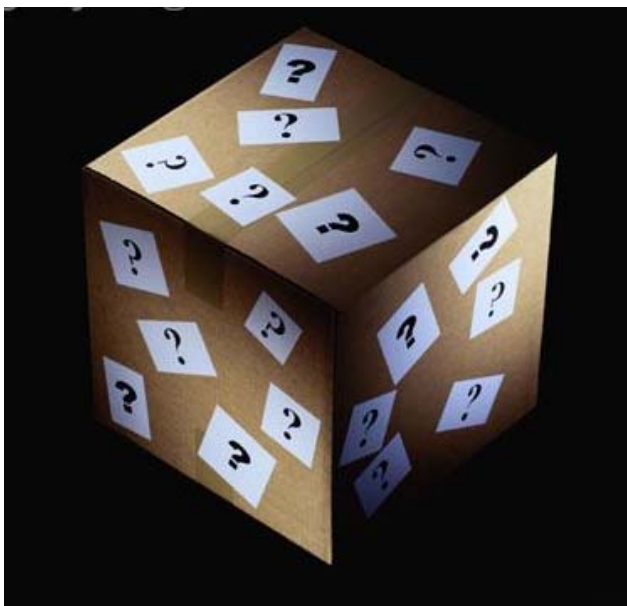


Resume FAQ's

What if I don't have any relevant experience?

From reading this book you'll know the importance of gaining paid or unpaid work experience related to your industry. If you've reached the end of your course and don't have this – don't despair. Focus on what you have done rather than what you haven't. Spend some time identifying industry-related or transferable skills from what you have done while you've been at uni. What skills have you gained from your part time employment, your assignments, team projects, extracurricular activities and other areas of your life? Check out the Careers and Employment website www.careers.qut.edu.au for help with identifying your personal transferable skills.



Who can I list as professional referees in my resume?

Professional referees can include current or recent employers, supervisors from your work experience, practicum placements or voluntary work, your mentor, or someone with whom you have built a professional relationship, or maybe even your lecturer or tutor. They are people who can comment on your professional or employment related skills. Make sure you build and maintain these relationships throughout your course so you can ask these people to be referees for you when you are applying for jobs.

What if I failed some of my subjects during my course – how do I put this in my resume?

Remember that the purpose of your resume is to get the employer interested in meeting with you – so think carefully about the information you include. Your resume is not a “warts and all” documentation of everything you've done in your life until now. It's selected, relevant information – targeted to that particular employer and job role. So aim to highlight your strengths, skills, experiences and achievements, and only include information that reflects you in the most positive light. However, that does not mean you can alter the facts! If you have some failed units, include in your resume only units you've performed well in, or make a general statement about your overall GPA if that worth highlighting. Think about how to talk about negative experiences in a positive way – you might have failed a unit but from that experience you've learnt better time management and study skills/ when you've taken on too much and need to adjust your work-life balance/ when you need to ask for support etc...and your grades have improved consistently since then. In this way, perceived negatives don't stop you from getting an interview, and you will be able to promote learning you have gained from the experience.

It is a good idea to include a photo?

A photo can be a great way to personalise your resume. However, the risk is that you could be discriminated against based on your appearance, i.e. being perceived as too young / old / serious / flighty / inexperienced and so on. So you could miss out on an interview based on someone's possibly inaccurate perception of you. If you like the idea of a photo, think about taking a separate copy of your resume with a photo included, when you meet with an employer. Then they will have the opportunity to meet you and hear what you have to say, and have a resume with a photo to remind them of who you are.

Do I need to include my interests / extracurricular activities?

As with any part of your resume, only include information that reflects positively on you in relation to the position you are applying for. Your interests and extracurricular activities can be a great way to personalise your resume and present you as a well rounded applicant. Think carefully about what your interests and activities say about you and be prepared to describe them further at an interview.



How do I make my resume stand out from all the others that will be received?

Resumes are very subjective – everyone has their own idea of what makes a good resume. What one employer thinks is a brilliant resume, another may be unimpressed by. Get feedback from employers, lecturers and careers staff and work towards a resume that balances being different from others but still within the comfort zone of employers. Experiment with design features such as different fonts, watermarks and borders. If you use colours, make sure your resume photocopies clearly. Use bold, uppercase, underlining or italics to highlight different sections of your resume. Use bullet points where possible, rather than lengthy text. Different types of paper can also create different effects – again make sure your resume photocopies clearly or you risk your copied resume not looking as professional as your original.

How long should my resume be?

Depending on how much experience (paid or unpaid) you have had, a new graduate's resume would usually be around 3-4 pages. Aim to find a balance between being concise and giving enough information to promote yourself effectively. A one page American-style resume is usually appropriate in Australia, but wherever possible, be guided by what an employer is requesting.

What is the difference between a resume and a CV?

The terms resume and curriculum vitae/CV are often used interchangeably, but usually a resume is the summary document that employers are seeking, and a CV is a more detailed document often used where extensive professional experience is required.

What if I've had jobs that involved similar skills – do I have to list them separately for each job?

Try to make your resume interesting and easy to read for potential employers. Rather than repeating similar duties/responsibilities/skills held for similar positions that you have held, think about listing each position and then do a summary of skills under this.

How far back should I go with my employment history?

Usually most recent information is the most relevant for your resume. So if you've had a lot of employment experience, think about limiting it to the past five years or so. You don't have to include everything – be selective and think about the relevance of your experience to what you are applying for. And remember to highlight the transferable skills from your employment!

