Resume and CV Tips

Creating a resume or CV does not have to be an overwhelming task! A successful document starts with good organization, a strong template, and solid details that showcase how your background and experience align with the job.

Resume or CV?

While a resume is usually used to apply for industrial and corporate positions, a curriculum vitae (CV) is needed for academic situations. Resumes are more skill-based (focus on lab skills, techniques, etc.), while the CV highlights more in research, teaching, publications/presentations.

Formatting

It is always best to start with a template document and then add in your information. Ensure that the format is neat and easy to follow. Additionally, use a font that is standard for most systems (Arial, Calibri, Garamond, Tahoma, Times New Roman or Verdana) and ensure your font size is no smaller than a 10-11 point.

Introduction/Header

All resumes/CVs should provide your contact information. While you do not have to include a street address, it is recommended that you include the following:

- Full Name, City/State, Phone Number, Email Address

Dos

- Ensure current contact information is listed
- Have a professional email address
- Include your LinkedIn Profile link (if updated)

Don'ts

- Give old contact information (email, etc.)
- Have an inappropriate email address
- Include a photo of yourself

Example:

FIRST M. LAST, PH.D.
123435 Chemist Drive • City, State 12345
Phone: 123.456.7890 • Email: first.last@gmail.com

Resume-Specific Sections

Professional Summary

Have you ever heard of an elevator pitch? This section is your elevator pitch on your resume. Also known as a summary of qualifications, this is where you will highlight your experience and skills in 4 to 5 sentences. This replaces the "objective" that was used years ago. You should include:

- Degree, years of experience, specialty area(s) of knowledge, set of skills, etc.

Dos	Don'ts
• Include a brief overview of your qualifications	• List all laboratory skills and techniques here
• Tailor your summary to align with the job	• Use first person or refer to yourself by name
• Highlight soft skills	• Be vague

Example:

> Enthusiastic early career scientist with two years of experience in quality testing, root-cause investigations, bench research, and writing GMP documents. Team collaborator who engages a person-first/safety-first approach and is self-driven.

Education

In this section, you will highlight your degrees. High school diplomas should not be included if you have a bachelor's degree or higher. Ensure that you include the following information:

- School name, location, degree and major, minor (if applicable), graduation date(s)

Dos	Don'ts
• Highlight all degrees achieved (BS, MS, PhD)	• List all classes taken for degree(s)
• Include high GPAs/academic levels of distinction	• Include a low GPA
• List both the month and year of graduation	• Leave off graduation dates

Example:

EDUCATION

University of Amazing Chemists – San Diego, CA   December 2023
Ph.D., Analytical Chemistry

ACS College – Cleveland, OH   May 2019
B.S., Chemistry, summa cum laude

Professional Experience

This is the section where you will highlight all of your relevant work experience (and/or research experience). You will want to give a brief overview of your responsibilities and provide details on relevant skills, techniques, projects, etc. that you gained in these roles – especially those that align with the requirements and preferences for the job(s) in which you are applying. You should include:

- Company/school name, location, job title, date(s), and details on duties/responsibilities

Dos

- Highlight job experience and skills
- Include soft skills, responsibilities, and impact
- Keep it concise, easy to follow, and relevant

Don'ts

- List excessive, non-relevant details
- Be too brief or leave out important skills
- Make the resume too long or wordy

Example:

Chemistry Manufacturer, Atlanta, GA   April 2020 – April 2024
Analytical Chemist
- Analyzed raw materials, in-process, and finished products according to USP validated methods; instrumentation used included GC, HPLC, GC/MS, AA, UV/Vis, and IR
- Primary trainer; responsible for development of new scientific staff
- Conducted EHS risk assessments and prepared/presented all monthly plant safety talks
- Participated in the Six Sigma "Project Rollback" cost savings team affording the Quality department over $10,000 in annual savings for lab consumables

Skills, Techniques, Additional Training, and Credentials

Although you have highlighted some of your relevant skills in the experience section, it is good to include a separate section that highlights all of your relevant skills together. Be sure to include:

- Laboratory skills/techniques, computer/software skills, additional training, credentials, etc.

Dos

- List instrumentation you have used regularly
- Include job-relevant training or credentials
- Include dates of credentials/additional courses

Don'ts

- Include instrumentation you have used/seen once
- List irrelevant training and credentials
- Be vague about your additional training

Example:

Laboratory Skills and Additional Training
Instrumentation: ICP-OES, GC-FID, LC-MS, GC/MS, UV-Vis Spectroscopy; Wet chemistry including pipetting, titrations, distillations, extractions, dilutions, standard/solution preparation
Software: MS Office Suite, LIMS, ChemDraw
Training: HPLC Workshop – Agilent Technologies Inc., Houston TX – Nov 2019

Publications and Presentations

On a resume, you want to keep your publication/presentation list brief – Ensure you highlight those that are most relevant to the position(s) you are applying to now. Items to include are as follows:

- Names, title, date, publication journal details, presentation location/conference details, etc.

Dos	**Don'ts**
• Include relevant publications and presentations	• Include an exhaustive list irrelevant to the job(s)
• List all authors and use correct formatting	• Remove authors/details to shorten your resume

Example:

PUBLICATIONS:
> **Journal of Analytical Toxicology, 2020, 52, 244-246**
> "Analysis of opioids and benzodiazepines in urine by LC/MS/MS"
> Chemist, J.D., Mole, M.A.; Mollennium, P.F.

PRESENTATIONS:
> **March 2024, American Chemical Society National Meeting, New Orleans, LA**
> "Opioids and benzodiazepines; Method validation and improvement"
> Chemist, J.D.

Honors and Activities

This section is where you want to highlight your achievements and professional activities. Ensure you include leadership examples, if appropriate. Your list should include:

- Scholarships, awards, professional affiliations and offices held, etc.

Dos	**Don'ts**
• List college awards, scholarships, activities	• Include high school awards and achievements
• Include dates and other relevant details	• Be vague

Example:

HONORS AND ACTIVITIES

- Centennial Scholar – Full Scholarship (2018 to 2021)
- Outstanding Chemistry Department Senior Award, 2021
- American Chemical Society Student Member (2018 to present)
    - Fundraising Chair, 2018 to 2019; President, 2020 to 2021

CV-Specific Sections

Education

Following your introduction/header, you will want to provide your educational details. In this section, you will highlight your degrees, completed and in process. Ensure that you include:

- School name, location, degree and major, minor (if applicable), graduation date(s)

Dos

- Highlight all degrees achieved (BS, MS, PhD)
- Include high GPAs/academic levels of distinction
- List both the month and year of graduation

Don'ts

- List all classes taken for degree(s)
- Include a low GPA
- Leave off graduation dates

Example:

> **EDUCATION**
>
> **University of Amazing Chemists** – San Diego, CA   December 2023
> **Ph.D., Analytical Chemistry**
>
> **ACS College** – Cleveland, OH   May 2019
> **B.S., Chemistry,** summa cum laude

Professional Experience

In this section you will highlight all of your relevant work/research experience. You should include:

- Company/school name, location, job title, date(s), and details on duties/responsibilities

Dos

- Highlight job experience, skills, projects
- Include soft skills, responsibilities, and impact
- Keep it concise, easy to follow, and relevant

Don'ts

- List excessive, non-relevant details
- Be too brief or leave out important skills
- Make the resume too long or wordy

Example:

> **UNIVERSITY OF CHEMISTRY** – Nashville, TN   May 2020 – May 2022
> **Undergraduate Research Assistant** (Dr. Meg A. Mole)
> - Engaged in greenhouse and field research exploring weed management in turfgrass and ornamentals; Prepared treatment and performed application, collected data, and maintained plots
> - Assisted researchers in other disciplines, particularly turfgrass science; performed plot maintenance including green management and herbicide applications
> - Annual Turf & Ornamental Field Day team member serving green industry professionals

Publications and Presentations

On a CV, you want to provide more publications/presentations than you would on a resume. Ensure you highlight those that are most relevant to the position(s) you are applying to, but it is also good to show variety (knowledge in multiple areas). In this section you will want to include:

- Names, title, date, publication journal details, presentation location/conference details, etc.

Note: You want to provide a more comprehensive list in this section, but if it is a significant amount, you can list the most important ones you want to highlight, share your total number of publications/presentations, and note that a full list is available upon request.

Dos

- Include relevant publications and presentations
- List all authors and use correct formatting
- Showcase your scope of knowledge with variety

Don'ts

- Include an exhaustive list irrelevant to the job(s)
- Remove authors/details to shorten your resume
- Be too brief or only highlight one area of skills

Example (but do include more of each):

PUBLICATIONS:
> **Journal of Analytical Toxicology, 2020, 52, 244-246**
> "Analysis of opioids and benzodiazepines in urine by LC/MS/MS"
> Chemist, J.D., Mole, M.A.; Mollennium, P.F.

PRESENTATIONS:
> **March 2024, American Chemical Society National Meeting, New Orleans, LA**
> "Opioids and benzodiazepines; Method validation and improvement"
> Chemist, J.D.

Honors and Activities

This section is where you want to highlight your achievements and professional activities. Ensure you include leadership examples, if appropriate. Your list should include:

- Scholarships, awards, professional affiliations, etc.

Dos

- Include college awards, scholarships, activities
- Provide dates and other relevant details
- List office(s) held in professional affiliations

Don'ts

- Include high school awards and achievements
- List items that are not job-relevant
- Be vague or list every event attended

Honors and Activities, cont.

Example:

HONORS AND ACTIVITIES

- Centennial Scholar – Full Scholarship (2018 to 2021)
- Outstanding Chemistry Department Senior Award, 2021
- American Chemical Society Student Member (2018 to present)
  - o Fundraising Chair, 2018 to 2019; President, 2020 to 2021

Teaching & Mentoring Experience

This is a very important component of a CV. Whether your experience in this area is paid or unpaid, or even part of a graduate program requirement, you want to list it in this section. Be sure to include:

- School, location, dates, titles, courses, professors supported, etc.

Dos	Don'ts
• Include course titles, course numbers	• Be generic ("taught chemistry courses")
• Highlight duties and responsibilities for classes	• Only list course numbers; provide titles
• Include paid and volunteer work	• List non-professional experiences

Example:

CHEMISTRY UNIVERSITY – New Orleans, LA   2018 – 2023
Graduate Teaching Assistant (2022 – 2023)
Led instruction and prepared laboratory sections, monitored laboratory students, prepared quizzes, and graded reports.
- Physical Chemistry Lab (Dr. A. Mollennium) August 2022 – May 2023
- General Chemistry Lab (Dr. Meg A. Mole) December 2022 – May 2023

Undergraduate Supplementary Instructor /Teaching Assistant (2019 – 2021)
Assisted Lead Teaching Assistant and Instructor with laboratory preparations, student monitoring, and grading papers. Prepared PowerPoint presentations to supplement course material to help prepare students for course quizzes and exams. Provided feedback and discussion for past assignments and quizzes to help students better understand the course material.
- General Chemistry 1110/1120 and Lab (Dr. Meg A. Mole) January 2019 – May 2021

Tutor (Spring 2020 – present)
Assist students with homework questions and exam preparation.
- General Chemistry 1110/1120/1010/1020

Skills, Techniques, Additional Training, and Credentials

Although you have highlighted some of your relevant skills in the experience section, it is good to include a separate section that highlights all of your relevant skills together. Be sure to include:

- Laboratory skills/techniques, computer/software skills, additional training, credentials, etc.

Dos	Don'ts
• List instrumentation you have used regularly • Include job-relevant training or other courses • List credentials (licensure/certifications) and dates	• Include instrumentation you have rarely • List irrelevant training and credentials • Be vague about your additional training

Example:

Laboratory Skills and Additional Training
Instrumentation: ICP-OES, GC-FID, LC-MS, GC/MS, UV-Vis Spectroscopy; Wet chemistry including pipetting, titrations, distillations, extractions, dilutions, standard/solution preparation
Software: MS Office Suite, LIMS, ChemDraw
Training: HPLC Workshop – Agilent Technologies Inc., Houston TX – Nov 2019

References

Although it is not recommended to include references on a resume, it is necessary for a CV. Once you have received permission to use someone as a reference, you will want to provide the following:

- Reference name, school or company information, phone number, email address, etc.

Note: Once someone has agreed to provide a reference for you, share the job details with them so they can specifically speak to why they think you will be successful in the position(s).

Dos	Don'ts
• Request permission to use someone as a reference • Ensure their contact information is up to date • Provide 2-3 professional references	• List a reference without their permission • Provide old contact information • List personal references

Example:

References

Dr. I. A. Mollennium, Assistant Professor, Research Advisor
iamthemole@email.com 123-456-7890

Dr. Meg. A Mole, Associate Professor, Thesis Committee Board Member
megamole@email.com 123-456-7890

Final Tips and Reminders

The CV/resume get you the interview; the interview is what gets you the job

Header
- Do not include personal information (family details, photos, birthdate, etc.)
- Have a professional email address

References
- References are not needed on a resume; provide them when requested
- Include 2-3 professional references on a CV

Experience
- Include all job-relevant experience, volunteer or paid
- Don't forget to include soft skills – these are very important as well

Other Notes
- Cover Letters – Very important for academia; not as much focus in industry
- A resume should be limited to 2-3 pages; a CV should focus on including relevant and necessary information – typically longer
- Resumes should be tailored to the positions you are applying for
- Ensure you include relevant grant funding received; include this in the sections where relevant (typically experience or honors sections); should you have significant funding to include, create a separate section on your CV
- ALWAYS send a thank you note to your interviewers and reiterate interest
- Have others review your resume/CV for you and provide feedback

Meet with an ACS Career Consultant for advice!

Browse our Career Consultant roster and request your one-on-one appointment today!

acs.org/careerconsulting