

Resume Checklist

This checklist provides tips for improving your graduate or professional resume. Use this list to check the aspects of your resume which need more attention.

Please refer to the UWS Careers & Cooperative Education website www.uws.edu.au/careers to download the Resume Guide and Cover Letter Guide. These two guides provide more detailed suggestions about writing a resume.

Overall Presentation

Presentation	<input type="checkbox"/> Leave an overall positive impression, delete negative words or phrases <input type="checkbox"/> Use 10–12 size font <input type="checkbox"/> Make the headings stand out (eg two sizes larger than normal text and bold) <input type="checkbox"/> Use more white space between sections of information to improve navigation <input type="checkbox"/> Allow for an adequate left-hand margin (eg 3 cm) <input type="checkbox"/> Paginate the document so that sections of information are not split across two pages <input type="checkbox"/> Consider customising your resume; don't rely on templates
Format	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't use gimmicks (eg coloured paper, fancy borders) <input type="checkbox"/> Use consistent formatting throughout – font, size, justification, heading position <input type="checkbox"/> Use sub-headings effectively and make relevant points easy to find <input type="checkbox"/> Limit use of highlighting techniques – avoid uppercase, underlining and multiple fonts <input type="checkbox"/> Use tables to categorise and list technical or IT experience <input type="checkbox"/> Include page numbers in the footer (eg page 1 of 3)
Sequence	<input type="checkbox"/> Enter most recent information first, then work backwards chronologically <input type="checkbox"/> Order the headings and lists so the most important information comes first <input type="checkbox"/> Address the position requirements closely – use evidence and examples <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure all dates are correct (use months and years only) and explain any gaps
Length	<input type="checkbox"/> Ideal length for graduate resumes is 2–3 pages <input type="checkbox"/> Ideal length for professional resumes is 3–4 pages
Language	<input type="checkbox"/> Use a combination of brief text and bullet points – no wordy paragraphs <input type="checkbox"/> Use formal business language – should be clear, concise and relevant <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure correct grammar and punctuation <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure correct spelling – English (Australian not US) <input type="checkbox"/> Avoid jargon and unexplained abbreviations <input type="checkbox"/> Delete unnecessary words or punctuation <input type="checkbox"/> Begin bullet points with active verbs (eg manage, report, develop, coordinate) <input type="checkbox"/> Use consistent tense throughout (current tense for current job, past tense for previous jobs) <input type="checkbox"/> Avoid repetition of information – draw on broader range of examples
Individualised	<input type="checkbox"/> Aim to stand out favourably from the crowd by providing relevant, factual and current information about your education, skills and experience <input type="checkbox"/> Use relevant keywords that will appropriately keyword-sort your resume
Detail	<input type="checkbox"/> Include detail and information to support your claim to the position <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure your meaning is clear, don't expect the reader to interpret <input type="checkbox"/> Explain gaps in dates

Specific Content

Name and Contact Details	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Your name should be the heading of the document (large, centred, bold) <input type="checkbox"/> Don't write Resume of' or 'Curriculum Vitae of' or include a cover page <input type="checkbox"/> Avoid sub-headings such as Name, Address, Telephone – these are self-evident <input type="checkbox"/> Use a professional email address (no more 'hotchickybabe@wotsnew.com) <input type="checkbox"/> There is no need to list your date of birth, age, health, religion or marital status <input type="checkbox"/> If appropriate, state your Citizenship/Visa status toward the end of the resume
Career Objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Stating your career objective is optional, but very effective if clear and concise. It should consist of brief, factual sentences using a maximum of 3–4 lines <input type="checkbox"/> Start by giving the potential employer an idea of your aspirations and preferred work environment; motivate them to read the rest of your resume <input type="checkbox"/> Indicate short and long term career goals, if appropriate <input type="checkbox"/> Highlight one or two relevant competencies that you can bring to the position/organisation <input type="checkbox"/> Tailor the statement to each position you are applying for – refer to the job advertisement for clues of what skills or qualities are valued in the organisation <input type="checkbox"/> Change this heading to 'Career Summary' or 'Career Highlights' if you have significant professional experience <input type="checkbox"/> State your availability, if appropriate
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Degree (full title, include Majors) on first line (bold) and University (full title) on second line <input type="checkbox"/> List the year you graduated or your expected year of completion <input type="checkbox"/> Indicate your overall academic results (eg distinction average, credit average etc) <input type="checkbox"/> List the key subjects and major projects or academic research relevant to the position; this information helps you to stand out from the crowd <input type="checkbox"/> Attach a copy of your Academic Transcript – don't list all subjects and results here <input type="checkbox"/> List other educational achievements (eg previous degrees, diplomas) after your most recent education <input type="checkbox"/> Change this heading to 'Qualifications' as soon as you complete your last exam
Skills Summary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Identify a minimum of your key 4–6 skills and list in priority order <input type="checkbox"/> Include context and outcomes for skills used – achievements, capabilities and application <input type="checkbox"/> Concentrate on professional skills to match the position or organisation <input type="checkbox"/> List generic skills and provide examples to add credibility to your claims <input type="checkbox"/> List relevant IT skills <input type="checkbox"/> Skills Summary on first page or take up all of second page if extensive
Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Split this section into 'Relevant Experience' and 'Other Experience' <input type="checkbox"/> Position (full title) on first line (in bold) and Organisation name on second line <input type="checkbox"/> Give a brief description of the organisation (location, type of business) <input type="checkbox"/> Indicate on what basis you were employed (e.g. FT, PT, casual, voluntary, placement) <input type="checkbox"/> Provide the dates you worked for the organisation (Month Year – Month Year) <input type="checkbox"/> List your key specific responsibilities, starting each with an active verb (eg manage, produce, develop, test, provide, present) <input type="checkbox"/> Avoid copying the Duty Statement in full – it is too general and does not clarify your individual responsibilities <input type="checkbox"/> Tailor each resume so your relevant experience is given suitable emphasis according to the position or organisation <input type="checkbox"/> List your achievements – outline your contributions to the organisation (eg what you improved, the outcomes, skills you developed, positive feedback or awards received) <input type="checkbox"/> Include in this section any placements, voluntary or community work or leadership positions held
Professional Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> List any relevant short courses or conferences you have attended <input type="checkbox"/> Provide the date (the year is usually sufficient), the institution and the location
Professional Membership/s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> List any relevant Professional Association/s and your membership status (student, associate, full member)
Interests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> List 2–3 interests or social activities that demonstrate a balanced and active life
Referees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Follow advertised application requirements (usually two referees) <input type="checkbox"/> Referees should be current and able to comment on your workplace or uni performance <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure the referee contact details and relationship to you is made clear in the resume