name, title and organization, relationship to you (supervisor, professor, co-worker), email, and telephone number.
4. Only include references with your resume if requested by the employer.
5. Always notify references that they may be contacted. This is also a good time to email a copy of your resume for their reference, share your interest in the position and the organization, and confirm their current contact information.
6. Send a thank you note to all individuals who agree to serve as a reference for you.