

10 QUICK TIPS TO CREATING A RESUME FOR GRADUATE SCHOOL ADMISSION

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1. LIMIT THE RESUME TO ONE/TWO PAGES

Be concise and to the point. Make **all** the words count. Your resume should be a series of fragments – avoid using complete sentences. Your resume should **NOT** contain the words “I”, “me”, or “my”. The phrases “etc.” and “responsibilities include” are redundant and unnecessary. Use specific descriptions and think relevance. Remember: Your resume is not your autobiography – it’s about what you’ve got that the graduate school is seeking!

2. CONSISTENCY THROUGHOUT THE RESUME IS IMPORTANT. THIS APPLIES TO:

- Spacing before and after headings
- Bullet styles and indents
- Font size and style
- Use of formatting – bold, italics, underlining, all caps
- Format of dates

3. ACCURACY COUNTS

Your resume should be completely error free. Double and triple check typed information for accuracy. It is highly recommended that you have someone else review your resume to point out errors you may have overlooked.

4. DON'T USE RESUME TEMPLATES OR WIZARDS

- They're inconsistent.
- They don't like change. So, it's difficult to make updates to your resume.
- They don't always include headings that are effective for graduate school consideration.
- Your resume will look like many others; it won't “stand out in a crowd”.

5. FORMATTING YOUR RESUME

- **Margins:** 1 inch margins are ideal, but they can range from ½ inch – 1 inch. Be consistent all the way around to give your resume an organized look.
- **Font size/style:** Font size should range between 10 – 12 points; the style should be professional looking and be used consistently throughout the resume.
- **Bullets:** Bullets should be used to describe responsibilities and accomplishments. They give your resume the illusion that information is concise and to the point. (Paragraphs make the resume look “wordy”). Begin each bullet with an action verb.
- **Paper:** Print your resume on high quality paper (not photocopy quality) in a professional color.

6. INFORMATION SHOULD APPEAR IN ORDER OF IMPORTANCE

List most important information first, followed by least important information. This applies to the resume as a whole, as well as to the individual sections within the resume. Dates are less important – they should be listed on the right side of the page; not the left. Note: You do need to be careful and also follow the rules – and place information in reverse chronological order (most current information first.)

7. IMPORTANT INFORMATION REGARDING THE DIFFERENT SECTIONS OF YOUR RESUME:

- **Objective:** Short and concise; to the point. But don't limit yourself too much.
Example: "Graduate admission in psychology program with opportunity to serve as research assistant in the Department of Kinesiology or Linguistics and Human Development"
- **Education:** Include Degree, Major, Minor, Concentration, Anticipated Graduation, Institution, City, State. Include most current experiences first, with most important information first. High school is ancient history; don't include it. Dates of attendance are not important. What's important is your expected date to obtain the degree.
**You may also want to include subheadings under education titled "Honors" or "Related Coursework". Honors is a good location to list items such as Dean's list, cum laude graduate, scholarships received, honor societies/fraternities, etc.*
- **Computer Skills:** Include Languages, Operating Systems, Applications
- **Certifications:** Include relevant certifications you have obtained or are in the process of obtaining (include dates completed or anticipated dates of completion)
- **Experience:** Separate into relevant categories that work for you. Remember, experiences can be paid or unpaid. Different headings you may use include: Internships, Related Experience, Research Projects, Community Service, Campus Leadership, Professional Development, Study Abroad, Laboratory Skills, Presentations/Publications, Conferences Attended, Professional Memberships, and Additional Experience.

8. PERSONAL INFORMATION IS IRRELEVANT

What you do in your spare time, the music you listen to, your marital status, number of children, sexual orientation, religion, political affiliation, birth date, age, etc. is none of the graduate school's business. If it is not related, don't include it!

9. BE POLITICALLY CORRECT

- Avoid gender-specific terms such as "freshman", "salesman", "chairman", etc.
- Avoid slang terminology. Use words related to the industry/graduate program.

10. ITEMS TO AVOID IN YOUR RESUME

- **Abbreviations:** The only exception is the use of the two-letter state abbreviation (both letters are capitalized). Abbreviations are considered short cuts. If you're willing to take short cuts on your resume, are you going to take short cuts in your graduate program?
- **Overdone Graphics:** They make your resume look "cluttered" and unprofessional.