How to Structure a Resume

What Is a Resume?

A resume is a professional summary of your education, experience, skills, and accomplishments. Its purpose is to show an employer why you're qualified for a position and help you earn an interview. A strong resume is clear, organized, and tailored to the opportunity you're pursuing.

The Essential Resume Sections:

1. Contact Information
At the top of your resume, include:

- Full name
- Professional email address
- Phone number
- City and state
- LinkedIn profile or portfolio link, if relevant

You do not need to include your full street address, photo, age, or personal information.

2. Professional Summary (Optional)
A professional summary is a brief 2–3 sentence introduction highlighting your background, relevant strengths, and career interests. This section is especially useful when you want to connect your experience to a specific industry or position.

Example: "Business Administration student with experience in customer service, team leadership, and administrative support. Skilled in communication, problem-solving, and Microsoft Excel. Seeking an internship opportunity to apply business knowledge and develop professional experience."

Avoid generic statements such as "hardworking individual looking for a job." Focus on what you bring to the employer.

3. Education
For current students and recent graduates, education should typically appear near the top. Include:

- University name and location
- Degree and major
- Expected or actual graduation date
- Relevant coursework, honors, or academic achievements when applicable

Example:
Corban University | Salem, OR
Bachelor of Science in Business Administration Expected Graduation: May 2028

Once you have college experience, high school information is generally unnecessary unless especially relevant.

4. Professional Experience
Include relevant jobs, internships, volunteer positions, campus employment, and other experiences that demonstrate transferable skills.

For each position, list:
Job Title
Organization | Location | Dates of Employment

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Then include 2–5 bullet points describing your responsibilities, accomplishments, and contributions.

How to Write Strong Bullet Points

Start each bullet with an action verb, describe what you did, and explain the impact when possible.

Use this formula: Action Verb + Task or Responsibility + Result or Impact

Instead of: "Helped customers and answered phones."
Try: "Assisted customers with inquiries and resolved service concerns to support a positive customer experience."

Instead of: "Worked on social media."
Try: "Created and scheduled social media content to promote campus events and increase student engagement."

When possible, use numbers to show the scale or impact of your work.
Examples:

- Coordinated schedules for a team of 12 employees.
- Assisted more than 30 customers per shift.
- Organized records for 100+ student appointments.
- Only include numbers and accomplishments you can accurately support.

5. Skills
Include skills that are relevant to the position and that you can demonstrate through your experience.

Examples:
Technical Skills

- Microsoft Excel, Word, and PowerPoint
- Data entry and organization
- Social media management
- Customer relationship management (CRM)
- Graphic design or industry-specific software

Professional Skills

- Written and verbal communication
- Problem-solving
- Project coordination
- Leadership
- Customer service

Prioritize specific, demonstrable skills over a long list of general personality traits.

6. Additional Sections (Optional)
Depending on your background, you may also include:

- Leadership & Involvement: Student government, athletics, clubs, or campus leadership
- Volunteer Experience: Community service, ministry, or nonprofit involvement
- Projects: Relevant academic or independent projects
- Certifications: Industry certifications or completed training
- Awards & Honors: Academic or professional recognition

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You do not need every section. Choose the information that best supports your application.

Resume Formatting Best Practices

- Length: Aim for one page as a current student or recent graduate. Additional pages may be appropriate with substantial relevant experience.
- Font: Use a professional, easy-to-read font such as Arial, Calibri, or Aptos, generally 10–12 pt for body text.
- Layout: Use clear headings, consistent spacing, and bullet points.
- Order: List experience and education in reverse chronological order, with the most recent first.
- Design: Keep formatting simple and avoid excessive graphics, colors, and complicated layouts.
- File Format: Submit as a PDF unless the employer requests another format.
- Customization: Adjust your summary, skills, and experience bullets to reflect each position's qualifications.

Before You Submit

- My contact information is accurate and professional.
- My education and experience are clearly organized.
- My bullet points begin with strong action verbs.
- I've highlighted relevant skills and accomplishments.
- My resume reflects the position I'm applying for.
- My formatting is consistent and easy to read.
- I've checked spelling, grammar, and employment dates. I've followed the employer's submission instructions.

What If You Don't Have Much Work Experience?
You have more experience than you may think!

Employers value skills developed through:

- Class projects and presentations
- Student athletics and team involvement
- Church and community volunteering
- Campus organizations and leadership
- Part-time jobs and seasonal employment
- Internships, job shadowing, and independent projects

Focus on the responsibilities you held, the skills you developed, and the ways you contributed.

Remember: Your resume does not need to include everything you've ever done. It should highlight the experiences that best demonstrate your qualifications for the opportunity in front of you.

Need help? Book a meeting with Career Services!

careerservices@corban.edu | 503-375-7590 | Schimmel 213

CORBAN UNIVERSITY | Office of Career Services