



---

# Resume Writing Guide

---

## YOUR RESUME

Your resume provides prospective employers with their first impression of you—it 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. It 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 540-464-7560 to make a **30-minute appointment** with a career advisor to review your resume. You can request a meeting with COL Ratcliffe 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 that best demonstrate your skills and abilities as they relate to the position or opportunity for which you are applying. Your resume is unique to you and a critical marketing tool.

### 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 and college address.

### 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 2018.

## Education

Include all colleges and universities from which you have earned a degree and list in reverse chronological order (your most recent school listed first). For those colleges and universities you attended but did not receive a degree, their inclusion should be considered if you participated in some kind of experience relevant to the objective of your resume. Include the name and location of your college, type and date of degree earned, and major and minor. It is best to include your cumulative GPA and/or your major GPA. You may also include any special training you received that supports your objective.

- As a 2<sup>nd</sup> or 1<sup>st</sup> class cadet, you usually don't include your high school, unless you were involved in a significant or unique experience relevant to your career goal.
- For 4<sup>th</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> class cadets, you may include your high school information, particularly experiences related to your resume objective.
- If you've earned Dean's List or are academically distinguished, make sure you include this distinction with your degree information.

**Example:**     **Virginia Military Institute (VMI)**, Lexington, VA  
                  **Bachelor of Arts, International Studies**                     Expected May 2018  
                  Minor: Psychology  
                  **Dean's List** (4), Cumulative GPA: 3.2, Major GPA: 3.5

## Related Coursework

You may want to list appropriate college coursework in your resume *if* you apply for a position that is unrelated to your major or the coursework is unique/specialized in the career field. For example, if you apply for a technical writing position, but you majored in biology, it would be advantageous to list your writing courses to highlight your skills. In most cases, it is recommended that you omit major-related coursework from your resume.

## Work Experience and College Activities

Two key areas of difficulty in writing effective resumes are translating **Work Experience** and **College Activities** into language that employers will value and understand. This is accomplished with writing effective bullets that reflect your skills used. Bullets are short fragmented sentences that highlight transferrable skills used in your experiences and activities, AND are of future value to prospective employers.

Below are critical considerations when writing effective bullets:

1. Bullet points should be used to describe what you are doing, what you did, or what you have been selected to do.
2. Each of your bullets should begin with a properly conjugated action verb and they should end with an outcome. (Refer to Page 5 of this document for a list of action verbs)
3. When possible include quantities by number, duration, or dollar amount to tell the reader the entire story.
4. Be consistent with font type and size.
  - a. **Font:** Use a Sans Serif font like: Arial, Tahoma, or Trebuchet
  - b. **Size:** The font size for your bullets should be the same size as the rest of your headings except for your name. Your name should be around 14-16-point font. Your bullets and the rest of your content should be between 10-12 point size font.

**Example: Newspaper Internship**, Large Newspaper, Large City, State - Summer 2017

- Recorded and transcribed interview notes from three city council meetings
- Authored three 500-word articles published in June and July 2017
- Successfully increased followership of the Large Newspaper Twitter account by 400%

## 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: Investments Intern**, Summer 2017, 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 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, AutoCAD, and Mathcad.

## 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.

# RESUME FORMATS

There are two general resume formats: chronological and functional. The type of format you use depends on your particular background and the type of work you are seeking.

## **Chronological Resume Format** (Most often used by college students and new graduates)

- 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.
- This format can be disadvantageous for those with gaps in employment or for those whose recent experiences do not showcase your related skills and abilities.

## **Functional Resume Format** (Used typically by experienced candidates)

- 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.*

## GENERAL RESUME WRITING GUIDANCE

- Be brief. A one-page resume for most college graduates is adequate.
- 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 position/industry.
- 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 sparingly to highlight parts of your resume.
- During the editing process, you may find it helpful to save your resume as a Word document. Before sending your resume to an employer, you should save your resume as a PDF.
- Use a consistent file naming system to help you keep track of your resume documents. We recommend using the format that includes your name, the type of document, and when it was last modified.

**Example resume file name:** Resume\_TracyJackson\_10.6.17

# 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	Technical Writing
Fund Raising	Product Development	Testing
Graphic Design	Production	Training
Group Work	Problem-Solving	Writing
Healthcare	Product Development	Youth Counseling

# Tracy Ann Jackson

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

**Current Address:** VMI Box 11111, Lexington, VA 24450

**Email:** [jacksonta@mail.vmi.edu](mailto:jacksonta@mail.vmi.edu) **Cell:** (540) 111-1112

---

## SUMMARY

Academically Distinguished Economics and Business major with substantive summer financial internship and leadership experience seeking opportunities related to finance.

## EDUCATION

**Virginia Military Institute (VMI)**, Lexington, VA  
**Bachelor of Arts, Economics and Business**, May 2018  
Minor: History; Concentration: Finance  
**Dean's List (6)**; Overall GPA: **3.7**, Major GPA: 3.85

## RELATED EXPERIENCE

**Summer Intern**, Summer 2017  
Merrill Lynch, New York City, 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.
- Analyzed extensive data on prospective clients

**Vice President**, Fall 2017 – Present; **Junior Analyst**, Fall 2016 – Spring 2017  
VMI Cadet Investment Group

- Manages a \$310,000 VMI Foundation portfolio of diversified stocks
- Analyzes, reports, and recommends stock investments to the group
- Corresponds with external agencies to present our team's progress
- Orchestrates recruitment tutorials and conducted new recruit interviews
- Coordinates with group advisors and officers regularly to assess program direction and growth

## SKILLS

**Language:** Spanish (Intermediate)

**Computer:** Microsoft Office Suite

## COLLEGE ACTIVITIES

**Assistant Prosecutor**, Fall 2017 – Present  
VMI Honor Court

- Educates the Corps of Cadets on honor and integrity as a representative of the Honor Court
- Investigates breaches of the Honor Code to ensure the health and preservation of VMI tradition

**Vice President**, Fall 2016 – Present

VMI Chapter of Sigma Beta Delta Honor Society

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

**Academic Mentor**, Fall 2015 – Spring 2016

VMI Miller Academic Center

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

Sample 1<sup>st</sup> Class Chronological Resume

# Tracy Ann Jackson

**Permanent Address:**

8. E. Washington St.  
Lexington, VA 24450

**Current Address:**

VMI Box 11111  
Lexington, VA 24450

Cell: 540-111-1112 - Email: [jacksonta@mail.vmi.edu](mailto:jacksonta@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 2018  
**Dean's List** (5); GPA: **3.6**

**ENGINEERING EXPERIENCE**

**Summer Intern**, Summer 2017  
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**, ASCE Conference, Roanoke, VA September 2017  
**Structural Team Leader**, Concrete Canoe Project, September 2017 – Present  
**Project Manager**, VMI Transportation Class, January 2017 – March 2017  
**Timber Framer**, VMI Timber Framing Guild, April 2017 – Present

**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**, August 2017 – Present  
VMI Corps of Cadets

- Plans and composes operation orders for battalion level activities
- Organizes and supervises operations involving over 600 personnel
- Coordinates with VMI administration to develop training schedules
- Prepares weekly schedules for the student body
- Instructs junior leaders in Corps of Cadets

**COLLEGE ACTIVITIES**

**Club Athlete**, VMI Rugby Team, February 2015 – Present  
**Club Member**, VMI Rotoract Club, September 2017 – Present

**SKILLS**

**Engineering:** AutoCAD 3D, MATLAB, & MathCAD  
**Language:** French (Conversational), Arabic (Basic)  
**Computer:** MS Office

Sample 1<sup>st</sup> Class Functional Resume

# Tracy Jackson

**Permanent Address:** 1839 East Washington Street, Roanoke, VA 24001

**Current Address:** VMI Box 1839, Lexington, VA 24450

**Cell:** 540-111-2222    **Email:** [jacksonta@mail.vmi.edu](mailto:jacksonta@mail.vmi.edu)

---

- SUMMARY**                    Dean’s List English major and NCAA student athlete with community relations and policy internship experiences; seeking an internship for Summer 2018.
- EDUCATION**                **Virginia Military Institute (VMI)**, Lexington, VA  
**Bachelor of Arts in English**, May 2020  
**Dean’s List (2)**; Overall GPA: **3.4**; Major GPA: **4.0**
- INTERNSHIPS**              **Legal Intern**, Summer 2017  
United Planning Organization (UPO) | Washington, DC.
- Scribed meetings and drafted policy briefs for the Director of Legal Affairs
  - Prepared and facilitated the Community Leadership Academy for 50 teenagers
  - Presented on UPO programs during community events around the city
  - Developed an assessment dashboard in Excel to quickly track attendance and identify trends
- Community Relations Intern**, Summer 2016  
City of Roanoke | Roanoke, VA
- Compiled research on community and non-profit organizations in Roanoke
  - Designed a brochure to promote the city government’s resources for businesses
- COLLEGE ACTIVITIES**        **Student Athlete**, August 2016 – Present  
VMI NCAA Division I Water Polo Team
- Balances a rigorous set of academic and co-curricular military requirements with a 20-hour per week training and competition schedule
- Team Member**, January 2017 – Present  
VMI Ethics Club
- Discusses a range of scenarios and ethical dilemmas during weekly meetings
  - Selected as the only freshman to represent VMI at the US Naval Academy’s Ethical Case Competition in April 2017
- Club Member**, March 2017 – Present  
VMI BRIDGE Community Service Club
- Participates in community service projects around the Lexington area
- WRITING**                      **Poverty & Housing Policy Considerations**, August 2017 – Present  
Independent Research
- Currently researching the impact of public housing policy on impoverished communities
  - Completed research will be presented at the Undergraduate Research Symposium in April 2018
- Operations Plan and Report**, April 2017  
Technical Communications Class Paper
- Developed a policy and implementation plan to implement new software at a large organization
  - Prepared summary and marketing materials for entry, mid, and executive level employees

Sample Underclass Resume