

## Tailor, target, and optimize every resume

- Customize your resume for each job by weaving in keywords and skills found in the job posting, especially in your Skills and Experience sections. Use the employer's language so both humans and Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS) can spot your fit quickly.
- Reorder and prioritize sections to spotlight your most relevant experiences and skills for each application. What you spent most of your time doing in your last role may not be the most relevant part of that experience to highlight for a new role – keep the focus on the most relevant skills/experiences.
- Don't let AI write your resume for you – instead, use it as a brainstorming tool to help you understand what skills are sought, and what experiences you can highlight.
- Proofread your resume by reading it aloud and having someone else review it. Catching typos and unclear language is as important as any achievement you list.

## Format for clarity, simplicity, and Applicant Tracking Software (ATS) success

- Do not include personal information such as age, marital status, religion, or a photo. These are not required or expected on U.S. resumes.
- Use a clean, single-column layout with standard fonts (e.g., Calibri or Aptos), clear headings, and consistent spacing. Avoid graphics, tables, and fancy designs that can confuse ATS and distract human readers.
- Use bolding strategically to draw attention to your name, section headers, and key qualifications, but avoid over-formatting.
- Save your resume as a PDF with a clear filename (e.g., "Your Name Employer Name Resume") to preserve formatting and make it easy for recruiters to find.

## Build your resume around clear takeaways

- Decide on the key takeaways you want employers to remember about you in terms of what you bring to each role you apply for, and make sure that you reinforce these throughout the different sections of the resume.
- As you write, ask yourself what you want a recruiter to say about you after reading your resume, and use your content to guide them to those conclusions.

## Make your impact tangible in your experience sections using Skill-Context-Outcome (SCO) bullets

- Start every bullet with a strong action verb that matches the job's requirements, then add context and finish with a measurable outcome.
  - **For example: "Conducted qualitative research on student retention strategies, analyzing data from 50 interviews and presenting a 10-page report to faculty."**
- Quantify your results wherever possible. Numbers, time periods, and concrete outcomes make your contributions tangible – allowing the reader to picture your skills in action in their mind.
  - **For example: "Re-envisioned the department's targeted email strategy, resulting in a 75% increase in the open rate and a 60% increase in the click-through rate over a six-month period."**
- Highlight People, Project, and Problem-solving skills by showing how you collaborated, managed deadlines, or solved tough challenges in ways that matter to the target employer.
  - **For example: "Led a committee of partners from 4 campus offices to design and deliver a week-long series of professional development workshops for 250 incoming masters' students."**

## Not sure where to start? Here are some sample AI prompts:

1. Using this specific job description, review my research experience bullet and suggest three alternative versions that highlight transferable skills for industry roles. Focus on incorporating keywords and language from the job posting.
2. Analyze the attached job description and identify the most important keywords and skills. Provide examples of how I can rephrase my academic achievements and experiences to align with these requirements, offering at least three bullet point options for each.
3. Based on this job description, review my involvement in student organizations or leadership roles. Suggest multiple bullet points that demonstrate relevant skills such as project management, teamwork, or event planning, using language that matches the employer's needs.
4. Using the language and priorities from this job description, help me brainstorm several ways to describe my experience collaborating on interdisciplinary projects, ensuring each example highlights skills valued by the employer.
5. Using the attached job description, generate three different summary statements for my resume. Each should clearly communicate my value as a graduate student or postdoc, drawing themes from my attached, customized resume, and should leverage relevant keywords and concepts from the job posting.

## What people say about resumes

- Up to **75% of large employers use ATS software** to filter resumes (*and this number will only increase!*). To avoid automatic rejection, include **keywords from the job posting** and use a simple, standard format.
- You may hear that recruiters spend an average of **just 7 seconds** on an initial resume scan. This reinforces the need to ensure that your **most relevant points** are instantly visible.
- **Typos and formatting errors** are among the top reasons resumes from similarly qualified candidates are discarded. Attention to detail is non-negotiable.
- Graduate students and postdocs often **undersell their transferable skills**. Instead of just listing your academic titles, describe how your research, teaching, or project management experience **demonstrate skills** that are valued by employers.

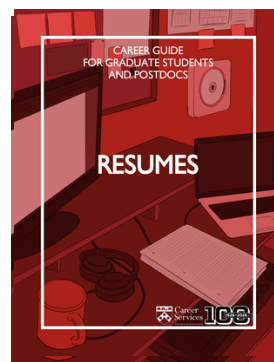
# Resume resources

## Resources for Everyone!

- ["How to write a resume" page on CS website](#)
- [Schedule a resume review appointment](#)
- [Submit your resume for review \(undergrads only\)](#)
- [Resume Workshop playlist on the Penn Career Services YouTube Channel](#)
- [Vault Guide to resumes](#)
- [Targeted Resume](#) - A tool for matching keywords from job descriptions with your resume
- [Quick resume/cover letter content and formatting advice](#)
- [Career Services action verb list](#)

## Resources for Grad Students/Postdocs

- [Resume Guide](#)
- [PhD Career Training Platform](#) - Resume advice for PhDs and postdocs
- [Beyond Graduate School](#) - Resume advice for Master's students
- [Resume Guide](#) and [Cover Letter Guide](#) for Design students



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