

General Guidelines for Writing Your Résumé

First impressions are lasting impressions! Generally, your first contact with a prospective employer is through your résumé – ***Why should an employer hire you over other candidates that seem equally qualified?*** In the case of co-op positions, you will be competing with peers from UK as well as with students from other universities.

Be consistent in style and PROOF your résumé carefully. Pay close attention to punctuation, spacing, spelling, and grammar. Errors on a résumé will be costly. Employers repeatedly indicate that typos will eliminate you from consideration. Make certain that your verb tenses match. For a job you currently hold, job duties should be in the present tense. For jobs you have previously held, job duties should be written in the past tense. Use reverse chronological order when listing activities and jobs as employers like to see what you are doing most recently first. **Avoid the use of the personal pronouns “I” and “my” throughout your résumé as this is understood.**

Effective résumés should.....

-be visually appealing and easy to read
-be concise and logically organized
-communicate job related abilities, not just duties**
-emphasize accomplishments and quantify when possible
-communicate responsibility, dependability, and enthusiasm
-show your ability & potential. Focus on where you are going with your career.

Some employers are using scanning technology to sort a reasonable number of promising résumés from huge stacks of résumés. Information is easily missed with scanners if the résumé has fancy treatments such as italics, underlines, shadows or reverses. Two-column format should be avoided. We recommend having two versions of your résumé – one for electronic uploads (.txt) and one designed for the human eye (.doc). The version in this handout is in a scannable format. Please do not use templates offered by Microsoft Word, etc.

Content/Headings

Name: Center your name at the top, using all upper case letters and bold type. Increase font size so that it stands out.

Contact information: Center phone number & e-mail under your name. Physical address should not be listed.

Objective: This is often the most difficult part of the résumé; here are some things to consider: Very general statements such as “To gain hands-on experience while pursuing a degree” give very little information. “To obtain a co-op position in which principles of engineering can be applied to process or product development” gives the reader a clue. However, if an objective is too specific, the reader may reject the résumé because the company cannot offer work in the expressed interest area. Remember, the objective creates a frame of reference for the employer viewing your résumé. It is appropriate to edit your objective for a particular position. You might indicate you are seeking a part-time or summer position rather than a co-op.

Available: Use the semester and year. Example: Spring 2006 (If applying for a part-time job, you might say “immediately”). This section is not appropriate once you are nearing graduation as it will be obvious that you are available immediately.

Education: State the *degree* that you are pursuing, *hours* you have completed including transfer hours, and *cumulative grade point average*. The hours completed and GPA should match those

on your UK transcript. If you use only the GPA in your major or average in the GPA from another school, then you should so indicate – example -- 3.4 (major) or 3.4 (UK and ECU). ***As a freshman, it is appropriate to include your high school GPA until you have a college GPA.*** Be sure to clearly indicate when you are listing a high school GPA.

Your anticipated ***graduation date*** should also be included. Students applying for alternating semester co-op positions will need to work out a rotation plan with the co-op staff. This plan usually moves the graduation date back by at least a semester, most often by a year.

It is suggested that you ***include courses that you have had or are currently taking.*** You might include a short description of classes in your major since outside employers don't know what was covered in CS 216 Software Engineering.

Computer skills are of great interest to prospective employers. List hardware, software, and any type of experience that you might have. Depending on the extent of your experience, this information can go under education or could be a separate heading.

Honors and Awards, Leadership Activities, and Professional Associations are all good headings on a résumé. This is an area where you would like to call attention to your transferable skills and abilities. Stating that you were vice-president in Student Council is good. However, indicating that you “organized the annual fundraiser and increased earnings by 20%” would be much better and communicates an accomplishment. As you move into your junior and senior year at UK, information from high school should be replaced with experiences at UK. ***Plan to become active in student organizations and activities so that you will have good examples of leadership and teamwork skills to put on your résumé.*** Employers want to see current activities. ***Be aware that employers may not be familiar with awards and acronyms so a brief explanation may be necessary.*** Try to incorporate some of the action words listed below into your descriptions:

Analyzed	Documented	Installed	Researched
Assisted	Established	Maintained	Saved
Calculated	Engineered	Monitored	Suggested
Composed	Expanded	Organized	Supervised
Contributed	Formulated	Planned	Trained
Coordinated	Identified	Prepared	Tutored
Created	Implemented	Produced	Verified
Demonstrated	Improved	Provided	
Designed	Increased	Recommended	
Developed	Initiated	Redesigned	

Experience: List present or most recent experience first. Be concise. Include name of the company, location of the company (city and state) dates worked, job title and job duties and accomplishments. Again use action verbs to communicate skills. ***Think broadly in terms of experience – include internships, part-time experience, class projects.*** Don't hesitate to use babysitting or mowing lawns as work experience; your work does not have to be with a major engineering company to be impressive.

EXAMPLE: Senior Cashier, Pizza Hut

Somerset, Kentucky, May 2005 – August 2006.

Provided excellent customer service, prepared orders, trained and scheduled three new employees, and handled money.

Additional Tips

References: In this age of technology and legal repercussions, references should not be included on your résumé. If your résumé has too much white space and needs a filler, then you might say “References available upon request” at the bottom. Do have your references prepared on a separate sheet with your contact information ready to complement your résumé if an employer requests them. Be sure to ask permission of your references and inform your references when you send out your reference sheet. Think of this as an opportunity to tell your references how to sell you for the particular position.

Key Words: Scanners look for particular words or phrases relevant to open positions. The following is a list of such words (some are discipline specific) that we have collected from several employers:

Microsoft Office	Compaction
AutoCAD	EPA
JAVA	Environmental engineering
PSPICE	Analog
C, C++	Digital
FOCUS	Sequential Networks
ORACLE	Digital Data Simulator
Web development	Circuit Analysis
Excel	VLSI Blocks
Network	Electromagnetic Compatibility
Spreadsheets	Failure Analysis
UNIX	AC and DC Power Generators
Modeling	Biomedical
Fluid dynamics	Highway Design
ISO 9000	Bridges and Roadways
ANSYS	Transportation Systems
Finite Element Analysis	Microstation
Pro-Engineer	KY Pipe
Material Balances	Hydrology
Polymers	Lean Manufacturing
Distillation	Just in Time
Separations	Teamwork
Catalyst	Groundwater
Computer Modeling	Construction
Reactors	Geotechnical
Flow Rates	Structures

If you think a prospective employer may be scanning résumés (INTEL, Microsoft, IBM, TVA, and DuPont scan) then sprinkling words such as these on a résumé may bring yours to the top of the stack. Currently, most co-op résumés are not being scanned. However, understanding and using scannable-friendly formats is a good habit to form. (See discussion at beginning of handout). You should not think that one résumé will fill all needs. In applying to a particular employer, review their website and any other material, such as co-op reports housed in the co-op office, that will give you clues as to how to modify your objective or emphasize certain skills.

Additional resources: UK Career Center Center. 408 Rose Street, 859-257-2746
Co-op Office: Ilka Balk, ibalk@engr.uky.edu; 859-257-4178 or
Marsha Phillips, Phillips@engr.uky.edu, 859-257-8863