

Writing an Effective Résumé

Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) receives an average of 7,000 résumés each month. To compete effectively for a position at LANL, create a résumé that is not only comprehensive but also brief. This web site provides some basic guidance to maximize the probability of your being contacted for an interview.

Make your résumé “generic” or “one size fits all” so that it can be used to apply for a variety of jobs for which you are qualified. Customize your job application by writing a cover letter tailored for the job for which you are applying. Information on the cover letter should detail how you fulfill the required and desired skills as well as the education and experience expectations.

A résumé is appropriate for people with high school diplomas, associate’s degrees, bachelor’s degrees, or master’s degrees without significant experience and/or publications.

If you have a master’s degree and you have authored numerous publications or if you have a doctoral degree, you should use a CV curriculum vita(e) rather than a résumé. A CV is a longer, more comprehensive document than a résumé is. CV guidance is offered at this web link: _____

General Information

- Good résumés result in interview opportunities.
- Interviews lead to jobs.
- You do **not** have to tell or include EVERYTHING in a résumé.
- A résumé is a marketing tool. It is a snapshot of you and what you do well. It is a teaser, **not** a true confession! It is **not** an autobiography!
- A résumé is a promotional or marketing document! An advertisement of you! You are the product! At an interview, the interviewer gets to check out the product!
- Stand out because of what you have to offer.
- Answer the question: “What can this person do for us?” Tell them and tell them how. Give evidence.
- You have 10 to 20 seconds to get the reader’s attention and to convince the reader to keep reading. Be powerful quickly!

A Functional Résumé

- A functional résumé highlights transferable skills, accomplishments, and abilities and also emphasizes your qualifications for a job, **not** job duties.
- Functional résumés focus on skills, not where you were when you used specific skills.
- A functional résumé spotlights the same information that you would include in a chronological résumé, but in a different format with a refreshing twist.

Appearance

Length

- Create a résumé that is one to two pages, **NOT ANY LONGER!**
- Allow plenty of white space. Do **not** crowd the text.
- Have at least 1-in. margins on all sides.

Font

- **Avoid** using all capital letters EXCEPT FOR HEADINGS because it takes twice as long to read capital letters as it does to read a combination of initial capital letters and lowercase letters.
- **Do** use a serif font, such as Bookman Old Style, Times Roman, or Palatino. Avoid using sans serif fonts, such as Helvetica or Arial.
- Do **not** use a font size smaller than 10. Caution: Times or Times New Roman in a size 10 font is too small to read easily.
- Do **not** justify text.

On-line Formatting (compatible with the LANL web site's job ad application form)

- Submit **plain** text only.
- Do **not** center or justify text.
- Do **not** use bullets, tabs, hanging indents, bold or italicized fonts, or vertical or horizontal lines.

Additional Tips

- Do **not** number the pages. (The objective on the first page is a clue that it is page 1.)
- Do **not** label the résumé as a résumé.
- Do **not** date a résumé.
- Do **not** use the word “I.”
- Do **not** state “References available upon request.” Your list of people who have agreed to serve as references can be taken with you to your interview. Include the same personal contact information on your résumé at the top of a separate sheet of paper. Use REFERENCES as a heading. Then list the names, their professional relationship to you, e-mail address, telephone number (including area code), and mailing address.

If you do not opt to include all your application materials on line (the preferred method for applying for a Laboratory position), please follow these suggestions:

- Do **not** fold a résumé.
- Send the résumé in a 9” x 12” manila envelope and add extra postage. If applying from within the Laboratory, use an interoffice envelope.
- Do **not** staple résumés.
(It takes time to remove a staple if the recipient wants to copy the résumé. The staple holes or dog-eared corner will show when copied. The reader may want to lay both pages down side by side to see “you” in one glance.)
- It is not necessary to use special or colored paper for a résumé.
- Plain white copy paper is highly recommended.

Miscellaneous Information

Question: How far back should you detail your education and experience?

Answer: Include information on your résumé following high school graduation if you have an associate’s, bachelor’s, master’s, or doctoral degree. If your education ended with high school graduation, include information concerning your high school diploma.

Additional options:

*Limit your information of your employment to the last 15 years.

*Limit your information to what is relevant to the jobs for which you would be apt to apply.

*Simply summarize any experience from more than 15 years ago if you wish.

Do **not** include personal data, such as age, health, marital status, or number of children.

Preparing a Functional Résumé

Functional résumés highlight your transferable skills, ones you enjoy using.
Present a general overview. Avoid unnecessary detail.

Parts of a Functional Résumé

1. Objective
2. Skills (optional)
3. Summary
4. Relevant Skills and Experience
5. Work Experience
6. Education

Personal Contact Information

Write your personal contact information at the top of the page.

- Full name, including your nickname in parentheses if used at work.
- If you have a Los Alamos Z#, insert a comma following your name and add your Z#, for example, Maria McCloud, Z#987650.
- Home address
- City, state abbreviation, and zip code
- Home telephone number, including area code
- E-mail address

1. Objective

The entire résumé should support and target your objective. **Ask yourself if the information you are adding is value added to your objective.** If not, leave it out.

- Be brief, just one or two lines, but broad enough not to be vague and narrow enough not to be confining.
- Good examples
 - A position as an experimental physicist.
 - A position as a chemical technician.
 - A position as an administrative assistant in a technical organization.
 - A position as a computer programmer in a support organization.
- Poor example
 - A challenging position in a growing organization where my skills can be used and I will have opportunities for personal growth and development.

2. Skills (Optional)

You can list your significant skills in a **brief** paragraph format as follows if you wish:

Skills

C++, Perl, Java, Oracle, Access, system administration, management, leadership, presentations, documentation

3. Highlights of Qualifications, Qualifications, Summary, Highlights

Keep them reading! Do **not** be humble! Include the “Wow” and the “That’s interesting!” information.

Use a line or two to describe the following:

- **amount of relevant experience (target the objective) – Use numerals for the number of years!**

Example: *20 years of experience as a chemical technician, including 15 years at 3M and 5 years at Los Alamos National Laboratory.

Example: *12 years of experience in office administration at Los Alamos National Laboratory, most recently 4 years of experience as a division office administrator.

- **relevant degrees, credentials, certifications – Be brief and to the point. Do NOT include details.**

Example: *Bachelor’s degree in chemistry.

Example: *A.A. degree in business management. Certificate in word processing.

- **significant accomplishment – Using a line or two, tell about only ONE special accomplishment relevant to your objective.**

Example: *Established a new process for removing radioactive residue from laboratory instruments.

Example: *Led a team that created a unique solution to streamline and simplify attendance reporting in our division, resulting in an LA Achievement Awards for the entire team.

- **three or four skills**, stated briefly – Remember to be relevant to your objective. For what skills are you frequently complimented? Be unique! Be sure that these skills support your objective.

Example: *Thorough, solution oriented, innovative, and ambitious.

Example: *Customer-focused, organized, and conscientious. Excellent time management skills.

- **your values, commitment, or philosophy** – **Start this statement with “Dedicated to” or “Committed to.”**

Example: *Dedicated to finding creative and practical solutions to tough problems and to mentoring new technicians.

Example: *Committed to high-level office and people management and to serving as a resource for division members.

4. Relevant Skills and Experience

Identify **three** to **five** skill and experience categories that highlight your top transferable skills. Focus on accomplishments (results) and evidence of those accomplishments rather than job duties. Specific results make you unique and show that you did indeed make a difference. Consider including a category addressing your computer skills.

Start each accomplishment statement under each category heading with **a dash or an asterisk** and **the past tense of an active verb**.

Limit each entry to just a line or two.

Quantify where you can! For example, include the amount of money saved, amount of overtime reduced, or how much efficiency or productivity was increased (use a numerical percentage, such as 40%).

List the **most** important skill and experience category first. Show the most significant information first in each skill and experience category.

Consider including a category about your computer skills.

Avoid using the following words: expertise in, responsible for, or experienced with. Such words are not specific enough.

Example: Problem Solving
-Devised a method to reduce toxic waste caused by volatile chemicals.

Example: Supervisory Skills
-Supervised 3 high school co-op students and a contractor in a busy group office that served 80 people.

5. Work or Employment History

Use reverse chronological order. Start with the most recent job and work backward.

Do not include details! You do **not** have to indicate the month and the day.

Example: year to present, job title, business name, city, state
year to year, job title, business name, city, state

Identifying each group for which you have worked is not necessary. The group's abbreviation, such as HRD-3 may be outdated. If you want to identify the group, write out the group's official name, such as Analytical Chemistry.

If you need to save space and want to show progression in job responsibilities, you might consider the following format if you have held many jobs.

Example: 1980 to present, clerk, word processor, group office administrator, division office administrator, Los Alamos National Laboratory, Los Alamos, NM

5. Education and Training

Education includes your high school diploma **only if you did not attend college**. If you did pursue advanced education after high school, include your college and/or university degrees or courses as well as certification programs.

Training refers to classes taken to qualify you to do certain specific job activities. No college credit is given for training.

List the most recent degree first. Name the degree, major and minor, date of graduation, the institution, city, and state. If your GPA was 3.0 or above, include that information here also. If you received any awards or honors during your academic experience, include them here too. Because college degrees are more significant, list them before certifications.

List any general course work or program relevant to the objective even if you have not received a degree. Save the LANL EDS printout for the interview.

If you have a university degree in progress, you can list it as follows:

B.S. in chemistry with a minor in mathematics, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM. Expected date of graduation: December 2005.

Relevant training can be included with education or detailed in a separate section following education. List recent training classes and compliance-required training.

Training can be shown as a separate section if you wish.

Education

B.A. in business management with honors, 1990, College of Santa Fe, Santa Fe, NM

Training

MS Word, MS Excel, MS Project, IB, Citrix, Data Warehouse, and Telephone Skills

Other Possible Sections

Include information that will strengthen your résumé. **If information is not value added, leave it off.**

Professional Affiliation(s)

Do not include an alumni association! Include only current affiliations unless you held a leadership position in an organization in which you no longer are a dues-paying member.

Clearance

Example: Active DOE “Q” clearance

Example: Reinstatable DOE “L” clearance

Community Service

Let good judgment be your guide concerning what is appropriate, especially if the volunteer work is relevant to your objective or shows another side of you that is not apparent in previous sections.

Note: Deal with fraternal, religious, or political affiliations with care! It is advisable to err on the conservative side.

Example: State chairman of a national political party, 2000 to 2002

Honors and Awards

Include any honors or awards not listed under **Education** above, such as community service awards. List them in reverse chronological order.

Publications

Follow the publication protocol for your particular discipline. List the publications in reverse chronological order, most recent first. You can use an extra page as an attachment for a lengthy list of publications. In that case, indicate under the “Publications” heading that you are attaching a complete list of your publications.

Miscellaneous

You may create a section that can include a collection of miscellaneous, unrelated information that might strengthen your opportunity to have an interview. Include any pertinent information that was not included elsewhere.

Example: Bi-lingual: English and Spanish

Question: What is next?

Answer: A cover letter! Address all **required** elements and as many **desired** elements as possible as well as the **education** and **experience** expectations in your cover letter. Use the past tense of active verbs. Make the cover letter as long as necessary to be thorough, but do not ramble.

Resource: *The Damn Good Résumé Guide* by Yana Parker.

An Example of a Functional Résumé

Rachel Restore (If you are a current Laboratory employee, include your Z# here.)
234 Valley Lake Drive,
Ocean Park, NJ 08337
(609) 677-5432
rachelrest@abc.com

Objective: A position as a restoration architect

Summary

- 10 years of experience as a restoration architect in both the private and public sectors.
- Bachelor's degree in architecture; certification in antique restorations.
- American City Downtown Rehabilitation Award for designing and overseeing the restoration of Milltown's Historic City Renewal Project.
- Unique ability to understand clients' ideas and transform them into workable drawings and designs.
- Committed to excellence in authentic reproduction of period architecture.

Skills

Architectural design, antique restorations, project management, financial planning, budgeting, team management, AutoCad, Microsoft Project, time management

Relevant Skills and Experience

Restorations

- Restored Milltown's Historic City (3 city blocks).
- Served as the historic restoration specialist for Seaville's waterfront renewal.
- Met with the city councils to determine their budget, goals, and aesthetic expectations.
- Researched the history and development of the original downtown area.
- Assessed the existing structures to determine how much needed to be razed.
- Served as a consultant for selecting contractors.
- Monitored the construction sites.

Architectural Design

- Created preliminary design sketches for municipal approval.
- Prepared site plans.
- Produced architectural drawings for both remodeling and reconstruction of historic sites and buildings.
- Interacted with city officials and the Historic Restoration Committee members to gain approval of the drawings.

Project Management

- Managed multiple projects simultaneously.
- Created comprehensive and realistic project plans using Microsoft Project.
- Completed all projects on time and within budget.
- Oversaw projects with budgets ranging from \$1M to \$9M.
- Skillfully managed a staff of 25 employees with no turnover for 2 years.

Work Experience

1995 to Present: City of Milltown, City Architect, Milltown, NJ

1991 to 1995: Creighton and Low Design, Inc., Junior Partner, Seaville, NJ

1990 to 1991: Hammer and Nail Associates, Intern, Collegevale, NJ

Education and Training

B. Arch, 1991, White University, Collegevale, NJ, GPA 3.8

Graduated with highest honors

Dennis Family Award for Excellence in Architecture

All-American Collegiate Soccer Player

Antique Restorations Certification, Philadelphia Restoration Institute, Philadelphia, PA, 1990

Professional Affiliations

Society of Architectural Design, Board of Directors

Historical Restoration Society of America, Member

Awards

American City Downtown Rehabilitation Award, 1998

Junior Civitan of the Year, 1997

Miscellaneous

Bilingual: English and Italian

Volunteer Community League Soccer Coach