Resumes

PDCO Career Resources

At this point in your career as a postdoctoral fellow or PhD candidate, you likely already have a curriculum vitae (CV). As you prepare to apply for positions outside of the academy, you will need to convert your CV into a resume. Where your CV is a full record of your academic accomplishments, a resume should only contain information that is of interest to your prospective employer. The chart below explains some of the key functional differences between resumes and CVs.

	Resume	CV
What is it?	Concise summary of your accomplishments that is tailored for every application	Comprehensive list of your entire scientific career, generally not tailored for each application
When do I use it?	Non-academic job applications	Academic job search, fellowship applications, postdoc applications,
Length	1-3 pages	5+ pages

Academics typically only have one version of their CV that they will use to apply for academic positions, fellowships, and grants. When on the non-academic market, however, you must create a specialized resume that is tailored to **EACH** job to which you planning to apply. A generic resume template that you send out to multiple employers will quickly be transferred to the 'no' pile before it is even fully considered.

Resumes will first be screened by hiring managers and human resources professionals, not research scientists. It is important to remember that the initial reviewer of your application will be responsible for assessing applications from hundreds of qualified applicants and will look over your resume for less than thirty seconds. For this reason, your resume must be easy to **skim.** In order to get through the first round of review, you need to quickly show your potential employer that you fill the minimum requirements for the **SPECIFIC** position to which you are applying.

It is important that your resume follows a consistent format that is visually appealing, easy to read, and provides a clear, concise story that explains why you are **UNIQUELY** qualified for the

position you are applying for. You should use **bold** to draw attention to words in your resume that match **keywords** in the job description.

Three Types of Resumes:
There are three approaches you can take in constructing your resume:
- **Chronological**: Starts by listing your work history in reverse chronological order. Preferred by employers.
  - Excellent for applicants who have a strong and progressive work history relevant to the position.
- **Functional**: Focuses on your skills and experience rather than your work history.
  - This type of resume is excellent for applicants who are changing careers or for those who have gaps in their work history.
- **Hybrid**: Lists your skills and experience first, followed by your employment history.
  - This type of resume allows you to highlight the experience that fits the position AND includes the chronological work order employers prefer.

Many postdocs and graduate students who choose to pursue non-academic careers will use the 'hybrid' approach to writing their resumes, because the hybrid approach allows them to effectively relate their skills and qualifications while also quickly providing resume reviewers with information they require about their professional work history. **Arrange an appointment with PDCO to discuss which resume approach will work best for you.**

How to Tailor Your Resume to the Job Advertisement
The job advertisement will tell you everything you need to know about how to appropriately tailor your resume. The first (and most important) thing you should do when preparing to apply for a position, therefore, is to **carefully read the job description.** The description will outline the minimum and preferred qualifications for the position. It will also give you a sense of what your responsibilities and duties will be in your new job. Before you start tailoring your resume, ask yourself the following questions:

- Do I meet the position's minimum qualifications?
  - If I do not meet the minimum qualifications, will the employer accept equivalent or similar experience?
- Do I meet the position's preferred qualifications?
  - If I do not meet all of the preferred qualifications, which ones do I meet? Which preferred qualifications indicate my 'fit' with the position and highlight my ability to carry out the job's tasks?
- What will my primary tasks and responsibilities be in the position to which I am applying?
  - Do I have any experience carrying out similar tasks or responsibilities in my prior work or professional experience that I can emphasize in my resume?

It is essential that you show your prospective employer that you meet the position's minimum qualifications. If you do not meet the minimum qualifications, you may want to consider whether or not this position will be the best 'fit' for you. The minimum qualifications of a job description are an indication of your preparedness to start your new position successfully.

Resume Bullet Points

Bullet points are your way of quickly and effectively telling resume reviewers the story of your professional history. They are brief, no longer than one sentence descriptions of your most impressive professional accomplishments that **draw from keywords in the job advertisement.**

Your bullet points should use **'action verbs'** (e.g. researched, developed, investigated, extracted, etc.) to describe the active role you took in completing a task or solving a problem.

The **STAR method** is an approach that can be used to help resume writers develop more effective resume bullet points. Each bullet point using the STAR method should address the following points:

- **S- Situation**
  - Describe the **situation** and provide the reader with the context they need to understand your role.
- **T- Task**
  - Outline what your major **task** or responsibility was.
- **A- Action**
  - Describe the **action(s)** you took to accomplish the task.
- **R- Result**
  - What was the tangible **result** of your action? What did you accomplish?

Example job task not using STAR Method:
"Developed a safety protocol for use in labs in the Chemistry department."

Same job task using the STAR Method:
"(Situation) In collaboration with departmental faculty and graduate students, (Action) developed (Task) a lab safety protocol for the Chemistry department that has (Result) been adopted by 60% of the labs over the past year."

Professional Summary/Career highlights

Emphasize your 'fit' for the position first by outlining the minimum and preferred qualifications in your 'Professional Summary.' Your professional summary/career highlights should be your first major section in your resume underneath your header where the hiring manager will quickly see it. It should include:

- Broad statement of who you are targeted to and utilizing keywords from the job advertisement
- 4-6 bullet points outlining your most impressive technical or scientific accomplishments, targeted to and utilizing keywords from the job advertisement

- Summary of hard skills (programming languages, scientific techniques, etc.) that show that you meet the minimum and (hopefully) some of the preferred qualifications for the position
- At least one bullet point describing your soft and transferrable skills (teamwork, collaboration, etc.)

Example executive summary bullet points:
- Molecular Biologist with 8 years of experience designing and executing microbial pathogenesis experiments.
- Published 6 first author and 3 co-author manuscripts in high-impact scientific journals.
- Utilized CRISPR/Cas9 technology to identify and study mammalian genes that influence host susceptibility toward chronic infection; proficient in next generation sequencing technologies.
- Results-oriented leader: co-founded 76-member science outreach program that garnered $15K in funding and served 450 students in 2015.

Formatting
- 1-3 pages in length. If you have a PhD, your resume should be at least two pages.
  - Consulting resumes are the exception, typically these should only be one page. See PDCO if you have questions about resume length.
- Use a professional font (such as Times New Roman, Arial, Calibri) with at least 11 pt. font.
- Resume Sections:
  - **Contact information/Header:**
    - Name, followed by PhD (where relevant)
    - Address (home or work)
    - Email address (make sure it is professional)
      - If you are unable to use your Hopkins e-mail, create a professional e-mail using your first and last name)
    - Phone number
      - Have a professional voicemail message
- **Professional Summary/Career Highlights:**
  - Quickly demonstrate match between position requirements and your qualifications by using key words from the job advertisement
  - **Education:**
    - Depending on the job, this can be moved to the second page, especially if it is a position that doesn't require a PhD
    - List: University, location, degree obtained, date of degree
  - **Professional Experience:**
    - Include position title, institution or name of employer, dates of employment
    - 3-5 bullet points that explain your responsibilities using the STAR method (see above)
    - Utilize keywords from job advertisement in constructing your bullet points

- Other experience that could be relevant (and separated into new categories): Leadership, Volunteer, Research, Teaching, Mentoring, Leadership and Supervision, Industry, Community Service, Writing, Business
- Include substantive bullet points for each category, wherever relevant
  - **Relevant Papers and Presentations:**
    - Applicants should only include full references to academic papers and presentations when they are **relevant** for the position for which they are applying
  - **Awards & Honors**
  - **Skills & Certifications**
    - Only include skills and certifications not outlined in your Professional Summary
  - **Foreign Languages**

The DON'TS of Resumes

- Do not use the same resume for multiple positions, HR professionals will notice if you failed to take the time to tailor your application for their employer.
- Avoid highly stylized resumes; resumes are sometimes scanned in via computers and stylized formatting can cause issues.
- You are not required to include a photo, birthday, marital status, height or weight in US resumes.
- Do not use narrative bullet points that are more than 1-2 sentences in length, they will not be read by busy resume reviewers.
- Do not include an objective statement. The employer knows your 'objective' is to get the position you are applying for. Instead, use a Professional Summary to indicate your 'fit' for that position and highlight your major accomplishments.
- Postdocs should not be listed in your Education section but under Professional or Work Experience.

Other helpful resources

- [NIH 'Guide to Resumes and Curriculum Vitae'](#)
- [Harvard 'Resumes & Cover Letters for PhD Students'](#)
- [UCSF 'Resumes for Industry scientist job applications'](#)
- ['Job-search basics: how to convert a CV into a resume'](#)
- ['10 Things Smart PhDs Do NOT Put on Their Industry Résumés'](#)