



O'NEILL

CAREER HUB

VMOCK GUIDE BOOK

Fall 2021

What is VMock?

VMock is a 24-7 online resume-review tool, that leverages data-science, machine learning, and natural language processing to provide instant personalized feedback. When you upload your resume, the platform assesses components such as action verbs, format, and how well the 5 competencies (analytical, communication, leadership, teamwork, and initiative) are reflected in your document. It is also designed to work with resumes from many different fields across various industries.

Why Use VMock?

Make a Standout Resume, Any Time, Any Day

The platform is available 24 hours/day, 7 days/week to create or improve your resume.

Get Detailed Feedback to Beat the Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS)

Line-by-line feedback is given on 100+ points to pass the ATS review.

Raise Your Score with Personalized Advising for the O’Neill School

Your resume is systematically scored against O’Neill students who have similar interests and academic backgrounds.

VMock Provides System Feedback and Targeted Feedback.

System Feedback

VMock will break your score down into three categories:

- Impact
- Presentation
- Competency

The categories are on a 1 – 30 scale. Green indicates a high score, yellow means there is some room for improvement, and red means a fair amount of work is needed to improve the quality of your resume.

Targeted Feedback

This allows you to scan your resume bullet-by-bullet and make specific changes to maximize the bullet’s value.

You can upload your resume for feedback a maximum of 10 times per year. Additionally, while VMock will score your resume based on best practices in resumes, the goal is not to reach a score of 100. The goal is to get to the green zone.

SMART Editor Tool

The SMART Editor Tool allows you to edit an existing resume or create a new resume using the O’Neill template. If you are using an existing document, convert it to the template in VMock. The system will automatically correct any spacing or layout issues.

How to Use VMock

1. Go to <https://www.vmock.com/oneillcareerhub>
2. Login using your Indiana University email (username@iu.edu).
3. Upload the best version of your resume in a pdf to the Resume module.
4. Click “View Detailed Feedback” to explore the different scoring elements, and hover over highlighted portions to view detailed feedback.
5. (Optional) Use the SMART Resume Editor to automatically update your formatting and make edits to your resume. This feature is not recommended for students using unique or creative templates/formats.
6. Make the recommended changes and upload your revised resume until you achieve a **score of 86**.
7. **You are allowed 10 uploads/academic year.** If you use 3 and have not reached a score of 86, come to the Career Studio to troubleshoot.

Note Important Additional Information on VMock.

- VMock is a starting point for resume building and is not a replacement for career advising. It will help you refine your resume to the point where it makes coaching appointments and the Career Studio more productive and meaningful.
- Students have 10 opportunities to **upload** a resume or **rescore** a resume each academic year. We advise that you use these uploads judiciously.
- For students using unique or creative resume formats, we recommend making changes to your resume on your original file, not through the SMART Resume Editor. VMock is only able to process PDF files that were created using conventional word processing applications such as Microsoft Word.

For Maximum Benefit, Check Out VMock’s In-App Guides.

- Within System Feedback, guides are provided for all elements of the Impact and Competencies modules. There’s also a guide withing Bullet-Level Feedback for additional help on writing strong bullet points.
- To access the guides, simply click on the “see guidance” button wherever it appears.

Make as Many Changes as You Can Before Uploading Your Resume Again.

- You get only 10 uploads an academic year, so if you only make small changes each time you’ll quickly run out.

What Should I Do After Using VMock?

- Have your resume reviewed by human eyes in the Career Studio. You need to be sure you appeal to the human who will review your resume after you pass the ATS.
- Keep using VMock as you apply for internships and jobs. You have 10 uploads an academic year; use them to help you be more a competitive candidate.

Tips for Success

- VMock’s standards are very high and strict. Use the O’Neill School templates provided to help increase your Presentation score. Focus on the practical feedback to make your resume more competitive.
- VMock is not intended to replace real-person feedback. Use VMock first and incorporate the feedback, bring your updated resume to the Studio for a review that will focus more on substance and nuance.
- Access the in-app guides for maximum benefit. There are guides for all elements of the Impact and Competencies modules and a guide within Bullet-Level Feedback. Click the “see guidance” button wherever it appears.
- Take notes on a hardcopy of the resume you upload or have your resume open on another screen so you can make the recommended changes.
- **Make as many changes as you can before you upload your resume again. If you use 3 uploads and have not reached a score of 86 come to the Career Studio for help troubleshooting.**

Step-by-Step Guide

1. When you log-in
 - See your score, with breakdown by Impact, Presentation, and Competencies
 - Templates and guidelines are available at the top of the page.
 - The Upload button with your number of remaining uploads is at the top (you have only 10 for the entire academic year).
 - You can view feedback on any previous uploads from this page.
2. Click on “View Detailed Feedback”
 - The Summary Page shows all 3 areas with color-coded breakdown of scoring areas.
 - Click “View Detailed Feedback” or select “System Feedback” top left-hand corner of page.

System Feedback

- For each of 3 sections (Impact, Presentation, Competencies) click on categories on left of the page.
- Hover over red highlighted parts of resume for more feedback.

Targeted Feedback

- See specific feedback on each section (Education, Experience sections, etc.) of your resume.
- Review individual accomplishment statements with recommendations for improving them.
- Click at the top to see how your resume compares to the O’Neill School community.

Help for Specific Sections

IMPACT

The Impact scoring module is a style guide for your bullet points. Here's what you should do:

- Start with a focus on what you did (Action-Oriented)
- Indicate the tools, techniques, and skills used; specify the amount and frequency of what you did and produced (Specifics)
- Avoid repetitive language (Overusage)
- Leave out unnecessary words while still maximizing meaning and detail (Avoided Words)

Action-Oriented

Begin bullet points with action verbs.

- Starting with phrases like “Responsible for...” or “Policy research...” will get flagged as a problem.

Use action verbs that are specific rather than generic.

- Starting with verbs like “worked” or “helped” will get flagged by VMock as weak verbs. For better action verbs, identify what the work or help consisted of.
- Use the VMock guides in the Impact module for examples of specific, action-oriented bullets.
- When verbs get flagged on your resume as weak, VMock's examples of strong verbs aren't always the best fit. Refer to the Action Verbs List on oneillcareerhub.indiana.edu; that list might be more helpful.

Specifics

- VMock loves numbers, so try to quantify everything you can. If you can't be precise, ranges and estimates are fine. Keep in mind, quantifying something is not only about amount (how much) but also frequency (how often).
- Include information about tools, techniques, and skills used to get something done.
- When listing technical or language skills, include information about your level of ability.

Avoided Words

- Good resumes are concise and use as few words as possible to express the accomplishment. So VMock flags articles (a, the) as words that are generally safe to delete. Try doing that and check whether the meaning is still clear.
- Avoid pronouns (I, we, me, our). Leaving these out is generally accepted practice.
- VMock flags certain adverbs (successfully, effectively, independently, etc.) as filler words that pad your bullet points without adding substance. For example, “Successfully completed all assignments” is not more impactful than “Completed all assignments.”

PRESENTATION

The Presentation module in VMock evaluates your resume's layout and formatting of information. This is where students can usually improve the most and do so pretty easily. The following are common things that VMock flags as problems.

Avoid stock resume templates that come with MS Word or other applications.

- These templates use unconventional design elements—colors, images, layouts, and text formatting—and will trigger multiple error flags. A simple, straight-forward layout, that is scannable and easy to read is preferred.
- People who read a lot of resumes prefer a simple layout because it's easier for them to navigate and find the information that matters most to them. The O'Neill template is designed based on best practices shared by recruiters.
- Writing your own resume isn't just about a single document, it's about learning how to frame and present your experience in a persuasive way. This is a general skill you'll apply in different ways, over and over throughout your career.

For creative resumes such as graphic design: focus on content feedback, not presentation feedback.

- The unconventional design elements of a creative resume will result in a low Presentation score.
- Feedback for Impact and Competencies, along with Bullet-Level Feedback, will still be valid and useful, so focus on that to improve how you describe your experience.
- It is best practice to have two versions of your resume, one with a conventional design and layout (such as the O'Neill template).

Number of Pages

- One page is the norm for most industries and job functions, so VMock is set for that length for most types of resumes.
- Graduate students may have two pages. The second page should have a header that includes your name and page number (see O'Neill template for example).
 - Add a header on the second page only:
 - Double click the header area.
 - Select *Different First Page*. (*Different First Page* is a toggle; be sure to turn it on.) Content of the header on the first page is removed.
 - Select **Close Header and Footer** or press Esc to exit.
- Resumes are accidentally created with an extra page of blank space at the end. This will make a one-page resume look to VMock like two pages (and a two-pager look like three). As a result, the resume can get flagged as too long. Check your pdf to be sure you haven't included an extra blank page.
- Note that federal resumes are much longer and VMock is not set to review those at this time.

Experience Sections

- Your section headings should highlight a specific competency followed by the word “Experience.” For example, “Campaign Experience,” “Management Experience,” or “Field Experience.” You may also use “Fellowships and Awards” or “Honors and Awards.”
- It’s possible that you have a section heading that gets flagged but in your considered judgment is what works best for you. In that case, keep what you have and move on to other suggested changes.

Date Formatting

VMock is set for the date formats recommended by the Career Hub. The requirements are strict because inconsistencies and not-so-best practices in date formats are the most common we see. Some common issues with date formats:

- The date used for Indiana University should be your expected graduation date, with no start date. This differs from other experiences, where you list a date range from start to finish.
- For date ranges, use space-dash-space formatting. For example, “June – August 2019” is allowed, while “June–August 2019” and “June– August 2019” is not.
- The same style of dash (shorter hyphen or slightly longer en-dash) must be used consistently throughout.
- VMock is set for only one way to abbreviate months: first three letters of the month with no period. For example, “Sep – Dec 2017” is allowed, but “Sept. – Dec. 2017” is not.
- All dates must use consistent formatting and must be right aligned on your resume.

Here are the allowed formats, sorted by type of information.

Education Section

Graduation Date

- **Month YYYY**
For example: May 2021 or December 2022
- Do not include “Expected Graduation Date” before the month and year. It is understood that is your expected graduation date and is not necessary to write.
- Do not include a start date; the range of your attendance is not necessary, only your graduation month and year.

Study Abroad

- **Month YYYY or Season YYYY**
For example: June 2020 or Summer 2020

Experience Sections

- Month YYYY – Month YYYY
- Month YYYY – Present
- Month YYYY
- Mon YYYY – Mon YYYY
- Season YYYY

Fonts

- We recommend the following fonts: Times New Roman, Arial, Calibri, Helvetica, Cambria, Georgia, and Garamond

Section Spacing

- Add a line of blank space before every section. Without that blank space, the document gets crowded, making it hard to read.
- Make sure line spacing between experiences within a section is consistent.
- For readability, we recommend having some blank space between experiences within the same section.
- Be consistent throughout, inconsistent spacing will cause a big point reduction.

Bullet Check

- Use standard black-dot bullets for describing your experience.
- Bullets are preferred by people who read a lot of resumes because they make the resume easy to scan.
- The Bullet-Level Feedback feature of VMock evaluates each bullet point individually and will find your statements with the bullet point.
- Bullets should not be used by the organization name or position title, only by the accomplishment statements describing your experience within the organization.
- Avoid non-standard bullet styles (arrows, dashes, other symbols). Only the standard, black-dot style is allowed.
- Make sure all bullets are indented the same amount in all sections, so they line up vertically.

Section Specific: Your Heading (Contact Information)

Name

- Font size should be bigger than the rest of the text in your resume.
- Your name must be in bold.
- You may use all capital letters for your name.
- You can center your contact information or left-align it.

Address

- Including a street address is optional.

Email

- Include only your Indiana University email.
- Any of the following formats are accepted: *@indiana.edu*; *@iu.edu*; *@iupui.edu*; *@umail.iu.edu*

Phone Number

- Provide a phone number that you answer.

LinkedIn

- Provide your personalized URL for your LinkedIn profile.

Section Specific: Education

University

- Indiana University is the first university listed and should be in bold.
- “O’Neill School of Public and Environmental Affairs” is on the line under Indiana University.
- If you are not yet admitted, list the school you are currently a member of or if you have not yet declared a major put “University Division” on that line.

Degree and Major(s)/Minor(s)

- Spell out your degree: example: *Bachelor of Science in Public Affairs* NOT *BSPA*.
- Your GPA should show 2 decimal places out of a 4.00 scale: example: 3.24/4.00.
- List your majors and minors separately.
- Undergraduates may include their high school information but only until sophomore year.
- Listing course work is optional. If you do include courses, do not list general education classes. Instead list courses that will demonstrate you have developed a specialized skill set or knowledge.

Spell Check

VMock flags acronyms, jargon, and organization names (e.g., “InfoSys”) as spelling errors (or possible errors).

- If you know the word is okay, hover over it and click “Add to Dictionary” and it won’t be flagged as an error the next time you upload your resume.

COMPETENCIES

The Competencies scoring module looks for evidence of five skills that employers commonly look for when making hiring decisions.

- VMock scans all content—not only the experience described in your bullet points, but also position titles, degree program, any courses, languages, software programs, and so on.
- Guides are provided in the Competencies module for all five skills. Use those guides to see how each skill is defined, different ways it is demonstrated, and several example bullets.

Bullet-Level Feedback

Bullet-Level Feedback evaluates each bullet point, one by one.

- It uses the same criteria as the Impact module, checking for action-oriented language, lots of specifics, overused words, and unnecessary filler words.
- When you improve your bullets based on the feedback and guides for Impact, this will improve your bullet-level feedback at the same time.

What To Do If Your Resume Is Too Long

Make sure you haven't accidentally added an extra page with blank spaces to your document. This will look like two pages to VMock and will be flagged as too long.

Step One: Use Space Efficiently

Margins

- Margins can be smaller for resumes than for other documents.
- Narrowest option: 0.5" all around.
- If space is available, use smaller margins on top & bottom, larger on left & right.

Contact information

- Your contact info can be combined on one line, two at most.
- Add a separator (not a comma) between items for readability. Examples:
email • phone • city • LinkedIn
email | phone | city | LinkedIn

Line spacing: don't over space

- Spacing between items in same section: only 1.5 line spacing, not double space.
- For all lines within the same item—organization, position, bullets—use single-space.

Font size: don't go bigger than needed

- The default font size of 12 points is larger than needed. 11-point size works for all font styles.

Step Two: Reduce Content

Sections: options to reduce

- Combine separate sections into one (e.g., Activities & Community Service)
- Change one section into a sub-section of another (e.g., put Honors & Awards within Education)

Length of bullets: options to reduce

- For bullets barely over one line: re-phrase to fit on one line
- For two short bullets: combine to make one, single-line bullet

Options to remove content

- Eliminate less relevant bullets for experiences with more than four bullets.
- Older items that are redundant to more recent ones
- High school information and experiences
- Less relevant to position applying for
- Less impressive positions or achievements
- Positions with less responsibility
- Oldest experience

Request Network Feedback

Network Feedback allows you to solicit input on your resume from people you know. To do this, we recommend several important steps to get the most out of your request.

- Ask for advice from people you trust and have talked to about your career path. If you wouldn't ask someone for help in person, then you shouldn't ask them through VMock.
- Professors you know well, friends, family, mentors, and prior supervisors or co-workers can all be great choices if you would normally ask them in person for career advice.

Talk to the person before asking through VMock

- Before you send your request through VMock, ask the person if they are willing to review your resume.
- If they say yes, let them know that they will receive an email request with editing instructions. They will be able to review your resume through VMock without having to sign in or sign up for an account.

Craft a customized message in VMock

- When you select the Network Feedback option, enter the name and email address of the person you're requesting feedback from. You will then have space to write a message.
- Explain what your goals are for using the resume, and what you are looking for them to focus on. This helps them give you more precise advice.

Give them a reasonable deadline for when you would like to receive advice

- If you have a deadline that you are trying to meet, let your reviewer know. It is important that you give them a reasonable amount of time to provide thoughtful advice and also enough time for you to make changes before a deadline. **DO NOT ASK ANYONE FOR IMMEDIATE FEEDBACK.**

Thank your reviewer

- Gratitude is an important part of the internship and job search. Once you get feedback, it is important to acknowledge the help.
- You can do this outside of VMock either via email or in person. Sending a thank you card or letter through the postal service is a nice additional touch.

Sample Request for Feedback:

Dear Professor Jones,

Thank you so much for agreeing to review my resume through VMock. As I mentioned in your office hours, I am applying to a study abroad program where I will be taking two classes in sociology and interning 10 hours per week at a local nonprofit. I hope to highlight my previous nonprofit work, my communication skills, and ability to take initiative. My application is due in three weeks so if you could please provide me with some advice through VMock in two weeks by (DATE), so that I have enough time to make changes, I would appreciate it.

Thank you, Sarah Bentley

VMock FAQ

How do I access VMock?

To get started, head to <https://www.vmock.com/oneillcareerhub> and login with your Indiana University username and password.

How can I learn more about using VMock?

After you log in, you can click the “Take a Tour” button to help you learn how to use the platform.

Why isn't VMock working in my web browser?

For the best experience, use Google Chrome or Mozilla Firefox.

Why is a PDF required when uploading into VMock?

PDF is a universal file format that provides a standard viewing experience across many devices and software. Because VMock operates similarly to many Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS) that job seekers encounter with employers, PDFs are required to ensure that your resume information is processed accurately.

How do I convert my resume to a PDF?

In Microsoft Word, convert your resume by clicking on File and Save As, then select the dropdown menu for Save as Type to choose PDF and Best for Printing.

In Google Docs, click on File and Download to choose PDF Document as your file type.

It is generally not recommended to use other software (e.g., Adobe InDesign, Adobe Photoshop, Canva) to create traditional resumes, due to PDF compliance issues with Applicant Tracking Systems.

I made all of the edits VMock suggested, why don't I have a 100% score?

While Vmock will score your resume based on best practices in resumes, the goal is not for each student to get a 100% score. The goal is to get a green zone score.

VMock gave me a green zone score, but I was not offered an interview to the position I applied to. Why not?

Using VMock does not guarantee that you will receive an interview or job offer. The VMock scored resume is the first step in a successful application process. There are many factors in a hiring decision that we may not know, such as how competitive the rest of the applicant pool was for that position. This is a good time to assess what skills you would like to develop further to compete at a higher level and work toward developing them. The Career Studio team can help you to explore this area further.

What is the difference between "System Feedback" and "Targeted Feedback"?

System Feedback breaks down your resume score into three categories: Impact, Presentation, and Competency-- each graded on a scale of 0 to 30. The quality of your resume in each category is based on a color system: green indicates a high score, yellow means there is some room for improvement, and red means a lot of work is needed.

Targeted Feedback function allows you to scan the resume bullet-by-bullet and make specific changes to maximize that bullet's impact. You receive feedback on topics such as the use of action verbs, bullet length, and qualifying/quantifying your statement.

What do the Impact, Presentation, and Competencies scores mean?

The Impact category measures how effectively you articulate your experience to catch a recruiter's attention.

The Presentation category assesses its readability and overall organization.

The Competency category examines how well you showcase five major transferable skills (analysis, communication, leadership, teamwork, and initiative) through your experience.

Is there a limit to how many times a student can upload a resume to VMock for review?

Students may upload a **maximum of 10 resumes** for review per year.

I tried to upload my resume, but I received an error message. What did I do wrong?

To successfully upload your resume to VMock, it must be:

- in PDF form
- not be password or copyright protected
- not include any graphic content
- only 1 page in length (make sure you don't have an extra space at the bottom that created a second page in the pdf). Note: graduate students can upload a 2-page resume.

Can I edit the uploaded resume within VMock?

Yes! SMART Editor allows you to do that.

Your VMock score is not a guarantee of a specific outcome with a recruiter.