

# Resume Guide

Northland College Career Education Center

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## Resume Guide

### What exactly is a resume?

Think of a resume as a promotional brochure about you. It should include a succinct summary of your accomplishments and qualifications that you will share with a potential employer. If effective, a resume should help you secure an interview.

### When do I need to develop my Resume?

Ideally, you need to develop your resume during your freshman year which can be used for summer jobs, internships, volunteer positions, and scholarship opportunities. Several drafts will occur throughout your college experience to perfect presentation and wording, and make additions/revisions to your pre-professional experience, educational preparation, certifications and distinctions.

### Tips:

- **Be Honest** - never lie on your resume.
- **Utilize spell check** - Be sure to proofread and have others proofread for spelling, grammar and punctuation errors.
- **Maintain consistency** - Pay close attention to fonts, spacing and punctuation.
- **Eliminate wordiness** - Keep your resume to one or two full pages.
- **Most important information 1st** - Order all headings with most current and relevant information first.
- **Be prepared** - Know your audience and develop your resume to match the skills, abilities and accomplishments related to each position and/or employer.
- **Use active language** - Start your bullets with an action verb and use descriptive, incomplete (never write in complete sentences) statements.
- **Be specific** - Use numbers, percentages, statistics, and superlatives (i.e. first, only, most, best, top) when appropriate.
- **Stay away from templates** - Templates and prepared formats make your resume difficult to reconstruct and edit.
- **Be unique** - Present yourself in a professional and visually appealing manner.

**Ask for help** - The Career Education Center can help proofread and fine tune your resume! Stop by the 2nd floor of the Ponzio Campus Center, or email [careers@northland.edu](mailto:careers@northland.edu) for assistance.

For more information:

[my.northland.edu/careers](http://my.northland.edu/careers)



Northland College Career Education Center

Northland College Alumni and Student Network

# What format should I follow?

There are three basic formats we suggest to develop your resume. Within each of these formats there are choices in: design, additional information, font selection, etc. To make these choices, look at several sample resumes. You can find sample resumes in some of the resume guidebooks in the Career Education Center Lending Library on the second floor of the Ponzio Campus Center. We've included some samples here (see page 5) to help you get started, but we strongly encourage you to look at more.

## Chronological Resume -

Emphasizes employment in reverse chronological order, beginning with your most recent job experience and working back. This resume format targets progressively greater responsibilities and specific achievements.

### Who should use this format?

Those with a consistent employment history.

## Functional Resume -

Hones in on specific accomplishments, skills and qualifications at the beginning of the resume—that correlate to the position in which you are applying. This resume highlights your best experiences first, not just your most recent ones.

**Who should use this format?** Those who have little related experience to what they are applying for, employment gaps, or those changing careers.

## Combination Resume -

Combines the strengths of both the Chronological and Functional formats, and provides a strong presentation to bring forth diverse skills and experiences in a coherent, coordinated fashion.

### Who should use this format?

Those with a need to express specific skills and accomplishments that may not be noticeably highlighted in employment history.



## Applying for a Federal Job?

**Federal resumes are different!** They have some specific formatting and content requirements. Check-out USA Jobs at <https://www.usajobs.gov/> for content and formatting information.

# Resume Content—The Details

1

## Contact Information

Your resume needs to be in a format that will inform others about your relevant skills, your professionalism and your strengths. The presentation and content of your resume are critical in communicating who you are on paper. Your contact information includes your email, phone number and address as well as provides your resume with a type of letterhead. The examples in this brochure or from the resume guides in the Career Education Center Lending Library (2nd floor PCC) can be used as reference sources.

3

## Experience/Work History

“Experience” is often used as a title for this section rather than “Work History” for recent graduates as you will then be able to include:

- ◆ Volunteer work related to a potential position
- ◆ Internships
- ◆ Participation in organizations
- ◆ Supervision in any role (paid or unpaid)
- ◆ Mentor, tutor, and/or advisory roles
- ◆ Instructor positions
- ◆ Residence hall roles/orientation leadership
- ◆ Projects for classes (capstone)
- ◆ Travel and/or study abroad

In the Experience section, you need to communicate your skills/responsibilities in more detail:

- ◆ Your title
- ◆ Organization name & location (city and state)
- ◆ Time period— M/Y—M/Y or Y—Y format
- ◆ Description of your responsibilities in bulleted format; use action verbs (using incomplete sentences) to describe your responsibilities

You may want to group experiences together under descriptive subheadings that reflect your main skill areas (see functional resumes). By creating subcategories, you can actually highlight your most relevant and strong experiences first. experiences first.

2

## Education

Include information on all of your college degrees including your degree in progress. Include the following information for each school:

- ◆ Degree earned (degree in progress)
- ◆ Major/minor/area of concentration
- ◆ Date/anticipated date of graduation
- ◆ Name and location of institution
- ◆ Cumulative GPA (only if 3.0 or above)

This is also an area that you may include other sections regarding your Education, including “Scholastic Achievements” and “Coursework Highlights.” In the former, include those scholastic distinctions including scholarships and Dean’s List. Coursework Highlights is a listing of relevant coursework that helps underscore your educational preparation. Once you have sufficient experience, you may wish to delete this section. Include “Certifications” earned in the field of your degree, campus involvement, academic achievements, or anything that is part of your educational process.

4

## Other Areas:

These sections are used to highlight any additional miscellaneous or unique qualifications or skills you may have. You may not use this section or you may decide to have two of these sections. It is up to you.

- ◆ Specialized Skills
- ◆ Professional Development
- ◆ Professional Memberships
- ◆ Campus and Community Involvement

# What About References?

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Include a separate attachment with your resume that lists your references. Remember, your references are a part of your whole “marketing plan”. Why withhold them when you have a chance to show your employers some of the people who like your work and support you?

Include a separate page, formatted in a style similar to your resume with your name and all of your contact information at the top. On it, list the names and contact information which includes professional title, name, work address, work phone number, and work email address for 3-5 references.

In terms of who to include on your reference contacts, consider one or two employers, one or two professors, and sometimes a personal reference (someone who can attest to your personal qualities—not a relative). **Always** ask permission of the people you list. Don’t risk a reference being surprised by a call from a potential employer. If you are not confident that these people will provide you a positive reference—don’t list them. One way to find out if they will give you a positive recommendation is to ask them when you ask for permission: “Would you be comfortable providing a good reference for me or would it be better for me to find a professor who knows me better?”

By providing your prospective reference with an out, you are able to make sure the individual feels comfortable recommending you for the position.

## Use Active Language

Using active words makes your resume easy to read and helps your experiences sound more...active. Start your bullets with a verb and use descriptive statements.

**When describing your responsibilities, instead of:** Trained employees, Helped customers, Managed farm

### **Better:**

- Trained front line food service staff members
- Developed rapport with clients which increased customer relations and sales
- Managed 50 head of dairy cattle on farm

### **Best:**

- Conducted new hire orientations to help acclimate new restaurant employees by touring facility, explaining policies, completing necessary paperwork, and answering questions
- Assisted customers by answering questions, locating merchandise and resolving conflicts in a professional manner which increased floor sales by 14%
- Managed a herd of 50 high producing cows by following daily milking procedures to ensure high quality milk

# Action Words!

Acquired  
Adapted  
Addressed  
Administered  
Advertised  
Advised  
Allocated  
Analyzed  
Appraised  
Arranged  
Assessed  
Assisted  
Attained  
Attended  
Authorized  
Balanced  
Budgeted

Improvised  
Integrated  
Introduced  
Invented  
Investigated  
Maintained  
Managed  
Mapped  
Marketed  
Measured  
Mediated  
Mentored  
Monitored  
Motivated  
Negotiated  
Observed  
Operated  
Organized

Calculated  
Chaired  
Clarified  
Coached  
Collaborated  
Collected  
Communicated  
Compiled  
Completed  
Composed  
Computed  
Constructed  
Controlled  
Coordinated  
Corresponded  
Counseled  
Critiqued

Originated  
Performed  
Planned  
Prepared  
Prioritized  
Processed  
Produced  
Programmed  
Projected  
Provided  
Reasoned  
Recommended  
Recorded  
Recruited  
Referred  
Repaired  
Reviewed  
Scheduled

Delegated  
Demonstrated  
Designed  
Developed  
Devised  
Directed  
Documented  
Edited  
Educated  
Encouraged  
Enforced  
Established  
Estimated  
Evaluated  
Examined  
Executed  
Expedited

Screened  
Solved  
Specified  
Strengthened  
Studied  
Summarized  
Supervised  
Supported  
Surveyed  
Taught  
Tested  
Trained  
Unified  
Updated  
Upgraded  
Verified

Explained  
Facilitated  
Familiarized  
Figured  
Formulated  
Generated  
Guided  
Handled  
Identified  
Implemented  
Initiated  
Informed  
Innovated  
Inspected  
Installed  
Instructed

# Samples!

## Katie Duff

duff@duffymail.com  
(715) 915-6111

Present Address:  
1411 Ellis Avenue  
Ashland, WI 54806

Permanent Address:  
777 Lucky Lane  
Las Vegas, NV 89123

### EDUCATION

**Bachelor of Science**, Sociology with Disability Studies emphasis (May 2008)  
Northland College, Ashland, WI  
GPA: 3.25/4.0

### RELATED EXPERIENCE

**Advisor**, Pathways Inc., Ashland, WI 09/2004 – 12/2005; 04/2007 – 01/2008

- Worked one-on-one with consumers with developmental disabilities
- Assisted in meeting goals set by consumer, agency, and social worker
- Provided recreation, job coaching, and taught daily living skills
- Worked with geriatric consumers; provided individual support and personal care

**Special Olympics Coach**, Chequamegon Bay Area Athletes, Ashland, WI 04/2004 – 12/2007

- Volunteered coaching adult athletes with developmental disabilities during track and field, tennis and bowling seasons
- Taught athletes how to participate in various sports while adapting activities to meet all abilities
- Organized and facilitated practices, contacted athletes, recruited volunteers and coordinated trips to local and state competitions

**Special Olympics Board Member**, Chequamegon Bay Area Athletes, Ashland, WI 09/2004 – 12/2007

- Attended monthly meeting to discuss current events and goals of organization
- Participated in an active role in organizational decision making

**Health and Wellness Director**, YMCA Camp Manitou, Eau Claire, WI 06/2006 – 08/2006

- Maintained overall health and wellbeing of all campers and staff
- Demonstrated leadership supervising younger staff members
- Provided first aid as needed to campers and staff
- Organized and distributed campers' medications

**Special Education Paraprofessional**, North High School, Eau Claire, WI 01/2006 – 06/2006

- Assisted head teacher with daily lessons and classroom activities
- Worked in individual and group settings with students with disabilities
- Provided personal care for students such as toileting, feeding and positioning
- Assisted students in meeting requirements for individualized education program (IEP)

### ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE

**Student Office Assistant**, Northland College, Ashland, WI 09/2006 – 12/2007

- Assisted faculty with grading and copying; completed data entry
- Maintained an organized working environment for faculty

**Counselor**, YMCA Camp Manitou, Eau Claire, WI Summer 2001 – Summer 2005

- Supervised a cabin of ten to twelve female campers each week
- Oversaw campers' safety and wellbeing
- Modeled leadership and served as a positive role model for kids
- Guided campers through activities and educational experiences

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duff@duffymail.com  
(715) 915-6111

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Ashland, WI 54806

Permanent Address:  
777 Lucky Lane  
Las Vegas, NV 89123

### References

#### Jenna Casey

jc Casey@northland.edu  
Coordinator of Career and Community Services  
Northland College  
1411 Ellis Avenue  
Ashland, WI 54806  
(715) 682-1398

#### Patti Fenner-Leino

pfcn-lei@northland.edu  
Director of Retention & Student Advocacy  
Northland College  
1411 Ellis Avenue  
Ashland, WI 54806  
(715) 682-1230

#### Michele Meyer

mmeyer@northland.edu  
Associate Dean for Student Life  
Northland College  
1411 Ellis Avenue  
Ashland, WI 54806  
(715) 682-1674

Additional examples can be found in the **Career Resource Area** in the Student Services Commons on 2nd Floor of the Ponzio Campus Center.



# Resume Checklist

After you develop a first draft, review your resume with this checklist. Then, when you've made your corrections, use the resume refinement service available through Career Services.

## Appearance

- Is inviting and easy to read; doesn't look crowded; includes plenty of white space
- Creates visual impact with moderate use of bullets, boldface, underlining, italics, font size
- Is printed on very light colored (white, cream, beige, or very light grey), high quality paper

## Organization and Format

- Presents strongest qualifications first
- Highlights experiences and skills through headings and subheadings
- Is kept to an appropriate length—generally 1-2 pages plus reference sheet
- Uses consistent style of presenting dates, job titles, descriptions, locations, etc., throughout the document

## Writing Style

- Begins sentences or phrases with powerful action words
- Includes words that are important to employer (borrow key words from job ad or description)
- Uses brief, succinct language in active rather than passive voice
- Reads smoothly without awkward phrases (Hint: Have a friend read it aloud to you; if he or she stumbles on a phrase, the employer probably will too.)
- Is absolutely free from grammatical, spelling, punctuation, usage, and typographical errors

## References

- Are attached in a separate list of 3-5 people including all contact information
- Include only people who have given you permission and who will say good things about you
- Are presented on a sheet that is formatted like your resume to create a set of documents with a professional look

**Do not staple your resume.  
Print on quality paper, single-sided.  
See the Career Education Center for quality resume paper choices.**