



St. Joseph's College  
NEW YORK

OFFICE OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT  
AND ENGAGEMENT



# CAREER GUIDE

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## RÉSUMÉ WRITING

## RÉSUMÉS

Your résumé is usually your introduction to an employer. It is an individually designed document that summarizes your education, qualifications and experience as they relate to your career goals. Your résumé is your marketing brochure, showcasing those skills, achievements and qualifications that relate to the type of position you are pursuing. It should include specific descriptions that give the reader a solid picture of your achievements and capabilities. Remember, your résumé is not a biography; it is a promotional piece that is targeted toward its reader.

## TYPES OF RÉSUMÉS

The career field, job opening, graduate school or internship that you are targeting with your résumé will often determine the résumé format that you choose to utilize. Some of the basic formats are: chronological, functional, a combination of the two and curriculum vitae (CV). The most common résumé format and the one that is typically preferred by employees is a chronological résumé.

### Chronological Résumé

In a chronological résumé, your education history and work experience is included in reverse chronological order. Employers typically prefer this type of résumé because it is more straightforward. Using this format allows the reader to view your education and experiences in a way that is easy to understand. If your work experience is limited or non-existent it may be better to choose a different format.

### Functional Résumé

A functional résumé incorporates your skills, achievements and other highlights such as coursework, volunteer work, memberships and leadership. Some employers do not favor this format because it doesn't indicate relevant work experience. However, for some students and recent graduates who have a minimal amount or no work experience at all, it may be a better route to take.

### Combined Résumé

The combined format uses parts of both the chronological and functional formats. This format focuses on marketing your career accomplishments and highlights, and probably works best for those who have an established career history.

### Curriculum Vitae (CV)

A curriculum vitae or CV is often utilized by people when applying for academic, education, scientific or research positions. It is generally longer than other résumé formats and includes more details of your background and skills. Common sections in a CV are education, teaching and research experience, presentations, awards, publications and affiliations. A CV is more common among graduate students than undergraduate students.

A career counselor in the Office of Career Development and Engagement can help you decide which format is best for you.

## FORMATTING A RÉSUMÉ

It is important that your résumé looks professional, is visually appealing and reader friendly. Through a number of design elements, which include consistent patterns, balanced symmetry and font, visual appeal

can be created. The following information can be useful to achieve a consistent pattern:

- One-inch margins are recommended to balance your white space and text.
- Calibri, Arial, Times New Roman or other similar font types work well.
- Use 11- or 12-point size throughout your résumé (except for your name: 14 or 16).
- Be consistent with font and point size.
- Bold items of importance and use italics to emphasize positions and other points.
- Use the same spacing between headings and body information.
- Include your most important and relevant information in the top third (top fold) of your résumé.
- Use bullets to help the reader focus on important information.
- Be consistent with formatting of titles, locations and dates throughout your résumé.
- Print your résumé on good quality résumé paper. White or off-white is recommended.
- Résumés are typically one page in length, but exceptions can be made.

## CONTENT OF A RÉSUMÉ

All résumés typically contain sections that highlight education and work experience. At times, a profile or summary of qualifications section in the top fold is used to provide the reader with an overview of your competencies. Some people also choose to include a section of volunteering or professional involvement as well as activities and skills. Always tailor your résumé to bring out your strengths and match the details with the position you are trying to attain. Utilize keywords in various sections of your résumé to indicate that you are a good fit for the position you are seeking. Incorporate your "brand" into your résumé. The following sections are usually included in a résumé:

### Heading

Your contact information should include your name, email address and phone number. Your home address is an option.

### Education

Summarize your education in reverse order, starting with your last degree or the one that you are working on now. Include school name, city, state, degree, major, date, the degree that was received or will be conferred and honors. If your GPA is 3.0 or higher, you may choose to include it in this section of your résumé.

### Experience

This section indicates how your work experience relates to the position you are seeking. You should include relevant experiences from full-time, part-time, seasonal work, internships, field work and volunteering. For each position, include: job title (followed by dates of employment), employer, city and state. Emphasize either job titles or employers, but be consistent. Use action verbs in the correct tense to describe your achievements. Quantify your achievements wherever possible and emphasize transferable skills. It is recommended that bullets be used for each of your specific achievements.

## Skills

These are of great importance to employers. Indicate computer hardware and software skills, language skills and any other technical skills that are relevant to your search. Always include your level of proficiency for the listed skills.

## Optional Résumé Sections

Based on relevancy to the position and your individual accomplishments, the following sections may be included in your résumé.

- Profile or summary
- Certifications
- Relevant coursework
- Honors and awards
- Activities
- Leadership
- Research
- Affiliations

## GETTING STARTED ON YOUR RÉSUMÉ

The purpose of your résumé is to impress the employers and recruiters who will be making a decision on your candidacy for a position. Consider your résumé to be your key to opening doors to competitive internships and job opportunities. Your résumé must be focused on highlighting your accomplishments instead of simply listing responsibilities. If your résumé leads to an interview, your résumé has been successful.

The process of creating a résumé will take time, but the result will make it worthwhile. Seek feedback from counselors in the Office of Career Development and Engagement, faculty and from multiple working professionals in your field of interest before ever submitting it to an employer or recruiter. Here are the steps to take to create your résumé:

### Brainstorm

Create a list of your jobs, major activities, educational experiences and accomplishments during your years in college (current students or recent graduates). If you have been out of college for a period of time, include your most recent experiences. Describe each of your experiences and incorporate the skills you used in each job or activity. Choose action verbs that most accurately describe your accomplishments and try to focus on accomplishments and how you added value to the organization.

### Organize Your Information

Determine the best way to group your experiences and choose appropriate section headings. It may be beneficial to research your career field of interest and focus on responsibilities of positions in that field.

### Write a Draft

Think about your accomplishments and select action verbs to begin each of your bullet points. Also, decide how best to emphasize certain pieces of information with the use of bold type, italics and capitalization.

## Get Your Résumé Reviewed

It is important to have your résumé reviewed by a counselor in the Office of Career Development and Engagement, faculty and professionals in your field of interest.

## Polish Your Résumé

Proofread your résumé often to be sure that it is free of any spelling or grammatical errors. It often takes a few drafts to refine what you have written. Consider another meeting with a counselor to complete a final review of your résumé. Remember that your résumé will change often as you gain experience and will continue to be a work in progress.

## RÉSUMÉ TIPS

- Be honest throughout your résumé.
- Always tailor your résumé to the position you are seeking.
- Remember to incorporate your brand to indicate that you are the perfect fit for the position.
- Identify and emphasize measurable results and accomplishments with facts and figures, whenever possible.
- Be consistent in your use of headings, verbs, grammar, hyphens, indentations and bullets.
- Avoid use of pronouns (I, me, etc.) and abbreviations (except the two-letter code for states).
- Minimize use of articles (the, an, a) and prepositions (of, for, in, with).
- Check for and eliminate misspelled words, typos and grammatical errors.
- Update your résumé each time your experiences change.
- Use high-quality white or off-white résumé paper and matching envelopes.
- Create a separate references page.

## RÉSUMÉ SAMPLES

- [About.com](#)
- [Career One Stop](#)
- [Quintessential Careers](#)

## RÉSUMÉ WRITING REVIEW

The Office of Career Development and Engagement is located at SJC Long Island in O'Connor Hall, Room E301, or at SJC Brooklyn in Tuohy Hall, Room 205. We invite you to make an appointment with a member of our counseling staff to help you with any other career-related topic. Career counseling sessions are generally 30-60 minutes in length, and appointments can be scheduled by contacting the Long Island office at 631.687.1248 or the Brooklyn office at 718.940.5852.



**TRADITION. INNOVATION. EXCELLENCE.**

**SJC Long Island**

155 West Roe Boulevard  
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**ABOUT ST. JOSEPH'S COLLEGE**

Founded in 1916, St. Joseph's College is an independent, coeducational college with campuses in Brooklyn and on Long Island, in addition to SJC Online. We have a long history of providing an excellent, yet affordable, education. Our reputation has consistently earned SJC a place in the *U.S. News & World Report's* annual "America's Best Colleges" issue. We also have been highly ranked by *Forbes* and named one of New York's "Colleges of Distinction."