

Resume Tune-Up Guide for NMU Students

Your resume is often the first impression you make on a potential employer. It's a snapshot of your skills, experience, and qualifications. A well-crafted resume can open doors to interviews and ultimately, job offers. This guide will help you create a resume that stands out.

I. Formatting for Success

- **Avoid using a template:** Templates cause unnecessary work when you need to add or move anything, and most employers have seen the templates many times.
- **Keep it concise:** Aim for one page, especially if you're an undergraduate student. Recruiters often spend just a few seconds scanning each resume.
- **Use a clean and professional font:** Stick to traditional fonts like Times New Roman, Arial, Calibri, or Helvetica in 10-12 point size.
- **Maintain consistent formatting:** Use the same font, font size, and spacing throughout the document. Use bolding, italics, and capitalization sparingly but consistently to highlight key information.
- **Use white space effectively:** Don't overcrowd the page. Use margins (0.5-1 inch) and spacing to create a visually appealing and easy-to-read document.
- **Reverse chronological order:** List your experiences and education in reverse chronological order, with the most recent items first.
- **File format:** Save your resume as a PDF to preserve formatting across different systems.

II. Essential Sections

- **Contact Information:**
 - Full Name
 - Phone Number
 - Email Address (professional-sounding)
 - LinkedIn Profile URL (optional, but recommended if profile is complete)
 - Permanent Address (optional, especially if you have a local address)
- **Summary/Objective (Optional):**
 - A **Summary** is best for those with more experience. It's a brief overview of your skills and experience, tailored to the specific job you're applying for.
 - An **Objective** is more suitable for students or those with limited experience. It states your career goal. However, summaries are generally preferred.
- **Education:**
 - Degree Name, spelled out (e.g. Bachelor of Science in Biology)
 - Major/Minor
 - Expected Graduation Date (or Graduation Date)
 - University Name, City, State
 - GPA (optional, include if it's above 3.5)
 - Relevant coursework, honors, or awards
- **Experience:**
 - Job Title
 - Dates of Employment (Month/Year - Month/Year)
 - Company Name, City, State
 - Use bullet points to describe your responsibilities and accomplishments (see section III for details)
- **Skills:**
 - List both hard skills (e.g., software proficiency, programming languages) and soft skills (e.g., communication, teamwork, problem-solving).

- Tailor this section to the specific job requirements.
- **Activities/Involvement (Optional):**
 - Include extracurricular activities, volunteer work, club memberships, or relevant personal projects. This can demonstrate leadership, teamwork, and other valuable skills.
- **Awards and Honors (Optional):**
 - List any academic or professional awards you've received.
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III. Crafting Powerful Bullet Points

The experience section is the heart of your resume. Use the following tips to create compelling bullet points:

- **Start with strong action verbs:** Use action verbs that convey a relevant skill to begin each bullet point (e.g., managed, developed, implemented, led, analyzed). Avoid weak verbs like "responsible for" or "assisted with."
- **Focus on accomplishments, not just duties:** Instead of simply listing your responsibilities, highlight your achievements and the impact you made.
- **Quantify your accomplishments whenever possible:** Use numbers, metrics, or data to demonstrate the results of your work (e.g., "Increased sales by 15%," "Managed a team of 5," "Reduced customer complaints by 20%").
- **Use the STAR method:** This method can help you structure your bullet points:
 - **Situation:** Briefly describe the context or situation.
 - **Task:** Explain the task you were assigned.
 - **Action:** Describe the actions you took.
 - **Result:** Highlight the outcome or result of your actions.

Example:

- **Weak:** Responsible for answering phones and greeting customers.
- **Strong:** Provided exceptional customer service to over 50 clients daily, resolving inquiries and ensuring customer satisfaction.

Another Example (using STAR):

- **Situation:** Faced with low student engagement in a club.
- **Task:** Needed to increase membership and participation.
- **Action:** Developed and implemented a new social media marketing strategy.
- **Result:** Increased club membership by 30% within two months.

IV. Tailoring Your Resume

- **Customize your resume for each job application:** Carefully review the job description and tailor your resume to highlight the skills and experience that are most relevant.
- **Use keywords from the job description:** Incorporate keywords from the job description throughout your resume, especially in the skills and experience sections. This can help your resume get past applicant tracking systems (ATS).

V. Final Checks

- **Proofread carefully:** Check for any typos, grammatical errors, or formatting inconsistencies. Ask a friend, family member, or career counselor to review your resume as well.
- **Get feedback:** Visit NMU's Career Services for a resume review. They can provide valuable feedback and suggestions.

By following these tips, you can create a strong and effective resume that will help you land your dream job. Good luck!