



CAREER &
ACADEMIC
PLANNING

MAKE YOUR NEXT MOVE...

RESUME WRITING

Main Office: 3rd Floor Wilson Hall – 540-568-6555

Recruiting Services: 1st Floor Sonner Hall – 540-568-7379

<http://www.jmu.edu/cap/>

What is a Resume?

A resume serves as a brief summary of your qualifications and experiences as they relate to the type of job you are seeking—it is used when you apply for jobs, internships, or graduate and professional schools. The primary purpose of a resume is to secure an interview, giving you the opportunity to sell your strengths and abilities to prospective employers in person.

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 job objectives. The following pages will define different resume features and resume types and help you develop your own unique resume.

Need Individual Attention on Your Resume?

Visit Career and Academic Planning in Wilson 301 or call 568-6555 to make a **30-minute appointment** with a career counselor to review your resume. You may also attend a **Resume Writing Workshop**. Please see the Calendar of Events on <http://www.jmu.edu/cap/calendar/index.htm> for dates and times of these events.

Want information on resume writing?

Visit our website at <http://www.jmu.edu/cap/> or stop by the **Career and Academic Planning Resource Center** in Wilson 303 to browse our books on resumes, cover letters, job search strategies, networking interviewing, negotiating salary offers, and business etiquette. Flip through the Resource Center's **JMU Student Resume Binder** to see samples of JMU student resumes organized by feature and college.

Want Employers to Come to You?

Career and Academic Planning's **Recruit-A-Duke** and **On-Campus Recruiting Program** are available to JMU students and alumni. By registering on Recruit-A-Duke at <https://jmu-csm.symplicity.com/students/>, you can search job and internship listings, post your resume online, apply for positions, and sign up for **mock interviews**. This saves you valuable time and gives employers access to your resume even when they are unable to come to campus.

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*.

Identifying Information

Your name, mailing address, telephone 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 phone number.

Objective

The objective sets the tone for your resume and informs the employer of the position you are seeking. 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. A job objective indicates to the employer (or graduate program) that you have some direction; however, you may omit this information from your resume if you are unsure about the type of work you are seeking or you are applying for a variety of positions within the company. In this case, state your objectives in a cover letter rather than your resume.

Examples:

- To obtain a financial trainee position with a dynamic banking organization that will utilize my analytical skills, language skills, and multinational experiences.
- To work hard in a challenging position as a programmer or analyst that will utilize and enhance my knowledge of the information systems field.
- Seeking a position in a foreign relations or intelligence field that will employ my knowledge on political science and background in Russian language and culture.

Education

Include all colleges and universities from which you have earned a degree. They should be listed in reverse chronological order with your most recent school first. If you are a freshmen and sophomore, it is customary to include your high school information; however, if you are a junior or senior, you usually do not include your high school, unless you were involved in a unique experience relevant to your job search. 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. If it is relevant, include any special training you received that supports your objective.

Example: James Madison University, Harrisonburg, Virginia
Bachelor of Arts, May 2004
Major: International Affairs, Minor: Political Science
Honors Program, Cumulative GPA: 3.7, Major GPA: 3.8

Related Coursework

It may be appropriate to describe relevant course projects or research you have completed if it is related to your job target. Listing of college coursework on your resume may be helpful *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 many cases, it is recommended that you omit major-related coursework from your resume.

Experience

Summarize your experiences by highlighting those that best reveal your skills and abilities and are related to the type of job you are seeking. You should include the title of your position, the name of the organization, location (city and state), and the dates you worked at the organization. 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.” Remember to be brief and use strong action-verbs in the past tense to indicate your responsibilities and accomplishments.

Activities

This section highlights college and professional organizations and clubs in which you participated. Include the name of the organization, any offices you held, and the dates you were a member. Include a brief description of your activities if these would be relevant to the position for which you are applying.

Honors

Provide information about any honors you received such as scholarships, Dean’s List, President’s List, and memberships in honor societies. Include dates. If you have less than three honor entries list them under the education section.

References

Before listing someone as a reference on your resume, you must *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. You need only state on your resume, “References will be available upon request.” However, some people prefer to list their references on a separate sheet and either attach it to the resume and/or bring it with them to the interview. In this case, include names, titles, addresses, and phone numbers for each reference. Be sure to include your name and address on your reference sheet.

Skills

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

Personal Data

Unlike in the past, personal data such as race, sex, height, and marital status is no longer required on your resume—it is illegal in some states for employers to request this information and, more importantly, it has nothing to do with your skills and qualifications. Some people do provide this data on their resume when applying for positions where the information is pertinent, such as flight attendant.

Other Categories

Be creative and do not 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. Chronological resumes are easy to follow because they highlight career growth and the names of employers. 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. Disadvantages of this format—your skills may not be highlighted and gaps in your career path may be more visible. List jobs or experiences in reverse chronological order with your most recent position listed first.

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 bound by employment dates. Titles and work history are de-emphasized. 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 page 6 of this booklet for ideas on functional headings.*

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 is adequate. Use two pages only if you have had extensive experience.
- Use action verbs to describe your accomplishments. *See the page 5 of this booklet for ideas.*
- Emphasize your successes, 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 letter, bold print, or italics to highlight parts of your resume.
- Use simple graphics such as lines to create a border. If you are a graphic or interior design major, you may want to use your resume to display your design skills or logo.
- 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 using a variety of verbs, like the ones listed below to describe 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

Accounting	Human Resources	Problem Solving
Administrative	Healthcare	Product Development
Advertising	Human Services	Programming
Athletic	Inspecting	Promotion
Career Development	Instruction	Production
Chemistry	International	Publicity
Communication	Interpersonal	Public Relations
Computing	Interviewing	Public Speaking
Community Affairs	Investigation	Purchasing
Counseling	Investment	Real Estate
Creativity	Laboratory	Research
Culinary	Layout	Retailing
Data Processing	Leadership	Security
Design	Legal	Scheduling
Drafting	Management	Selling
Editing	Market Research	Social Work
Employment	Marketing	Supervision
Engineering	Medicine	Teaching
Field Work	Organization	Technical
Finance	Planning	Testing
Fund Raising	Presentations	Training
Graphic Design	Printing	Writing

Source: Jackson, Tom. *The Perfect Resume: Today's Ultimate Job Search Tool*. New York: Broadway, 2004.

Scannable Resumes

The “Electronic Revolution” has made it possible for employers to find job applicants faster and easier. Optical Character Recognition (OCR) systems look at images (resumes) to distinguish characters (letters and numbers) and then create a text file (ASCII). Artificial intelligence then reads the text and extracts the important information about the applicant. The purpose of a scannable resume is to match employers’ needs to applicants who fulfill those needs quickly and effectively. Scannable resumes allow employers to search a database of resumes by using *keywords*, *buzzwords*, or *descriptors* to find matches or “hits.” Ultimately, a computer-friendly resume is one that maximizes the computer’s ability to read the applicant’s resume and obtain hits. Finally, it is a good idea to have two versions of your resume—a scannable version and a traditional version—to take with you to an interview.

Scannable Resume Content Guidelines

- Use common headings such as: Objective, Education, Employment, Work History, Positions Held, Skills, Accomplishments, Summary, Highlights, Summary/Highlights of Qualifications, Publications, Licenses, Certifications, and Honors.
- Incorporate important nouns. The scanner will search for descriptive words (keywords) such as: writer, accounting, manager, Spanish (language fluency), Public Relations Society of America.
- Use concrete words, for example, it is better to use “managed a team of software engineers” instead of “responsible for managing, training...”
- Use common keywords to define your skills, experience, education, professional affiliations, etc.
- Use industry-specific jargon and acronyms. Minimize abbreviations to common ones like B.A., B.S., or GPA. When you use acronyms, also spell out their meanings.
- Include specifics such as names of software packages (Adobe Photoshop, Microsoft Excel).
- When faxing a resume to be scanned, set the fax to “fine mode” so that the recipient receives a better quality.

Scannable Resume Format

- Use any standard resume format—chronological, functional, or combination.
- Format your name and address with your name on one line and the address on each line appearing below it.
- List multiple telephone numbers on separate lines.
- Use capital letters for section headings.
- Do not use vertical or horizontal lines, shading, graphics, boxes, charts, or columns on your scannable resume.
- Use common, simple, non-decorative typefaces such as: Arial, Helvetica, Times New Roman, Tahoma, Trebuchet, or Verdana.
- Use standard type sizes between 10 and 14 points.
- Do not use italics, underlining, shadows, or reverse (white letters on black background).
- Use white space, computers use it to recognize when one topic has ended and another has begun.
- Use one side of 8½ x 11” white paper.
- Use a laser printer or high-quality photocopier.
- Include your name on the top of each page if there are multiple pages of your scannable resume.
- Do not fold or staple.

OBJECTIVE	To obtain a position in multimedia design and development to utilize and further develop my artistic skills, aesthetic sense, and technical training.
EDUCATION	<p>James Madison University, Harrisonburg, VA Bachelor of Science, Media Arts and Design, May 2008 Major: Interactive Media Minor: Creative Writing Cumulative GPA: 3.4 Relevant Coursework: Multimedia for the Web, Interactive Media Authoring, Multimedia Writing, Web Communication, Multimedia Law, News Editing, Photojournalism, Scriptwriting, and Creative Nonfiction</p>
EXPERIENCE	<p>Freelance Web Designer, Harrisonburg, VA May 2006–May 2008</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Created engaging web presences for clients per their requests and requirements ▪ Provided consulting services to evaluate and meet client needs ▪ Forged and maintained client relationships <p>Web Designer/Graphic Artist, Commonwealth Information Security Center, Harrisonburg, VA Sept. 2005–May 2006</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maintained and designed 3 corporate websites for nonprofit organization ▪ Fabricated/manipulated web pages, graphics, and JavaScript in an office environment ▪ Maintained organized documentation to ensure that application scripts and web pages were dynamic and readily updatable for future employees ▪ Provided advice regarding graphic design and layout issues ▪ Instructed people on how to create websites in Dreamweaver and edit HTML <p>Pool Manager, Atlantic Pool Service, Springfield, VA Summers 2003–2005</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Used communication and leadership skills to manage 400-member facility ▪ Maintained organized records ▪ Communicated with Board of Directors to ensure that members' needs were met ▪ Utilized lifeguard training and CPR training to save two lives during the 2004 season
SKILLS	<p>Software: Macromedia Flash, Director, Dreamweaver, Fireworks; Adobe Photoshop, ImageReady, Illustrator, Premiere, After Effects, Audition; Corel Bryce 5; Microsoft Office Suite (including Access); Apple Final Cut Pro, Quicktime Pro; Digidesign Pro Tools Operating Systems: Mac OS 9, X; Windows 95–XP; Dos; Linux Languages: HTML; SQL; CSS; ActionScript; JavaScript; Director Lingo; VBA (working knowledge)</p>
AWARDS/ HONORS	<p>Broadcast Education Association (BEA) Best of Festival 2004/King Foundation Award Winner, Fixed Media in the "To Instruct/Train" category; won \$1000 top prize and attended BEA Festival in Las Vegas, NV Dean's List: Spring 2007, Fall 2006, Spring 2006, Fall 2005</p>

Figure 1. Chronological Resume

DOLLEY M. MADISON

madisondm@jmu.edu

CURRENT ADDRESS

48F South Avenue
Harrisonburg, VA 22801
(540) 555-5512

HOME ADDRESS

123 Meatso Drive
Leap, MD 20473
(245) 555-6789

OBJECTIVE

To gain an entry-level position utilizing my writing, organizational, and administrative skills within a government or private setting.

EDUCATION

JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY, Harrisonburg, Virginia
Bachelor of Arts, May 2008
Major: **International Affairs**; Minor: **Political Science**
Honors Program, GPA: 3.2

WRITING & EDITING EXPERIENCE

- Completed writing and technical communication courses
- Proofread reviews and bibliographic annotations for the Middle East Journal
- Wrote annotations of books for recent publications list in the Middle East Journal
- Edited and published newsletter of the JMU Honors Alumni Association Chapter, The Epilogue
- Researched and wrote honors thesis, "Middle Eastern Politics and its Nuclear Potential"
- Developed handbook for high school Model United Nations participants

ADMINISTRATIVE EXPERIENCE

- Maintained budget records for Honors Program
- Communicated with publishers of books being reviewed
- Recorded incoming books for Publications Department
- Compiled and updated Honors Program alumni list database
- Performed various administrative tasks, including typing, filing, preparing documents, scheduling, entering information into databases, photocopying, faxing, and answering phones

LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT EXPERIENCE

- Assisted in planning of African American poetry conference
- Effectively supervised campers and organized activities for camping sessions
- Facilitated academic, emotional, recreational, and social programs for JMU residents
- Developed and organized St. Mary's Middle School Model United Nations program
- Lobbied Maryland General Assembly as President of regional student council

SPECIAL SKILLS

- Proficient in German (conversation and composition)
- Knowledge of both IBM and Macintosh computer systems
- Knowledge of Microsoft Office Suite (including Access and PowerPoint) and MacWrite software

WORK EXPERIENCE

- Publications Intern: Middle East Institute, Washington, D.C. Summer 2007
- Student Assistant: Honors Program, JMU, Harrisonburg, VA 9/06-present
- Unit Counselor: Campy My Flather, GSCNC, Mt. Solon, VA Summer 2006
- Resident Advisor: Eagle Hall, JMU, Harrisonburg, VA 8/2005-5/2006

Figure 2. Functional Resume

MADISON A. DUKE

Permanent Address: 1223 McMannus Drive ▪ Lake, VA 25607 ▪ (540) 555-3336
Current Address: 1360-F Hunters Road ▪ Harrisonburg, VA 22801 ▪ (540) 555-4321
E-mail: dukema@jmu.edu

OBJECTIVE To pursue a hospitality career in events planning using my knowledge and skills in organizational and interpersonal communication.

EDUCATION **James Madison University**, Harrisonburg, VA
Bachelor of Business Administration, May 2008
Major: **Hospitality Tourism Management** Concentration: **Special Events Planning**

CAREER-RELATED EXPERIENCE

Conference Assistant, Summer 2007

Events and Conferences, James Madison University, VA

- Served as a primary contact to numerous camps and conferences visiting James Madison University
- Initiated and maintained contact with sponsors prior to their arrival date to confirm all pertinent information
- Organized staff and materials for check-ins/check-outs; compiled billing summaries and housing rosters
- Coordinated all requested JMU services by assigned customers, including dining arrangements, meeting facilities, audiovisual equipment, housekeeping requirements, signage, and transportation needs
- Supervised use of all dining and dorm access cards by camp/conference participants, as Events and Conferences Liaison to JMU Card Services Department
- Performed necessary administrative duties including locking and unlocking residence halls, meeting facilities used, answering phones, and serving as on-call staff member after regular business hours

Outreach Coordinator, September 2005–May 2007

Canterbury Episcopal Campus Ministry Vestry, James Madison University, VA

- Collaborated with members to develop weekly activities and identified monthly community service events
- Led outreach committee to plan, coordinate, and participate in all projects and service events including: organizing “Relay for Life” (to raise money for cancer research), tutoring impoverished children in Columbia, SC and volunteering at local retirement communities and soup kitchens
- Followed up with new or absent members of community; wrote all welcome letters, birthday cards, and thank you letters for 40+ members

Events Coordinator Intern, Summer 2005

Strathmore Hall Arts Center, Bethesda, MD

- Scheduled exhibit tours and weddings for a variety of arts patrons
- Supervised weddings and banquets as the after-hours representative

LEADERSHIP

- Developed and led a week-long service trip to Columbia, SC
- Attended weekly leadership training sessions and maintained good group contact with service coordinator to support trip planning and implementation
- Prepared a budget for travel and dining expenditures for 9 participants
- Anticipated, scheduled, and led daily activities
- Facilitated several reflection sessions and maintained group morale through conflict management during trip

COMMUNICATION

- Served non-profit organization that promotes land use in the Shenandoah Valley
- Provided assistance for weekend training seminar; created training manual for group cohesion workshops
- Created press releases for 8 exhibits and shows at the Strathmore Hall Arts Center

ACTIVITIES Trip Leader, Alternative Spring Break, James Madison University, October 2005–December 2005
Intern, Valley Conservation Council, Staunton, VA, September 2004–May 2005

Figure 3. Combination Resume