

RESUME GUIDE

SUNY Potsdam
Career Planning, Sisson Hall 106
Phone (315) 267-2344 Fax: (315) 267-2342
Homepage: WWW.Potsdam.edu/career

- See the Career Planning "Calendar" bulletin board, in the Career Planning Office, for information on workshops.
- See the "Career Student Computer" bulletin board, in the Career Planning Office, for information on resume printing and using resume templates.

WHY A RESUME?

- The resume is an essential part of the job search process. It is used by employers as a screening tool. From your resume, the employer will decide whether or not to grant you an interview.
- This is your marketing piece. The resume is all the employer knows about you. It is crucial that you show ALL the skills you have to offer a particular employer. Match your resume with the job skills and experiences that are required for the job.

WHAT IS A RESUME SUPPOSED TO DO?

- Serve as a written product that summarizes your experiences, abilities and future capabilities.
- Market you to employers and persuade employers to invite you for an interview.
- Act as a guide for the interviewer, prompting questions about your experiences and abilities.

TIPS BEFORE YOU START

- Make an inventory of your background. Use one of the sample resume formats and go through step-by-step, listing your experiences, educational background, accomplishments, and skills.
- Focus on content during the initial stage rather than being concerned with having your format or wording perfect.

YOUR NAME

College:
Your Mailing Address
City, State Zip
Phone

Home :
Your Mailing Address
City, State Zip
Phone

(section 1)

OBJECTIVE
(section 2)

OPTIONAL BUT HIGHLY RECOMMENDED. (See section 2 notes)

EDUCATION
(section 3)

M.S. Ed., State University of New York at Potsdam, Potsdam, NY
(graduation month/year)
Major: If more than one, use Majors.
Grade Point Average: If 3.0 or higher *(See section 3 notes)*

B.A., State University of New York at Potsdam, Potsdam, NY
(graduation month/year)
Major: If more than one, use Majors. Minor: If none, omit this.
Grade Point Average: If 3.0 or higher *(See section 3 notes)*
Honors: If none, omit this. If numerous listings, use as a separate margin category prior to experience. *(See section 3 notes)*
Computer Knowledge: No matter what your career, your ability to use computers will be important! Say something like: Database, spreadsheet software and Web Page Design on Macintosh and IBM computers. *(See section 3 notes)*
Foreign Language: If none, omit. You *must* state your proficiency level. *(See section 3 notes)*
Activities: If you describe any of these under Experience, omit them here. *(See section 3)*
Special Programs or Special Training: Certifications, Licenses, and Workshops, Study Abroad, etc. If none, omit this category. *(See section 3 notes)*
Courses included or special projects: List only those directly transferable to the job for which you are applying. *(See section 3 notes)*

XXXXXXXXX
EXPERIENCE
(section 4a & 4b)

Your job title, employer, city, state date.
• Write the description of your experience(s) using past tense action verb phrases.
(See section 4a notes and section 4b note sample action verbs)

OR

XXXXXXXXX
SKILLS
(section 4b)

• List all skills you have that relate to the position for which you are applying.
(See section 4b notes)

PERSONAL

OPTIONAL. List interests and hobbies. If you have a great deal of travel, you might want to list it as a separate margin category or a sub category within the personal category. *(Section 5)*
Travel includes: Germany, Canada, and England. *(See section 5 notes)*

REFERENCES
(section 6)

Option 1- References provided at your request from Career Planning, SUNY Potsdam, Potsdam, NY 13676 Phone: 315/267-2344 FAX 315/267-2342.
Option 2- List your references on the resume. We recommend listing names and phone numbers for your most important ones. If the relationship isn't clear, describe the person's relationship to you after their name. Then write the statement, "Written references provided at your request from Career Planning, SUNY Potsdam, Potsdam, NY 13676 Phone: 315/267-2344 FAX: 315/267-2342".
Option 3- Create a separate sheet listing your references with quotes from reference letters. (See section 6)
Option 4- Create a separate sheet listing your references without quotes. (See section 6)
Option 5- Submitted at your request.

ADDRESS NOTES
(SECTION 1)

Be sure to indicate the date that your college address will no longer be effective. Example (until 5/15/00)

OBJECTIVE
(SECTION 2)

If you have a specific job title, use it (e.g., Retail Buyer). If you don't have a title, but know the segment of the economy where you want to work, use it (e.g., Retailing). If you can't do that because you have a number of different career interests, omit the objective and discuss it in each letter you send with the resume. If you have an objective but no experience related to it, include the objective.

SAMPLES:

To obtain a teaching position in a Public Elementary School.

To obtain a General Music and Vocal Teaching position.

To obtain a position in the Human Resource field.

To obtain a position in Sales.

EDUCATION
(SECTION 3)

If you have more than one degree: List the highest first (Master's, then Bachelor's, then Associate's). List academic information and major for each school before you go to the next school.

If you attended another college but received no degree. The last line in the education section should be: Other college attended: University/College Name, number of year(s) or number of credit hours.

SAMPLES:

(1) **M.S. Ed.**, State University of New York at Potsdam, Potsdam, NY
(graduation 5/0X)
Major: Instructional Technology Media Management, GPA: 3.80

2) **B.A.**, State University of New York at Potsdam, Potsdam, NY
(graduation 5/0X)
Majors: Elementary Education GPA: 3.2 Psychology, GPA: 3.0
Teaching Certification area: N-6

B.A., State University of New York at Potsdam, Potsdam, NY
(graduation 5/0X)
Major: Math

A.A., Mater Dei College, Ogdensburg, New York
(graduation 5/0X)
Major: Sociology

Other college attended: Clarkson University (1 year)

SAMPLES CONTINUED:

(3) For Crane School of Music Students:

B.M., Crane School of Music,
State University of New York at Potsdam, Potsdam, NY (graduation 5/00)
Major: Music Education
Performance Concentration: Voice (*or list instrument*)
Teacher Certification area: Music K-12

Grade Point Average. Only include GPA if it is 3.0 or above. It will be interpreted as your overall unless specified otherwise. If you omit the overall and just give your major, you must give both majors if you have two.

SAMPLE:

Majors: History (GPA 3.2) Education (GPA 3.3)

Transfer Courses. Your grades transfer to Potsdam but your GPA doesn't transfer. If you show your 4 year average, calculate it yourself and show it this way: Grade point average, both colleges: 3.1. You can list your averages separately with each school, but that's recommended only if Potsdam's is higher.

SAMPLE:

GPA, both colleges: 3.1

Honors. You can omit Greek names for brevity (e.g., History and Education Honor Societies). If you have several honors, you should create a separate section titled HONORS. This section should follow the Education Section, if you create a separate section for honors.

SAMPLE:

- Freshman Honor Society
- Omicron Delta Epsilon, Economics Honor Society
- Presidential Scholar
- Recipient of the Newell Scholarship
- President's List (4 semesters)

Foreign Language. Give your levels of proficiency. Ask your professor for advice if needed to determine your proficiency level.

SAMPLE:

Spanish - fluent in speaking, moderate reading and writing.
French - moderate ability speaking, basic reading and writing.
German - basic speaking, reading and writing.

Activities. Educational organizations in which you are active or hold office, sports, etc. If you held an elected or appointed office, list the office first (Captain, swim team; President, social fraternity). If you show both college and high school, put college first and indicate college or high school. You can title some of your activities for greater emphasis if you have 3 or more activities in a category (e.g., Leadership Activities, Music Activities, Sports, etc.). If you have some beyond those, list them as additional Activities.

SAMPLE:

College Activities: Secretary, social sorority; swim team.

High School Activities: Editor, yearbook; Captain, Women's Basketball Team.

Music Activities: Member, Music Educators National Conference (MENC); Crane Concert Choir

Computer Knowledge. Be sure to include your computer competencies - employers are looking for these! If you have a very strong computer background and this skill is essential to the employer, you might want to create a separate section and highlight these skills. Include your software and hardware knowledge.

SAMPLE:

Computer Knowledge: Word processing, spreadsheets, database, graphics, Web Page design, networking, LAN management, programming on Macintosh.

Courses Included: Think about the job for which you are applying and if you have any courses other than those in your major(s) that would be of interest to employers, list them. For example, if you are a psychology major applying for a business position, include your business courses.

SAMPLE:

Courses Included: Accounting I & II, Corporate Finance, Marketing, Financial Management.

Special Projects/Research: Again, think in terms of your expertise and what relates to the job for which you are applying. If you have completed a research project or a special study, list it. For instance, if you are seeking an environmental job and you completed a project that relates directly to that area include the name of the project in quotes and a one or two line description that highlights your project. If you have completed research either through a student assistant position, senior seminar or special project, be sure to highlight it. This will be especially important for the graduate school resume. Remember, they are looking for your academic ability and research capabilities. If you have a great deal of research, you should think about making this a separate margin term.

SAMPLE:

“Senior Seminar: Phytoremediation,” Compiled research to determine the environmental importance of using plants to clean the environment. Presented research findings to faculty and students.

“SONY Corporation: A Financial Analysis,” Researched five years of annual reports, SEC 20-F forms, periodicals and journals. Evaluated performance based on derived ratios and trend data.

FUNCTIONAL RESUME EXPERIENCE (SECTION 4A)

Margin Titles: If you have a left margin title with several words (for example, BUSINESS RELATED EXPERIENCE), list the words vertically - BUSINESS on top, RELATED next, then EXPERIENCE on the bottom. Make sure your description starts on the same line as your first margin title. Be sure to be descriptive when labeling your experience section, for example: COUNSELING RELATED EXPERIENCE, TEACHING RELATED EXPERIENCE OR BUSINESS RELATED EXPERIENCE.

Listing Your Experiences: Listing your experiences in chronological order isn't necessary and it's not always helpful. Employers are busy and want to quickly scan resumes. The first thing the employer will be looking for is the experiences you have that relate to the job for which you are applying. If you have paid or unpaid experiences related to your career, show those first. Then move down to categories indirectly related to the career. This category can be labeled XXX Related Experience. When you're finished with those, you can put the rest in chronological order or group them in a summary statement in the Additional Experience category.

Describing Your Experiences: List your position first and then the employer and the geographic location to the right. Place dates at the end of the title line or at the end of the experience description. This decreases the emphasis on the dates and highlights what you have to offer. Even if your job is still in progress (RA, PACES, workstudy, etc.), write in the past tense as though you've graduated. The resume should show your status at the time it is being read. When you describe your experience, describe yourself doing it so the employer can appreciate how you might be of value to them in the future. Communicate quantity, quality and results. (NOTE: Be sure to keep the format of your experience listing consistent, either in bulleted or paragraph format. They are different on these samples to illustrate various formats.)

FUNCTIONAL RESUME SECTION SAMPLES:

**RETAIL
EXPERIENCE**

Sales Associate, Smidley Department Stores, Western, NY. 1999-2000 Served customers courteously under rushed conditions. Kept over 500 items organized on shelves and balanced cash receipts of over \$5,000 daily. Closed and secured the store. Based on my performance, was asked to return the following summer.

**STUDENT
TEACHING**

Westhill Elementary Schools, Albany, NY. (Spring '02)

- Instructed 2nd through 5th grade general music classes.
- Directed and assisted with choreography for a 65 student select group in preparation for the upcoming Spring concert.
- Sponsor Teacher: Mrs. Arlene West

**ADDITIONAL
EXPERIENCE**

Summer and school year part-time jobs have included fast food counter person, sales clerk, lifeguard, and college library clerk. (6/97 - 8/02)

**ADDITIONAL
EXPERIENCE**

Or use this if it fits: Accepted responsibility for approximately 45% of my college costs, financing this through work, merit scholarships (if applicable) and loans. Summer and school year part-time jobs included: fast food counter person, sales clerk, independent house painter, lifeguard, and college library clerk.

SKILLS RESUME EXPERIENCE (SECTION 4B)

This section will focus on the skills you are marketing. The best approach in developing a skills resume is to analyze the job announcement for the skills they are seeking in a candidate. For example, if the ad is for a Human Resource Trainer and calls for strong communication, presentation, training and computer knowledge, then you certainly want to list any of these skills you have on your resume.

SAMPLE SKILLS RESUME SECTION:

HUMAN RESOURCE SKILLS

Communications:

- Created publications and marketing pieces to market services to XXX.
- Published weekly newsletters and company manuals.

Presentation:

- Developed various educational materials and conducted classroom presentations.
- Facilitated a variety of workshops in the college residence halls.

Training/Teaching:

- Conducted orientation for new employees.
- Skilled in group development and presentations.

Leadership:

- Held a variety of offices that included: President of the Campus Union Board,
- Vice President of the Economics Club and Hall Council Member.
- Facilitated a variety of Hall programs.

RESUME ACTION VERBS

Following is a list of action verbs to assist you with wording. Don't use the same word(s) repetitively! This list certainly isn't complete but it should give you ideas.

Accomplished	chaired	decreased	gathered	managed	provided
achieved	clarified	defined	grouped	marketed	publicize
adjusted	coached	delegated	guided	mediated	published
administered	collected	demonstrated	illustrated	memorized	purchased
advanced	compared	designed	improved	moderated	read
advertised	competed	diagrammed	increased	monitored	recommended
advised	compiled	directed	indexed	motivated	reconciled
allocated	completed	disapproved	influenced	negotiated	recruited
analyzed	composed	distributed	informed	operated	reduced
appraised	conducted	drafted	initiated	organized	referred
approved	consulted	eliminated	inspected	originated	regulated
arranged	contracted	enabled	installed	participated	remodeled
assembled	contributed	encouraged	instructed	performed	repaired
assigned	controlled	enlisted	interpreted	persuaded	reported
assisted	converted	established	interviewed	persisted	represented
attained	convinced	estimated	introduced	planned	researched
audited	cooperated	evaluated	invented	prepared	resolved
awarded	coordinated	examined	investigated	presented	restored
balanced	corrected	expanded	launched	presided	reversed
budgeted	counseled	explained	learned	produced	reviewed
built	created	focused	lectured	projected	revised
calculated	criticized	followed	led	promoted	risked
cataloged	decided	founded	maintained	proposed	saved
scheduled	sold	stimulate	summarized	trained	upgraded
secured	solved	stocked	supervised	translated	used
selected	sorted	strengthened	tabulated	traveled	validated
serve	specified	studied	taught	tutored	worked
simplified	spoke	suggested	telephoned	updated	wrote

**PERSONAL
(SECTION 5)**

Do not show age, health, or marital status. Fair Employment Regulations have made asking these questions illegal. Interests and hobbies are helpful for conversation to set you and the interviewer at ease. You may change the margin term to **INTERESTS** vs. **PERSONAL**.

SAMPLE:

PERSONAL Interests: Enjoy sailboating, collecting baseball cards, long-distance running
Travel: Germany, Canada, Mexico and most of the US.

**REFERENCES
(SECTION 6)**

As part of the job application process, you will be asked to provide your prospective employer with names and written references of people who can speak on your behalf about your abilities and experiences. You should begin obtaining references early in your job search process. References can include professors, former and current employers, advisors of organizations and sponsor teachers. There are four main ways to highlight your references:

OPTION #1 - In your reference section, state that references are available at Career Planning.

SAMPLE:

REFERENCES References provided at your request from Career Planning, SUNY Potsdam, Potsdam, NY 13676. Phone: 315/267-2344 Fax: 315/267-2342

OPTION #2 - List your references right on your resume.
Include the reference person's name, title, address and phone number.

SAMPLE:

REFERENCES

Dr. John Doe
Chair of Psychology
122 Flagg Hall
SUNY Potsdam
Potsdam, NY 13676
315/268-9807

Dr. Ann Smith
Professor of Anthropology
102 Morey Hall
SUNY Potsdam
Potsdam, NY 13676
315/267-9076

Mr. Bill Hall
Manager
J.C. Penney
102 Electronic Pkwy
Saddle River, NY 13586
315/265-9777

OPTION #3 - Create a separate reference sheet

ADAM SMITH
38 Elm Street
Potsdam, NY 13676
(315)222-1212

REFERENCES

Reference letters from the following people are available from: Career Planning Office, SUNY Potsdam, Potsdam, NY 13676. Phone: (315) 267-2344 FAX: (315) 267-2342

Mrs. Mary Smith
Grade 6 Teacher
Bergen Central School
Westport, NY 25675
Phone: (315) 989-9088

“ Adam has developed an excellent rapport with the students, parents and other faculty. He displays an unending commitment to provide a quality education to each student.”

Mr. James Pike
Principal
Ridgeport Elementary School
Ridgeport, NY 89767
Phone: (315) 897-9807

“ ... adept in classroom management techniques and acquiring the respect of students.”

Ms. Maria Parsons
Sponsor Teacher
Highland Central School
Smithville, NY 27898
Phone: (315) 897-9087

“ ... provides interesting, motivating and challenging assignments. Shows a genuine interest in the students and sensitivity to each child’s individual needs.”

Mr. Edward Ryan
Sponsor Teacher
Lawrence Elementary
Lawrence, NY 45999
Phone: (315) 678-9807

“ ... has a high level of maturity and confidence to work well with children. Accepts challenges with confidence and creative responses.”

OPTION #4 - List your references and not include quotes from reference letters on a separate sheet of paper.
Be sure to use an entire separate sheet of paper.

JANE DOE
12 Elm Street
Potsdam, NY 13676
(315) 267-9988

REFERENCES

Reference letters from the following persons are available from: Career Planning Office, SUNY Potsdam, Potsdam, NY 13676. Phone: (315) 267-2344 FAX: (315) 267-2342

Mr. Jim Smith, President
AT&T Technologies
223 Jones Rd.
Hicksville, NY 45544
Business Phone: (716) 222-6767

Ms. Sarah Peter
Director of Human Resources
Peterson Company
123 Commercial Blvd.
Albany, NY 44553
Business Phone: (918) 334-9090

Dr. Cynthia Lowe
Professor of Chemistry
SUNY Potsdam
34 Stowell Hall
Potsdam, NY 13676
Business Phone: (315) 456-9898

Dr. Albert Jones
Professor of Physics
SUNY Potsdam
89 Timmerman Hall
Potsdam, NY 13676
Business Phone: (315) 456-9090

COVER LETTERS

A cover letter should always accompany your resume and reference sheet (if you choose that option). Your cover letter will help bridge the gap between the resume and the job. It is the first correspondence the employer will see - and you will be judged on the communication skills demonstrated in your cover letter. The first paragraph should explain your desire to be a candidate, the second paragraph will highlight the skills you have to offer that employer, and in the third you will try to set up an interview. *For more information on cover letters, see our Letter Writing Guide and sample letters available in the Career Planning Office.*

TYPING, PRINTING AND MAILING YOUR RESUME

You can type your resume on the Career Planning student computer. This computer is designated for student and alumni use for creating and printing resume(s)/cover letters(s) and searching for internship or job listings. Sign up is required for use of the student computer. You must bring in a disk on which to save your resume or you can purchase a disk for \$2.00 with the resume templates on it. Resume templates are available for Word on Macintosh and IBM compatible systems.

PRINTING Laser quality black print on quality white or light colored paper is your best approach. Your paper should be a heavy weight (25% cotton blend). You can be sure that your resume will be electronically processed, even if only by a photocopy machine. We suggest using white or ivory as it reproduces the best. If you have a second page, be sure to put your name on the second page in the event the two should become separated.

MAILING Don't staple your resume or letters. Mail your materials in a 9 x 12 envelope to give a better appearance.

RESUME QUALITY CHECKLIST

Can you answer yes to all of the following questions?

Appearance and Format

- _____ Is the type sharp and clean and the paper spotless?
- _____ Have you used an attractive business like style that will fax well?
- _____ Is the type easy to read?
- _____ Is the copy neatly centered and nicely balanced on the page?
- _____ Is there plenty of white space on each page with wide margins and good space between your paragraphs?
- _____ Is your typed copy free of errors, strikeovers and obvious erasures or white out?
- _____ Have you selected a high quality grade bond paper no larger than 8 1/2 x 11?
- _____ Have you been consistent in use of indentation, underscoring, capitalizing and spacing?
- _____ Have you used a light colored paper that will reproduce well?

Organization

- _____ Is your name (in caps), address and telephone number (and business phone number, if including such would not involve a risk for you) placed at the top of the first page?
- _____ Is your name and page number on each additional page?
- _____ Does your objective (if you've decided to include one) appear immediately after your name, address and phone number?
- _____ If you are a recent recipient of a degree which lends major support to your objective, is your Education paragraph close to your Objective?
- _____ Is your highest educational accomplishment listed first in your Education paragraph?
- _____ Is your resume written for the reader? Does it read down the page and then across the page from most important to least important to the reader?

Objective/Job Objective

- _____ Does your objective state a general designation (e.g. "Human Resources") to allow consideration for a wider variety of openings rather than a specific job title (e.g. "Personnel Manager")?
- _____ Is your objective reasonably short?
- _____ Does your objective avoid offering over generalized virtues such as "maturity," "integrity," "conscientiousness," etc.?
- _____ Does your objective avoid emphasis on what you want from the employer in terms of opportunities or conditions of employment (e.g. "Entry level position offering opportunities for training and promotion")?

Content

- _____ Have you included every major, significant factor that could serve as an asset for you relative to the types of jobs you are seeking?
- _____ Have you phrased your resume to prove your ability to perform the functions cited in your objective or to otherwise reflect merit of you as a potential employee?
- _____ Have you given due emphasis to your activities, accomplishments and awards in college, in your community or elsewhere that reflect your abilities?
- _____ Does the content of your resume, wherever possible, emphasize results produced, interesting problems overcome, significant achievements, etc.?
- _____ Did you leave negative information (criminal records, divorce, fired, medical problems) off your resume?
- _____ Have you highlighted the skills and facts showing the desirable traits you have that the employer is seeking?
- _____ Is illegal data (pictures, age, sex, marital status) not included on your resume?

Writing Style

- _____ Is the spelling, grammar and punctuation correct? (Has someone else proofread your resume?)
- _____ Have you used short, concise statements to explain your experience/skills?
- _____ Is your Experience/Skills section written with past tense action verbs such as “directed”, “supervised”, “wrote”, “developed”, “planned”, “produced”, “achieved”, etc.?
- _____ Where possible, do you cite specific examples of successful performance supporting your objectives and do such examples quantify results (e.g., “supervised a staff of 25”, “managed a \$100,000 budget”)?
- _____ Are “I”, “me” and other pronouns omitted?
- _____ Are marginal leads, underlined statements, or other “attention getters” stated in terms of your accomplishments or primary functions that you have performed?
- _____ Have you eliminated all unnecessary military terminology and substituted equivalent civilian terms?

Final Check

- _____ 1. Is your resume an attractive, interesting, quick reading, factual account that proves that your experience and personal assets qualify you for the job you are seeking?
- _____ 2. Does your resume present your education and experience as evidence of benefits and abilities you will bring the employer?
- _____ 3. Is everything said or implied in your resume true? Is everything written as evidence rather than a claim?
- _____ 4. Have you had others read your resume and relate to you what they have learned about you from the resume?