

Résumé Tips

Types of Résumés¹

In general, there are two basic résumé styles: chronological and functional. Some people prefer to combine the two styles into what is often referred to as a hybrid style.

Chronological Style

This format is the most common and thus represents a “traditional” résumé. In a chronological résumé, your work history and education are described with dates in reverse chronological order, with the most recent experiences appearing first. This style is most often used to demonstrate career progression by showing positions of increased responsibility or academic preparation vis à vis the position you are targeting.

Functional Style

Using various categories, the functional résumé highlights your individual skills and accomplishments. This style gives you an opportunity to accentuate your transferable skills, and puts less emphasis on previous jobs held or on academic preparation. A functional résumé may be more relevant if you are changing roles. It can also be useful if you are seeking employment that is non-traditional or is outside of the health care sector. The functional résumé allows you to highlight your skills as they relate to the qualifications the employer is looking for.

Hybrid Style

The hybrid résumé combines the strengths of chronological and functional résumés. It emphasizes career continuity — as in the chronological style — while also highlighting themes of expertise and accomplishments, as reflected in the functional style.

¹ Adapted from Donner, G.J. & Wheeler, M.M. (2009). Taking control of your career: A handbook for health professionals. Toronto: Elsevier.

Creating Your Résumé

This section describes what information you should include under each of the potential headings in a chronological résumé. Remember that these are guidelines: you can tailor specific sections to meet your individual needs or the needs of the particular position.

Contact Information. This includes your name, your designations, your address, phone number and e-mail.

Career Objective or Career Summary. A career objective is a concise statement of what you are looking for. For example, “A leadership position within a community organization making a focused, strategic difference in chronic illness management.” A career summary is used to create a strong, positive impression by summarizing strengths, accomplishments, expertise and career interests.

Education. This includes degrees, diplomas, and certificates granted, outlining the name and location of the institution, and the date conferred.

Honours and Awards. These can come from your workplace, an academic institution, or a professional association.

Work Experience. The information in this section should reflect your career progression by describing your ongoing contributions and accomplishments.

Professional Development. This section should include only those professional development activities that are relevant to the position for which you are applying, and should be labelled, “Selected Professional Development Activities.”

Professional Memberships and Affiliations. This includes any offices or leadership positions you have held.

Publications and Presentations. If you have numerous publications, this section should enumerate those that are most recent and relevant (the past seven years is considered appropriate). Note that as a co-author or a member of a research team, you are entitled to be cited as a contributor on any publication.

Community/Volunteer Experience. This section should include experiences that are relevant to the type of work you are seeking. It is useful to include volunteer experience that has provided you with skills you may not have developed in your paid work.

References. Ideally, this section should not include the names of your references, although résumés commonly include them. Just like everything else in your résumé, you want your references to be relevant to the position and the organization. If the employer requires references before the interview, you can include them then in writing.

Using Technology: Electronic Résumés

Technology has had a huge impact on the job-search process, and health care is no exception. Having an electronic résumé is another important self-marketing tool. In fact, many of today's hiring managers and recruiters prefer to receive résumés by e-mail.

What exactly is an electronic résumé? E-résumés come in various formats, such as an MS Word attachment, a text version, a PDF file, a résumé posted to a job board, a Web résumé/portfolio, or a CD-ROM résumé/portfolio.

It's helpful to use key words when constructing a résumé of this kind. Key words are words associated with a specific industry, profession or job function that clearly and succinctly communicate a specific message. Currently in health care, words such as teamwork, interpersonal skills, patient safety and patient care are commonly used. To find key words, review job postings, corporate websites, classified ads and job descriptions.

To e-mail a résumé successfully, you must put the file into the proper electronic format. Be sure to check with employers regarding which format they require. Although technology can enhance the timelines within which an individual can apply for a position, it also poses risks, such as attachment viruses and/or corrupt files. Make sure that your anti-virus protection software is up-to-date, and always follow your electronic submission with a hard copy.