



Changing Lives, Building Futures....

RESUME WRITING GUIDE

Office of Career Services: Carroll Hall, Room 311

Phone: 540-464-7560 Email: careerservices@vmi.edu

Website: <http://www.vmi.edu/careerservices>

YOUR RESUME

Your resume provides prospective employers with their first impression of you—it is an advertisement about you. Your resume is your chief marketing tool in the job search process. Therefore, your resume should be well-organized and highlight your background by emphasizing your skills and qualifications. Your resume helps prospective employers evaluate what you have to offer them and informs them of the type of job you are seeking, and the skills, accomplishments, and educational background you have to offer.

If you have several career interests and you are applying for several positions that are unrelated, you may want to develop multiple resumes with different objectives. The following pages will define different resume features and resume types to help you develop your own unique resume.

Talk with a Career Advisor: Visit Career the Office of Career Services in Carroll Hall, Room 311 or call 464-7560 to make a **30-minute appointment** with a career advisor to review your resume. You can request a meeting with COL Ratcliffe, MAJ Mickel, or MAJ Hayden.

Get Connected: The Office of Career Services' *KeydetConnect* is available to VMI cadets and alumni. By registering on *KeydetConnect*, you can search job and internship listings, post your resume online, and apply for positions. This saves you valuable time and gives employers access to your resume even when they are unable to come to VMI.

RESUME CONTENT

The key to writing a strong resume is to highlight the areas of your background that best demonstrate your skills and abilities as they relate to the position or opportunity for which you are applying. Also bear in mind that there is no such thing as a “standard” resume format—your resume is unique to *you*.

Contact Information

Your name, mailing address, cell number and email address should always top your resume. If you are still in school while you are sending resumes to potential employers, include both your permanent contact information as well as your college address and cell number.

Summary Statement

- The summary sets the positive tone for your resume and informs the employer of two things; the position you are seeking and what strengths and skills you bring.
- You should seek to be brief, with no more than 1 - 2 sentences. It may include a job title, a description of activities and skills you wish to perform, the type of organization you wish to join, a special interest you have in a particular field, or your short and long-term goals.

Example:

Dean's List international studies major with research and study abroad experience seeking an internship with the US State Department for Summer 2015.

Work Experience

Summarize your experiences by highlighting those that best reveal your skills and abilities in relation to the type of job you are seeking. You should include the title of your position (**bold**), the inclusive dates you worked at the organization, the name of the organization, and the location (city and state).

Example: **Summer Intern**, Summer 2012, Merrill Lynch, New York, NY

You can include paid work experiences, volunteer work, internships, and student organization involvement. If you have several experiences that are directly related to the type of job you are seeking, you may list them under a separate category called "Related Experiences."

College Activities

This section highlights college and professional organizations and clubs in which you participated.

- This could include rank in the Corps of Cadets, clubs or organizations, RDC, Honor Court, Rat Challenge, research projects, Habitat of Humanity, Special Olympics or other volunteer projects.
- Include the name of the organization, any offices you held, and the dates you were a member.
- Include a brief description of your activities and accomplishments if these would be relevant to the position for which you are applying.
- Describe activities using language someone not familiar with VMI would understand.

Honors / Awards

Provide information about any honors you received such as scholarships, Academic Stars, Honors programs, and memberships in honor societies. Include dates. If you have less than three honor entries list them under the education section.

References

List references on a separate sheet and bring it to interviews. Before listing someone as a reference on your resume, *always* seek his or her permission so that the person is aware that he or she might be contacted. Think of faculty and employers who know you and your work well and will give you a positive recommendation. Include names, titles, addresses, email addresses, and phone numbers for each reference, along with a brief description of your relationship with them. Be sure to include your contact information on your reference sheet.

Skills

Information about special skills that are relevant to your job objective can enhance your resume, such as computer skills, language skills, research skills, leadership skills, and technical skills. You can include this information as a separate category or as part of other entries on your resume.

Example: **Computer Skills:** MS Office Suite (MS Excel, MS PowerPoint, MS Word)

Volunteer Work

Consider any volunteer experiences you've had while enrolled in college (i.e. Habitat for Humanity, Special Olympics, Relay for Life, Lexington Community Service Projects, Character Counts, etc.)

Personal Data

Do **not** include personal data such as gender, ethnicity, birthplace, or personal interests - it is illegal for most employers to request this information. More importantly, it has nothing to do with your skills and qualifications.

Other Categories

Be creative and don't feel you have to limit the content of your resume to the categories listed above. If you have special information that supports your application, create a place for it.

RESUME FORMATS

There are three basic resume formats: chronological, functional, and combination. The type of format you use depends on your particular background and the type of work you are seeking.

Chronological Resume Format

- A chronological resume emphasizes your work and/or experiences and organizes your information around dates.
- You should use the chronological format when your work or activity experience is strong and relevant to your job objective, when previous job titles are impressive and job history shows growth, and when you want to emphasize your accomplishments.
- List jobs or experiences in reverse chronological order with your most recent position listed first.
- Disadvantages of this format—your skills may not be highlighted and gaps in your career path may be more visible.

Functional Resume Format

- A functional resume organizes information under functional headings that highlight your major areas of accomplishment or strength.
- Experiences and skills are organized to support your job objective and are not limited by employment dates.
- You may draw upon all sources of experience (employment, volunteer work, college activities, and coursework) to describe your skills.
- Since the functional resume emphasizes capabilities and skills, it can be useful when you want to enter a different career field or illustrate your *transferable* skills.

Although the functional resume takes more time and thought to prepare, it may be more effective than the chronological format if your work experiences have been limited or you wish to focus on special skills and abilities. *See the list of Functional Headings listed later in this guide.*

Combination Resume Format

- The combination resume includes aspects of *both* the chronological and functional formats.
- Work history and skills or accomplishments are emphasized equally.
- This format allows you to include a section about prior work experiences and a section on your functional and transferable skills.

General Resume Writing Guidelines

- Be brief. A one-page resume for most college graduates is adequate. Use two pages only if you have had extensive experience.
- Use action verbs to describe your accomplishments. (*See the list of Action Verbs in this guide.*)
- Emphasize your successes, accomplishments, skills, leadership abilities, and qualifications. State all information positively and relate your skills and background to the job you are seeking.
- Give specific examples of your accomplishments. Quantify when possible to strengthen the impact of your message (e.g.: “supervised 12 employees,” “managed a \$2,000 budget”).
- Be consistent with format, type style and type size.
- Be consistent with verb tense and proofread for misspelled words and grammatical errors.
- Use capital letters, bold print, or italics to highlight parts of your resume.
- Use simple graphics such as lines to create a border.
- Print your resume on light-colored paper (white or ivory, for example) and use matching paper for your cover letter, especially when using a paper color other than white.

ACTION VERBS

Want to strengthen your resume? Try leading bullets with an action verb to highlight an important skill or attribute you bring from past experiences.

Example: *Managed* a \$200,000 VMI Foundation portfolio of diversified stocks VICE *Responsible for managing* a \$200,000 VMI Foundation portfolio of diversified stocks

Below is a list of commonly used verbs to highlight your skills and accomplishments:

accomplished	compared	effected	installed	persuaded	represented
achieved	computed	eliminated	instituted	planned	researched
acknowledged	conceived	encouraged	instructed	prepared	reserved
acted	conceptualized	endured	integrated	presented	resolved
adapted	conciliated	enlisted	interpreted	presided	reviewed
adjusted	conducted	entertained	interviewed	preserved	revised
administered	confronted	established	investigated	met	scanned
advertised	consulted	estimated	invented	printed	scheduled
advised	contracted	evaluated	led	processed	screened
affected	controlled	examined	learned	produced	selected
analyzed	convinced	exchanged	lectured	promoted	served
answered	cooperated	executed	listened	proofread	sketched
anticipated	coordinated	expanded	logged	proposed	sold
applied	corresponded	expedited	made	protected	solved
approached	counseled	experienced	maintained	provided	spoke
approved	created	explained	managed	publicized	staffed
arranged	critiqued	explored	manipulated	purchased	standardized
assembled	decided	facilitated	marketed	quoted	stimulated
asserted	defined	familiarized	maximized	ran	studied
assessed	decorated	followed	mediated	raised	summarized
assigned	delegated	formulated	merchandised	read	supervised
assisted	delivered	found	met	realized	supplied
attained	designed	founded	minimized	received	surveyed
attended	detailed	generated	moderated	recommended	synthesized
audited	detected	governed	modified	reconciled	systematized
authored	determined	guided	monitored	recorded	talked
budgeted	developed	handled	motivated	recruited	taught
built	devised	hired	negotiated	rectified	tested
cataloged	directed	implemented	obtained	redesigned	trained
chaired	displayed	improved	operated	reduced	translated
charted	dispensed	increased	organized	related	traveled
clarified	disproved	influenced	originated	remodeled	treated
classified	drafted	informed	oversaw	rendered	transmitted
collaborated	drew up	initiated	participated	renewed	updated
collected	edited	innovated	perceived	repaired	upgraded
communicated	educated	inspected	performed	reported	utilized

FUNCTIONAL HEADINGS

Functional headings should be listed as the most relevant to your objective first with those lesser relevance later. This allows you to group and highlight experiences and skills most relevant to the employer higher in the resume. For example, if you are applying for a sales position, you may want to group your sales, promotional and advertising experiences under “Advertising Experience”.

Accounting	Human Resources	Production
Administrative	Human Services	Programming
Advertising	Information Technology	Promotional
Analysis	Inspecting	Publicity
Architecture	Instructional	Public Relations
Athletic	International	Public Speaking
Career Development	Interpersonal	Purchasing
Chemistry	Interviewing	Quality Control / Assurance
Communication	Investigation	Real Estate
Computing	Investment	Record Keeping
Community Organizing	Laboratory	Research
Construction	Leadership	Retail
Counseling	Legal	Sales
Creativity	Management	Security
Customer Service	Market Research	Scheduling
Data Processing	Marketing	Selling
Design	Materials Handling	Social Work
Drafting	Media Relations	Supervision
Editing	Mediation	Surveying
Employment	Medical	Systems Analysis/Design
Engineering	Organizational	Teaching
Facilitating	Planning	Team Building
Field Work	Presentational	Technical
Finance	Printing	Testing
Fund Raising	Product Development	Training
Graphic Design	Production	Writing
Group Work	Problem-Solving	Youth Counseling
Healthcare	Product Development	

Thomas Jonathan Jackson

Permanent Address: 8. E. Washington ST., Lexington, VA 24450

Current Address: VMI Box 11111, Lexington, VA 24450 – **Cell:** (540) 111-1112

Email: jacksontj@mail.vmi.edu

SUMMARY Academically distinguished Economics and Business major with substantive summer financial internship and leadership experience seeking opportunities in the finance industry.

EDUCATION **Virginia Military Institute (VMI)**, Lexington, VA
Bachelor of Arts, Economics and Business May 2014
Concentration: Finance
GPA: **3.6, Dean's List** (2)

CAREER RELATED EXPERIENCE

Summer Intern, Summer 2013
Merrill Lynch , New York, NY

- Assisted financial advisors in Merrill's Global Private Client Division
- Guided \$1,000,000 in assets by placing calls on behalf of intern team
- Researched investment philosophies and portrayed findings in a presentation format
- Analyzed extensive data on prospective clients

Vice President, Fall 2012 - present
VMI Cadet Investment Group

- Managed a \$200,000 VMI Foundation portfolio of diversified stocks
- Analyzed, reported, and recommended stock investments to the group
- Corresponded with external agencies to present our team's progress
- Orchestrated recruitment tutorials and conducted new recruit interviews
- Coordinated with group advisors and officers regularly to assess program direction and growth

SKILLS

Computer: MS Office Suite
Language: Spanish (Basic)

COLLEGE ACTIVITIES

Assistant Prosecutor, Fall 2012 – Spring 2013
VMI Honor Court

- Educated the corps of cadets on honor and integrity as a representative of the Honor Court
- Investigated breaches of the Honor Code to ensure the health and preservation of VMI tradition

Vice President, Fall 2012 – Spring 2013
Sigma Beta Delta Honor Society, Virginia Military Institute

- Facilitated involvement among cadets interested in Business, Management and Administration

Academic Mentor, Fall 2011 – Spring 2012
VMI Miller Academic Center

- Mentored freshmen in helping them identify academic priorities, set goals, construct and implement plans, and evaluate their progress

AWARDS & HONORS

Eagle Scout, Boy Scouts of America

Thomas Jonathan Jackson

Permanent Address:

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Phone: (540) 111-1111

Current Address:

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Lexington, VA 24450
Cell: (540) 111-1112

Email: jacksontj@mail.vmi.edu

SUMMARY

Dean's List Civil and Environmental Engineering major with substantive internship and leadership experience seeking entry-level engineering opportunities.

EDUCATION

Virginia Military Institute (VMI), Lexington, VA
Bachelor of Science, Civil & Environmental Engineering May 2014
GPA: **3.6, Dean's List (2)**

ENGINEERING EXPERIENCES

Summer Intern, Summer 2013
Stearns and Wheeler, Roanoke, VA

- Designed solids handling portion of a wastewater treatment plant
- Researched new technologies to be use in water treatment
- Reviewed and edited Preliminary Engineering Reports
- Met with clients, visited sites, and edited and reviewed site plans

Member/Participant, Fall, 2012, ASCE Conference, Charlottesville, VA
Structural engineer, September 2012 – Present, Concrete Canoe Project, Civil and Environmental Engineering Department, VMI, Lexington, VA
Timber Framer, April 2013, Timber Framing Guild, VMI, Lexington, VA

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

- Guided team of 10 cadets in concrete canoe project implementation
- Presented water treatment research to governing board of engineers
- Published weekly updates and information on timber building projects

LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

Training and Operations Lieutenant, Fall 2012
Regimental S-3, Corps of Cadets, Virginia Military Institute, Lexington, VA

- Planned and wrote operation orders for battalion level activities
- Organized and supervised operations involving over 600 personnel
- Coordinated with VMI administration to develop student training schedules
- Prepared weekly schedules for the student body
- Instructed junior leaders in corps of cadets
- Directed programs for building projects
- Supervised numerous timber framing projects to completion

COLLEGE ACTIVITIES

Club Athlete, February 2013 – Present
VMI Rugby Team

OTHER SKILLS

Computer: MS Office Suite
Language: Arabic (Basic), French (Conversational)