

Purpose of Your Resume

Your resume serves as a marketing tool to prospective employers. You have approximately 30 seconds to catch an employer's eye, so your resume must be concise, organized, and targeted to the employer receiving it. Thus, you may have different versions of your resume for different positions. Your resume speaks volumes about your communication skills and serves as a conversational guide during interviews.

Your resume cannot tell your complete story; however, it should highlight your experiences and skills for a particular position so that an employer will be compelled to take a closer look at you by inviting you to interview.

Your resume must be perfect. Many employers receive hundreds of resumes for each open position and are looking for easy ways to narrow the pool of applicants. Proofread your resume and have others also check for typographical and spelling errors and incorrect grammar usage. Avoid the temptation to exaggerate or mislead, as the damage resulting from doing so can be irreparable to your bar fitness eligibility and career.

Resume Samples and Templates

The Career Development Office (CDO) has developed resume samples and typeable templates. These documents, available on the CDO [website](#), incorporate best practices in resume writing. We encourage you to use these documents as a starting point when creating your resume.

Resume Reproduction and Distribution

When submitting resumes via hard copy, use high-quality 8.5" x 11" bond paper in a neutral shade (e.g., white or ivory) and matching envelopes. Use preprinted labels or print the address directly onto the envelope using an ink jet or laser printer.

When submitting resumes electronically, convert your resume into Adobe PDF format. This will ensure the receiver is able to view the document exactly as you intended. When sending applications via email, the body of your message should be a short transmittal note with your resume and cover letter attached to the email as PDFs.

Resume Length

In most cases, your resume should be one page. Students with significant work experience (approximately 10 or more years) prior to law school may have a two-page resume. Also, a two-page resume is acceptable for some public sector positions for which you have substantial related experience.

Content and Format

Your resume should have at least two sections – Education and Experience (with Education listed first). Optional additional sections include Publications, Community Service and Additional Information.

After gaining post-graduate experience, you will reverse the Experience and Education sections (with Experience detailed first). Optional sections (e.g., Memberships and Professional Affiliations) may follow the Education section. A Bar Admissions section (more details below) may be listed first or last on your resume.

Graphics, Layout and Font

Use bold text, italics, underlining or all capital letters to highlight various elements of your resume, but use them sparingly. You also may experiment with margins, type sizes and fonts. We recommend that your margins are at least 0.75" on all four sides, and that you use a type size no smaller than 11 point. Consider using 12-point Arial and 1" margins if you need to fill the page; use 11-point Times New Roman and 0.75" margins if you have difficulty fitting everything on one page.

Graphics should be limited to the use of horizontal lines and simple bullets (• or ■), and they should be used consistently. Use the border feature to create a horizontal divider line, rather than a long line of dashes. Use the tab stop marker and tab alignment features instead of the space bar to align certain resume elements. To control the spacing between lines and throughout your resume, make sure the document is formatted with single line spacing and no automatic spacing between paragraphs.

When listing dates on your resume, be consistent in formatting. Use en-dashes rather than hyphens (i.e., May 2012 – September 2012, not May 2012-September 2012). Spell out months and years (not 9/2012).

Given the conservative nature of the legal profession, your resume should stand out because of its content, *not* because of unique formatting, graphics or colors.

Consistency

Employers use your resume as a proxy for your level of attention to detail and drafting ability. Be consistent in all sections of your resume. For example, if you use the abbreviation "B.A." for your undergraduate degree, use "J.D." for your law degree; if you write out Bachelor of Arts, write out Juris Doctor. The same applies to state names (either spell them all out or abbreviate them all). Moreover, be consistent with the use of the serial commas; either use them throughout your resume and cover letter before conjunctions, or not at all.

Contact Information

Your name, address, telephone number and email address should be on the top of your resume. Your name may be capitalized in a larger, bold font (several point sizes larger than the rest of the text, up to 16-point font). Use your full formal name including your

middle initial. However, if your preferred name is your middle name, you may use your first initial and your middle name (Example 1). If your preferred name is not a derivative of your first or middle name, the preferred name should be noted in parenthesis and quotation marks after your given name (Example 2).

EXAMPLE 1

J. ANTON LEONARD

5400 Stuart Avenue
Richmond, VA 23226
jaleonard@richmond.edu • 804.555.2344

EXAMPLE 2

SOON YUN (“EMERY”) BUNTING

1234 Briarcliff Place, Richmond, VA 23226

804-232-8000 / sybunting@richmond.edu

Address

Your local address should be centered beneath your name. If applying to locations to which you have a geographic tie (family or a significant other), include a local and permanent address (Example 3). Ensure that correspondence to you at any address provided on your resume will be handled in a timely manner. Also, include a phone number and your richmond.edu email address at the top of your resume.

EXAMPLE 3

JEFFERSON A. LEONARD

jaleonard@richmond.edu • 804.555.2344

5400 Stuart Avenue
Richmond, VA 23226

25 41st Street, Apt. 6D
New York, NY 10017

Education

Begin your Education section with University of Richmond School of Law. Then, list your other educational experiences in reverse chronological order. Include the school name in bold font, followed by the location and degree date (not dates of attendance) for each institution attended.

- List the law school as “University of Richmond School of Law.”
- Include “Candidate for” degree name, and anticipated graduation date if you are a current student. Example: “*Candidate for Juris Doctor, May 2016.*” Italicize

degree names. Note that the degree for which you are studying is a juris doctor, not a juris doctorate.

- If you are a dual degree candidate, include both anticipated degrees in a single entry (if you will be obtaining both degrees simultaneously) or use a separate entry for each degree and academic unit (Example 4).

EXAMPLE 4

EDUCATION

University of Richmond

Candidate for Juris Doctor and Master of Business Administration

Richmond, VA

May 2015

or

EDUCATION

University of Richmond School of Law

Candidate for Juris Doctor

Richmond, VA

May 2015

University of Richmond, Robins School of Business

Master of Business Administration

Richmond, VA

December 2015

- You may include your law school GPA (recommended if it is 3.0 or higher) if you would like.
- You may list your class rank as a number (e.g., 23/161) or percentile (e.g., Top 15%).
- Include Latin honors. Example: “*Bachelor of Arts, cum laude, in Political Science, May 2013.*”
- Exclude your LSAT score.
- List awards, distinctions, and scholarships under the relevant school. Law school honors include CALI Awards for Excellence and participation on a law journal.
- Include significant activities under the relevant school, not in a separate section.
- List study abroad experience under your home school using the formal name of the program. For Richmond Law’s Cambridge program, you would list: “Study Abroad: Summer Law Program at Emmanuel College, Cambridge University, 2013.”
- If you are a transfer student, list Richmond Law first, and then the law school from which you transferred. If you received academic honors or were invited to join a journal at your prior law school, you may include that information (Example 5).
- Typically, you should not include your high school on your resume. If you attended a preparatory school that is well known nationally or in the area to which you are applying, you may list it as the last item in your Education section. Do not include honors and activities with your high school.

EXAMPLE 5

EDUCATION

University of Richmond School of Law

Candidate for Juris Doctor

Richmond, VA

May 2015

Charleston School of Law

First-Year Student

Charleston, SC

2012 - 2013

- GPA: 3.998
- Dean's Award for Excellence in Contracts (Fall 2012)
- Invited to join *Charleston Law Review*

Experience

List your work experience in reverse chronological order (with the most recent employer listed first). Use bold font for the employer name, city and state. Use italics for your position title and list it below the employer name and location.

- This section is titled "Experience" intentionally to incorporate professional work experience, internships, clinical placements, volunteer activities and any other activities through which you have developed relevant experience, whether paid or not.
- If the name of an employer is not well recognized, include a brief indication as to the industry and type of work (i.e., add "mortgage" or "finance" in the job description).
- Use either bullet points or paragraph form to describe your job responsibilities. Use action verbs to describe your work in each position. (See below for examples of action verbs.)
- Be clear, concise, and consistent in detailing your experience. Describe relevant projects, issues, and practice areas (e.g., "Conducted legal research and prepared memoranda for complex environmental impact litigation.") Think about the overall experience and how what you learned will translate and be valuable to another employer. You may add a brief description of the case or deal on which you worked, without disclosing confidential information.
- Avoid vague expressions such as "assisted with" or "gained exposure to."
- Do not use first-person pronouns to describe your experience.
- Use past tense action phrases for former positions and present tense for current ones.
- Avoid industry-related jargon unless you are seeking employment within that specific field.
- If you have accepted a position, but have not started it, you may list the employer's name, city/state, your title, and when you will begin work. Do not describe your presumed job duties. Noting a future position comes up most frequently when you have been selected for an upcoming clinical placement.

Additional Information

This optional section may include language skills, personal interests and accomplishments, affiliations and special skills. When listing language skills, describe your level of proficiency (Example 6).

Interests noted on your resume should be unrelated to your course of study (or Richmond Law or another institution) or professional experience and not otherwise evident from your resume.

EXAMPLE 6

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Language Skills: Proficient in written and spoken Spanish

Professional Memberships: Member, Young Lawyers Section, Richmond Bar Association (2012 – present)

Publications

If you are published, include legal publications using Bluebook citation format and other publications in the format appropriate for the genre.

Bar Admissions

After passing the Bar exam, you may note this accomplishment in a separate section of your resume (Example 7). Alumni who are admitted to practice in certain courts may include that information as well.

EXAMPLE 7

BAR ADMISSIONS

Admitted to practice in Virginia; Eastern District of Virginia

References

Create a separate [Reference List](#) using the header from your resume. Do not include references on your resume or state that “references will be provided upon request.”

Action Verb Usage

Effective resumes and cover letters employ active voice. Action verbs describe your experience and achievements in a persuasive, concise manner. Please refer to the following list of action verbs to replace passive verbs (variants of “to be”) on your resume and cover letter drafts.

accelerated
accomplished
achieved

acquired
adapted
addressed

adhered
adjusted
administered

advised
allocated
analyzed
anticipated
applied
appointed
appraised
approved
arbitrated
arranged
assembled
assessed
assigned
assumed
assured
attended
audited
authored
authorized
awarded
balanced
began
bought
briefed
brought
budgeted
built
calculated
cataloged
chaired
changed
clarified
classified
closed
coached
collaborated
collected
combined
communicated
compared
compiled
completed
composed
computed
conceived
conceptualized
concluded
conditioned

conducted
consolidated
constructed
continued
contracted
contributed
controlled
convinced
coordinated
corrected
corresponded
counseled
crafted
created
criticized
critiqued
customized
debated
decided
defined
delegated
delivered
demonstrated
designed
determined
developed
devised
diagnosed
digested
directed
discovered
dispatched
drafted
dramatized
earned
edited
educated
elected
employed
encouraged
engineered
enlarged
enlisted
ensured
entered
established
estimated
evaluated

examined
excelled
executed
exercised
expanded
expedited
explained
explored
extracted
fabricated
facilitated
filed
financed
forecasted
foresaw
formulated
forwarded
fostered
founded
gained
gathered
generated
governed
graded
greeted
grossed
guided
handled
heightened
helped
highlighted
hiked
housed
hunted
identified
illustrated
implemented
improved
included
incorporated
increased
indicated
influenced
informed
initiated
innovated
inspected
inspired

instituted
instructed
insured
integrated
interpreted
interviewed
introduced
investigated
joined
labored
launched
learned
lectured
led
licensed
located
made
maintained
managed
mapped
marketed
maximized
mediated
met
minimized
moderated
modified
monitored
motivated
moved
named
negotiated
netted
observed
opened
operated
ordered
organized
overcame
paid
painted
participated
perceived
performed
persuaded
pinpointed
pioneered
placed

planned
played
policed
prepared
presented
prevailed
prioritized
processed
produced
profited
programmed
prohibited
projected
promoted
proofed
proposed
proved
provided
publicized
purchased
qualified
ran
rated
realized
received
recognized
recommended
reconciled
recorded
reduced
referred
rehabilitated
reinforced
rendered
renovated
reorganized
repaired
reported
represented
rescued
researched
retrieved
returned
revamped
revealed
reviewed
revised
revitalized

saved
scheduled
scouted
screened
scrutinized
selected
sent
served
shaped
showed
sifted
simplified
smoothed
solved
sought
spearheaded
specified
spoke
started
stated
stimulated
stopped
strategized
streamlined
strengthened
structured
suggested
summarized
supervised
supported
surveyed
systematized
tabulated
targeted
taught
tested
totaled
toured
tracked
trained
transferred
transformed
translated
traveled
treated
tutored
uncovered
updated

validated
verified
won
wrote