

RESUME CONSTRUCTION BASICS

- A resume is a marketing tool designed to get you an interview.
- Its purpose is to highlight your strengths related to the desired job by providing a short, focused summary of your experience, education, and skills.

YOU MUST INCLUDE:

- CONTACT INFORMATION
 - Full name, phone number, and email address are mandatory. Ensure your phone number is accurate and your email address is professional. You may choose to use your msvu.ca email address for job search correspondence. Home address is optional; try to fit on one line to conserve space (see samples for reference).
- EDUCATION
 - Include your current program of study with start date, or your completed degree with graduation date. You may choose to note any scholarships or significant research projects in this section. High school information is usually omitted by the second or third year of your undergraduate degree.
- WORK EXPERIENCE
 - Include your job title, name of company, location, and start/end dates of employment. Avoid simply listing a job description – use accomplishment statements to focus your points on **what you contributed and achieved** with past employers.

YOU MAY CHOOSE TO INCLUDE:

- HIGHLIGHTS
 - The *Highlights* section is placed at the beginning of the resume. It is a series of 3-6 comprehensive statements that sum up the information in the rest of the resume. This allows the hiring manager to form a mental picture of you as an employee while s/he reads the rest of the resume.
 - EXAMPLES OF HIGHLIGHTS
 - 10 years of experience in the healthcare industry with a focus on long-term care of seniors
 - Energetic and personable brand ambassador for multiple high-end retailers
 - Enjoys piloting new strategies to streamline product offerings and enhance client experience
- MEMBERSHIPS
 - Only include memberships that are relevant to the desired job.
- VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT
 - Volunteer pursuits should be listed in terms of accomplishment statements, in the same format as work experience.
- AWARDS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS
 - Significant academic awards can be listed in the Education section; other accomplishments can be listed at the end of the resume. Describe the criteria for any awards listed (eg. Tom Reeves Award – *awarded to a graduating student for excellence in mathematics*).

DO NOT INCLUDE:

- GENDER, MARITAL STATUS, ETHNICITY, CHILDREN, AGE, HEIGHT, WEIGHT, SALARY EXPECTATIONS

SELECTING A RESUME STYLE

In general, a reverse-chronological resume format is preferred. However, if you are applying for a job in a new field or based on experiences gained through unpaid experience, the functional or combined resume styles may be appropriate. You may wish to meet with a Career Counsellor or an advisor in your department to determine an appropriate resume style for your field.

Chronological Resume

Lists all education and experience in reverse chronological order

PROS

- Allows employers quick assessment of experience
- 80% of employers prefer this format
- Appropriate for those with consistent work record

CONS

- Because most common, may not stand out
- Can reveal gaps in employment/educational history or frequent job changes
- Can limit effective marketing of relevant skills/abilities.

Functional Resume

Focuses on major skills and accomplishments from all areas - not limited to work history

PROS

- Can highlight relevant skills acquired through a variety of experiences
- De-emphasizes unrelated positions and duties
- Downplays lengthy employment gaps
- Useful for individuals with few practical experiences in chosen field

CONS

- Can be confusing for employers to assess quantifiable work background
- Not recommended for conservative employers (e.g. banks, government)

Combined Resume

Highlights relevant skills and accomplishments while also outlining work history

PROS

- Effective marketing of key job-related skills and accomplishments while maintaining a traditional structure
- Offers flexibility to emphasize skills drawn from a range of experiences – for example, via co-op, volunteer experience, cultural exchanges or academic research projects

CONS

- Inclusion of chronological data can reveal gaps or inconsistencies in work history

ACCOMPLISHMENT STATEMENTS

Accomplishment statements show current or potential employers that you can bring value to the organization. Demonstrate this by describing your experiences in terms of accomplishments. Accomplishments are not restricted to paid work experiences!

What is an accomplishment?

Any action that you took that had a positive impact on your organization, customers or co-workers. Accomplishments can be qualitative (e.g., improved staff morale) or quantitative (increased event participation by 50%).

How do I create an accomplishment statement?

Examine each of your past experiences. Think about what you did particularly well in each of those experiences.

Possible questions to ask yourself...

What did I create or build?

What projects/assignments/presentations did I work on?

What was unique about them?

Did I receive awards or recommendations because of my work?

Link the accomplishment to an action (verb describing your behavior) and an object or target (group, individual, company, project)

Example:

Organized + **a food drive** + **exceeding targets by 75%**

(Action) + (target or object) + (accomplishment)

EXAMPLES OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- **Increased** return on investments
- **Improved** (gross or net) profits
- **Provided** quality service
- **Expanded** sales
- **Increased** market share
- **Reduced** turnover
- **Greeted** clients professionally
- **Improved** productivity
- **Lowered** costs
- **Improved** market penetration
- **Maintained** current knowledge
- **Decreased** new product launch time
- **Improved** cash availability
- **Generated** accurate reports
- **Streamlined** budget planning
- **Obtained** new financing
- **Reduced** operating expenses
- **Responded** quickly to inquiries
- **Arranged** moratorium with creditors
- **Negotiated** settlements
- **Planned** and executed location moves

RESUME FORMATTING CHECKLIST

- **TAKE THE TIME TO GET IT RIGHT** – Set aside a few hours with limited distractions. You will need to engage in meaningful reflection about yourself and your career, so you don't want to rush this process. Begin by making a list of all your past employment, community involvement, and education. Don't edit just yet. Think back to how you felt and what your priorities were when engaged in each job and activity; record what you contributed and what you gained from each position. This brainstorming activity will help you to craft accurate and varied accomplishment statements when you put together the finished document. Save this draft document for future use.
- **FOLLOW ALL JOB APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS!** – Read the job application closely. Ensure you follow all requirements, *even if they differ from the general directions in this package*. Each employer is slightly different, and following instructions is an important part of the hiring process.
- **LENGTH** – the resume should be 1 or 2 pages in length. Print on one side only.
- **PAPER TYPE** – Use standard 8 ½ x 11" white paper. Slightly thicker or tinted paper is acceptable, but avoid using unusual sizes or colours as they don't photocopy well.
- **FONT** – Use a clean, legible font, size 11 or 12 pt. Text should be black only to avoid distraction and for ease of photocopying. Send online applications via PDF to ensure your font and layout are not corrupted.
- **LAYOUT** – Overall appearance should be attractive, professional, and well-balanced on the page. Ensure bullets and right-justified dates are consistently formatted. You may choose to insert a horizontal line (bottom border) to emphasize section headings, but use any other formatting sparingly. Avoid graphics and logos.
- **SECTION ARRANGEMENT** – Section headings should be capitalized. Use boldface and italics consistently. If you decide to boldface the job title and italicize the company name, make sure you do this for each employer listed.
- **ACCOMPLISHMENT STATEMENTS** – Use accomplishment statements to lay out work experience in brief, clear sentences. Do not simply paste in a job description. Emphasize what **you** did during your employment to benefit the company.
- **POWERFUL PHRASING** – Remove unnecessary wordiness (i.e., "Was responsible for" or "Duties included: [...]"). Begin each bullet point with an action word. Do not use abbreviations or shorthand. Avoid negative language and ensure your portrayal of past employers is polite and positive. Be creative and find constructive ways to express any difficult situations you encountered (i.e., "resolved customer concerns in a courteous and efficient manner" as opposed to "dealt with annoying complaints").
- **SPELL CHECK** – Don't rely on your computer to do this! Have at least two people proofread your resume. There should be **NO** spelling, typographical, or grammatical errors – avoidable errors indicate carelessness and these resumes are often automatically rejected.

THE COVER LETTER

WHY INCLUDE A COVER LETTER?

The cover letter is your first chance to make a good impression. It directs attention to the qualifications in your resume that are most relevant to your desired job. It also allows you to demonstrate knowledge about the company and explain how you are a good fit for the position requirements and the company's culture.

Like the resume itself, the cover letter is a personal advertising tool and an opportunity to showcase your writing ability. **Your objective is to motivate the hiring manager to offer you an interview.** The cover letter should be written in the first person (i.e., "I am applying for [...]") but avoid passive language (i.e., "I am a dedicated salesperson" not "I think I could be considered a fairly dedicated salesperson").

You can find thousands of sample cover letters on the Internet. Although this can be a good source of inspiration and will give you an idea of what goes in each paragraph, **avoid copying these letters verbatim!** Your potential employer will be far more impressed by a simple and honest letter detailing what is special about YOU and what benefits hiring you will bring to the company.

A common difficulty many students encounter when crafting a cover letter is listing many desirable career characteristics (i.e., leadership, time management, innovation, enthusiasm) without providing specific examples of these characteristics in action. Make a concrete connection between your personal attributes and how they will be an asset to the desired job. Without specific examples, these descriptors have little impact and seem insincere.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

What position are you applying for?

"I am applying for the position of [...]" is a simple and straightforward opening sentence.

What can you contribute?

Tell the hiring manager what you will bring to the company if hired. The cover letter is not the place to tell the hiring manager what being hired will do for you – it is assumed you want the job to further your career, so overemphasizing the benefits to you comes across as selfish.

What are your qualifications?

Be sure to emphasize training you've received through your degree program (i.e., major research projects or presentations) that is relevant to the desired job. Read the job description or advertisement carefully and describe how you meet each qualification.

What would past co-workers consider special about you?

Attention to detail? Generous and welcoming attitude towards more junior employees? Ability to complete projects on time and on budget? Ability to solve customer concerns in a pleasant and professional manner? Willingness to take on additional assignments or projects to ensure the office ran smoothly?

Think carefully about your past employment opportunities and take note of tasks you were especially good at. Do not include qualifications and buzzwords that do not describe you.

SAMPLE COVER LETTER

Adapted from Service Canada (www.youth.gc.ca)

October 29, 2017

Ms. Holly Peters
Manager
Cool Threads Clothing Store
25 Main St.
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 2D4

Re: APPLICATION FOR SALESPERSON – COMPETITION #J-274-799

Dear Ms. Peters:

I am interested in applying for the position of salesperson at Cool Threads Clothing Store as advertised on the Mount Saint Vincent University Career Services website.

As a second-year Business & Tourism student, I understand how business operates through my specialization in economics and accounting, and have developed persuasive sales skills and cash handling experience as Fundraising Chair of the Business & Tourism Society. I have acquired organizational skills and the ability to multitask through my involvement as a timekeeper at varsity basketball games and as coach of a junior soccer team. I have enclosed my résumé with further details.

I would enjoy being a part of your company and am available for an interview at your convenience. You can contact me at 902-555-1212 or via email at jane.morriseau@msvu.ca. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

(sign your name)

Jane Morriveau
78-A Pine Street East
Halifax, Nova Scotia
902-555-1212
jane.morriseau@msvu.ca

Enclosure
(your résumé)

SUSAN THOMPSON

17 University Avenue, Halifax NS B3S 1K2

(902) 234-5526 susan.thompson@msvu.ca

HIGHLIGHTS

- 6 years experience in administrative roles - efficient and accurate worker
- Ability to forge connections with a wide range of people (including children and youth)

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Arts (History)

Mount Saint Vincent University

2019

Halifax, NS

WORK EXPERIENCE

Career Assistant

Career Planning Services - Mount Saint Vincent University

2017-2019

Halifax, NS

- Reviewed resumes and provided peer counseling to students, tailored to program of study
- Represented MSVU at various outreach events in collaboration with Career Planning team
- Publicized workshops and recommended resource material to students in person and online

Chauffeur

Discount Car & Truck Rental

Summer 2018

Truro, NS

- Provided client transportation to rental vehicle locations, planned best routes based on traffic
- Answered general inquiries and scheduled pickups in person, over the phone, and on website
- Good rapport with clients, which resulted in repeat business
- Achieved Employee of the Month Award (July 2011)

Administrative Assistant

Babcock & Wilcox Canada Ltd.

Summer 2013-2017

Halifax, NS

- Monitored inventory recording and coordinated daily updates to inventory lists
- Performed general office duties including filing, photocopying, answering phones and email
- Proficient in Microsoft Excel computer software and Oracle procurement system

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

Tutor

Queen Anne High School

2017-2019

Halifax, NS

- Mentored Grade 9-12 students; assisted with assignments and test preparation

Music Volunteer, Moms and Tots Program

Helping Hands Day Care

2017-2019

Halifax, NS

- Led sing-alongs and instrument activities with preschoolers age 2-4

JULIE HOUSE

42 Preston Ave., Apt 203 - Halifax NS - B3H 4K9

Julie.House@msvu.ca (902) 455-2553

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Public Relations

Mount Saint Vincent University, Halifax NS (Expected graduation May 2019)

Certificate in French for Non-francophones

Universite de Quebec a Trois-Rivieres, Trois-Rivieres QC (April 2016)

Bachelor of Arts in French

Memorial University of Newfoundland, St. John's NL (May 2014)

PUBLIC RELATIONS EXPERIENCE

Communications Student

Privy Council Office, Ottawa ON (January-April 2017)

- Prepared media relations plan for 2016 Federal Budget in conjunction with Prime Minister's Office
- Assisted with the production of Federal Consultation Overview and supported development of data-based calendar for Internet site
- Managed coordination and distribution of questionnaire for federal communications employees
- Assisted senior communications advisors in providing support to federal government departments
- Wrote articles and interviewed employees for the quarterly newsletter

Communications Student

Department of Fisheries and Oceans, St. John's NL (May-August 2018)

- Conducted media relations for public consultations,
- Wrote analytical report on public consultation process for proposed initiative
- Reviewed and edited articles for regional national employee newsletters
- Interviewed employees for human interest stories and profiles
- Drafted copy and design layout for brochure and regional fact book
- Planned special events for Oceans Day and Kids Day

OTHER WORK EXPERIENCE

Legislative Assistant

House of Assembly, St. John's NL (February-September 2017)

Historic Site Interpreter (bilingual)

Parks Canada, St. John's NL (Summer 2016 and 2015)

Tourist Information Officer

Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Tourism (Summer 2014 and 2013)

SAM LONE

22 Lacewood Dr, Halifax NS B3S 1K3 (902) 425-6568 samuel.lone@msvu.ca

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Tourism and Hospitality Management 2018
Mount Saint Vincent University, Halifax NS

INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Youth for Understanding (Frankfurt, Germany) 2017

- Won a Canada Youth Scholarship to participate in a student cultural exchange program in Europe
- Lived with a German family, communicating in French, English, and German
- Learned to adapt to a different culture

CUSTOMER SERVICE EXPERIENCE

Murphy's on the Water (Halifax, NS) 2018

- Provided guided tours of Halifax to visitors, ensuring safety and comfort of guests
- Communicated effectively in French and English with patrons from around the world

Black's Photography (Halifax, NS) 2016-2018

- Sold cameras priced up to \$3,000 on commission; regularly exceeded sales quotas
- Learned to deal effectively with the public and resolve client concerns with diplomacy

Marketing Research Group (Halifax, NS) 2015

- Researched and developed a comprehensive marketing plan for a business course
- Presented and defended proposal to a committee of professional academics and peers; received positive feedback on depth of research and strength of argument

Lifeguard Trainer (Halifax, NS) 2014

- Taught lifesaving techniques, aquatic skills, and other water sports to youth 14-20
- Earned Leader's Assistant Instructors Award for outstanding teaching skill

PERSONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- **Dean's Honour List standing** 2015-2018
- **Public Speaking Award, Mount Saint Vincent University** 2016

JANE BROWN

6 Water Street, Bedford, N.S., B3M 3K1 (902) 555-5678 jane.brown@msvu.ca

HIGHLIGHTS OF QUALIFICATIONS

- Over five years of experience working in food and nutrition related environments
- Motivated self-starter, displays initiative in diverse situations, confident public speaker
- Demonstrates leadership and organizational skills in academic and work environments

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Science in Applied Human Nutrition **2018**

Mount Saint Vincent University - Halifax, Nova Scotia

Academic Achievements

- Awarded Entrance Scholarship to Mount Saint Vincent University **2014**

DIETETIC EXPERIENCE

Level III Dietetic Intern **Winter 2018**

Cobequid Health Centre - Lower Sackville, Nova Scotia

- Assessed patient dietary needs and recommended appropriate diet modifications
- Designed patient education brochures which outlined healthy food choices for various medical conditions

Level II Dietetic Intern **Fall 2016**

IWK Health Centre - Halifax, Nova Scotia

- Consulted with members of medical team in order to make appropriate nutrition recommendations for children undergoing surgeries for various conditions
- Updated and revised website information on healthy food choices for children

Level I Dietetic Intern **Summer 2016**

Canadian Diabetes Association - Halifax, Nova Scotia

- Designed, implemented, and evaluated a nutrition education program for teenagers with diabetes

FOOD AND NUTRITION RELATED EXPERIENCE

Deli Counter Attendant **2015-Present**

Atlantic Superstore - Halifax, Nova Scotia

- Ensured health and safety standards were followed while preparing, displaying, and storing deli meats, cheeses, salads, and other items at deli counter
- Provided excellent service to customers while taking and completing food orders

Banquet Server/Waitress **2013-2015**

RCR Catering - Halifax, Nova Scotia

- Served food to customers in a friendly and efficient manner
- Worked as an effective member of a team during busy events

Heart and Stroke Foundation Volunteer

2013-2014

Halifax, Nova Scotia

- Developed a “Heart Smart” educational brochure aimed at fostering healthy eating and lifestyle habits in teenagers
- Promoted the brochure at local high schools

Feed Nova Scotia Volunteer

2012-2013

Halifax, Nova Scotia

- Assisted at local food bank by welcoming patrons and filling orders
- Prepared food items for distribution in an organized fashion

SPECIAL SKILLS

- **First Aid and CPR** certification updated yearly (current 2018 certification)
- **Computer Skills** - Microsoft Office, internet, email, website creation

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

- Canadian Association of Foodservice Professionals, MSVU Student Branch (2014-2018)
- Member - MSVU Residence Society (2015-2017)
- Participated in university intramural soccer and basketball (2014-2016)
- Enjoy reading health and food related articles, camping, hiking, and travelling

JENNY MILLER
16 Rosedale Dr, Halifax NS
902 455 6765 - jenny.miller@msvu.ca

Education

Bachelor of Business Administration (with distinction)	2018
Concentration in Accounting/Marketing Mount Saint Vincent University, Halifax, NS	
Tourism and Transportation Diploma	2012
Sir Sanford Fleming College, Peterborough, ON	

Accounting

- Reviewed and processed accounts payable, ensuring early payment terms and due dates were met
- Collected accounts receivable in a timely manner
- Created annual sales budget and developed monthly action plan to achieve goals
- Utilized company-specific accounting software application
- Processed bank deposits, reconciliations, and petty cash

Administration

- Oversaw the startup and promotion of branch office, resulting in reaching the sales goal of profitability with the two year mandate
- Hired, trained, supervised, and motivated staff to reach sales goals
- Researched new product development, worked with suppliers and negotiated contracts
- Redesigned and streamlined paper flow for time and cost efficiency; set up templates/mail merges and created spreadsheets for customer invoices
- Offered a high standard of customer service, through strong product knowledge and identification of client needs
- Good working knowledge of MS Word, Excel, Access, and PowerPoint
- Keyboarding 45-50 wpm

Marketing and Promotions

- Coordinated and conducted educational and promotional seminars/trade shows
- Wrote sales proposals and participated in sales presentations to current and potential clients, business executives, and managers/owners
- Organized two non-profit events, from planning/soliciting donations/recruiting volunteers to on-site coordination on event day
- Produced quarterly newsletters, designed sales flyers, and participated in the design, layout, and editing of annual brochures
- Negotiated co-op advertising to minimize promotional expenses while increasing product awareness

Employment Experience

Administrator Nova Tours (Atlantic Tours Ltd.), Halifax NS	Summer 2017
Travel Counsellor Maritime Marlin Travel, Halifax NS	2016
District Sales Manager Transportation Manager Club Med Sales Inc., Montreal PQ	2014-2016
Administrator Green Window Realty, Sherbrooke NS	2013-2014
Corporate Travel Counsellor Carlson Wagonlit Harvey's Travel, Dartmouth NS	2010-2013
Administrative Assistant <i>Working Holiday, Australia and New Zealand</i>	2008-2010

Community Involvement

- **Team Captain** – Abilities Foundation 24-Hour Relay (Summer 2017)
- **Halifax Chamber of Commerce** – Membership Retention (2013-present)
 - **Volunteer** – Labatt Briar Curling Championship (2015)
 - **Plasma Donor** – Canadian Blood Services (2011-present)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AT CAREER PLANNING SERVICES
McCain 306 – www.msvu.ca/careerplanning – [902] 457-6567

CAREER PLANNING SERVICES WEBSITE (msvu.ca/careerplanning)

Exploring the CPS website is a great first step in your career decision or job search. Online you'll find:

- Job postings for on-campus, full-time, part-time, summer, contract, and volunteer positions
- Upcoming events and career fairs (including downloadable events calendar, see below)
- Job search resources (including interview, networking, and resume tips; workshop videos)
- Career resources (including who's hiring in Nova Scotia, potential growth industries, expected compensation scales, labour market trends and links to external job search sites)
- Career tips by degree (including education and skill requirements, potential career paths)
- Information about career counseling, resume critiques, and other in-person services

ON-CAMPUS EVENTS

Check out the Career Planning Services Event Schedule for the current term's roster of special events and workshops (*available at the CPS office, or on the CPS website [here](#) under "Upcoming Events".*)

EVENTS INCLUDE:

- One-hour workshops on a variety of topics (choosing a major, resume/interview prep, finding a summer/part-time job) offered throughout the academic year free of charge
- Temporary displays ("Resume Roadshows") set up on campus staffed by a Career Assistant offering on-the-spot resume critiques and general information about CPS activities
- Annual events (Etiquette Brunch, Job-Finding Club) which provide more in-depth opportunities for skill acquisition and development. These events usually require pre-registration and occasionally a fee – check the Event Schedule or inquire at the office.

CAREER COUNSELLING (BY APPOINTMENT)

Career counsellors are dedicated professionals who facilitate the career planning process by:

- discussing your skills, interests, expectations and anxieties related to your career path
- offering standardized testing to help you determine how your interests, work style, and personality might fit with various career options

CO-CURRICULAR RECOGNITION PROGRAM (CCRP)

Formally document all your non-academic, extra-curricular involvement in an official format called a Co-Curricular Record (CCR), a document that can be submitted to employers alongside your resume.

- Include activities such as volunteer work, athletics, awards and other leadership activities. Your CCR will give you the edge that graduate schools and future employers are looking for.
- Assemble your CCR online at www.msvu.ca/CCRP. You can request your CCR at any time for job applications, award nominations, or scholarship opportunities.

RESUME CRITIQUES & CPS CENTRE TOURS (BY APPOINTMENT)

Career Assistants are upper-year Mount students trained to help you with your resume and accessing CPS resources.

- Resume Critiques are 30-min appointments with a Career Assistant to review your resume, offer advice on content and formatting, and provide preliminary proofreading.
- Career Assistants can also help you locate resources in the CPS Centre and online, and offer tours of the CPS Centre to familiarize you with available on-site books and career guides.