Resume Writing Guidelines

Overview - A resume is an essential document for job candidates to showcase their qualifications for a desired position. The Career Center's Guidelines for Resume Writing provides a comprehensive outline of the standard and optional content sections that serve as a blueprint for crafting an outstanding resume.

1. Strategies
2. Formatting Guidelines
3. Standard and Optional Content Sections
4. Resume Samples

1) Strategies
   a) Be aware of your audience:
      i) Who is the intended audience for this resume and what is the ultimate goal? When crafting a resume, it is crucial to personalize the information to engage the reader. It is recommended to have various versions of your resume, each tailored to the specific target audience.
   b) Advertising your skills & experience:
      i) As you are preparing your customized document, prioritize highlighting your abilities and experiences that closely match the requirements of the employer. Your resume does not have to encompass your entire academic and professional background; rather, focus on including the most relevant details.
   c) Consider multiple sources of experience:
      i) When developing your resume, it is important to consider a variety of sources for experience. Your life is full of valuable activities that can provide both job-specific skills and transferable abilities applicable to various fields. As you determine which experiences to highlight on your resume, take into account your entire background, including extracurriculars, internships, employment history, and academic projects. Each of these could potentially contribute valuable insights and qualifications to your resume.
   d) Requesting Feedback:
      i) Ask others for assistance in reviewing your resume!

2) Formatting Guidelines
   a) Templates:
      i) Do not use a resume template. Resume readers can most often identify these formats. They sometimes hinder your ability to change the content and style of your document.
   b) Layout:
      i) The layout of your resume should be well-organized and consistent. The reader should be able to quickly pick out information from the different content areas of your resume.
   c) Resume Length:
      i) Limit your resume to one page, unless you have several years of relevant experience. In that case, it may be appropriate to extend your resume to multiple pages. Keep in mind that certain industries may prefer longer resumes.

d) Margins:
   i) Ensure that all margins - left, right, top, and bottom - are set no smaller than 0.5 inches and no larger than 1 inch.
e) Font and Font Size:
   i) Choose one professional-looking font from options like Arial, Times New Roman, or Times. The font size should fall between 10 and 12 points. For headings and subheadings, slightly larger sizes can be used to draw attention.
f) White Space:
   i) Utilize white space effectively to create a balanced and professional appearance for your resume. Avoid overcrowding the page with too much information, and leaving too much white space can also detract from the overall appearance.

3) Content Sections
a) First & Last Name:
   i) It is crucial for a prospective employer to easily identify you when selecting top candidates. To ensure this, your first and last name should be clearly stated on your resume. Make it stand out by using a slightly larger font size and bold style.
b) Location
   i) Include the city and state where you are most accessible for potential interviews, whether by phone, video conference, or in person. You do not need to provide your complete mailing address; simply featuring the city and state will suffice in this section of your resume.
c) Contact Information
   i) List one phone number with an area code that you check regularly. It is important for a potential employer to be able to reach you, so ensure that your voicemail is set up and not full. Additionally, make sure that your voicemail message reflects a professional tone.
   ii) Include only one professional email address to avoid confusion, just as you did with your phone number. Make sure it is an email that you frequently check to ensure that no important messages from potential employers are missed.

4) Education Section
a) Prepare an education entry with the following pieces of information:
   i) Degree (e.g., Bachelor of Science) and Major (e.g., Political Science)
   ii) Month and Year of Graduation, or Expected Month and Year of Graduation (not the duration of attendance)
   iii) College or University (e.g., Webster University) and its location (e.g., St. Louis, MO)
b) In addition to providing standard information for each educational experience, you have the option to enhance your education section with additional details. These may include your GPA, academic awards and scholarships, study abroad programs, relevant coursework, research projects, certifications, or training that demonstrate your academic proficiency and knowledge related to your desired career path.

5) **Experience Section**
   a) As you tailor your resume to highlight how your skills align with the employer's requirements, remember that you do not need to include every job you have held or all of your extracurricular activities in this section. Instead, thoughtfully select those experiences that closely correspond to the skills outlined in the job description and emphasize them in your descriptions.
   b) Common sources of experience include:
      i) Internships
      ii) Military service
      iii) On-campus student employment
      iv) Major class projects, papers, or performances
      v) Significant involvement in student activities or community organizations
      vi) Full-time and part-time employment
      vii) Significant roles on committees
      viii) Athletics leadership roles
      ix) Independent or collaborative research
      x) Freelance work activities
      xi) Volunteer positions
   c) Prepare each experience entry with the following pieces of information:
      i) Company/Organization Name (e.g., Enterprise Holdings, The United Way of Greater St. Louis)
      ii) Location of Company/Organization (e.g., St. Louis, MO)
      iii) Position Title (e.g., Special Events Marketing Intern, Staff Accountant, Data Scientist)
      iv) Duration of Employment (e.g., March 2018 - Present; June 2017 - April 2020)
      v) 3-5 bulleted descriptions that clearly state your experience-related actions, outcomes, and accomplishments. Begin each bulleted description with a present-tense verb for current experience and past-tense verbs for previous experience.
   d) While tailoring your resume to highlight how your skills align with the employer's requirements, remember that it is not necessary to include every job or activity you have ever done. Instead, thoughtfully select which of your experiences are most relevant to the skills mentioned in the job listing and emphasize those in your description.