

What is the difference between a resume and a CV?

These terms are often used interchangeably.

- A **resume** is a summary document and often the one employers will request. Resumes need to be concise and targeted to the position.
- A **CV or Curriculum Vitae** is a more comprehensive document and used where a role requires extensive professional experience, for example higher degree research candidates.

How long should my resume be?

Generally speaking, a new graduate's resume will be around 3-4 pages long. Keep in mind the following:

- **Follow the application instructions** - employers may stipulate a maximum length.
- Your resume should be **concise and targeted**. Employers are most interested in recent, relevant and valuable information about you.
- If you are applying for a role **overseas**, be aware that application processes may differ in other countries.

What if I don't have any relevant work experience to add to my resume?

Many students will work in **part-time jobs** while studying. If these roles don't immediately look like relevant experience, consider if the skills you have gained are transferrable to the role you are applying for:

- Customer service roles can provide you with problem solving skills, the ability to deal with conflict etc.
- Working in a team can help with your negotiation skills
- Studying, working and volunteering can show your time management abilities

If you have had an opportunity to undertake **work experience** as part of your course, make sure you highlight the key achievements and skills gained there.

At JCU work experience can come in many forms:

- Clinical placements
- Practicums
- Professional placements
- Work Integrated Learning subjects
- Field work
- Internships
- Projects
- Vacation Work

I've had lots of similar part-time jobs - how do I describe them on my resume?

The aim of your resume is to get the employer interested in meeting with you. Your resume needs to be **interesting and easy to read**. Rather than repeating similar duties/responsibilities/skills, consider listing each position and then summarising the skills and experience you have gained under this.

Do I need to include my interests / extracurricular activities?

You should include information which **adds value** to your application and **reflects positively** on you in relation to the position.

You can use your interests and other activities to present yourself as a well-rounded candidate. You may be asked about them in an interview, so be prepared to elaborate on them. Think about the skills you have gained through team sport, volunteering, clubs, societies and fundraising etc.

Who can I list as referees in my resume?

Consider your choice of referees carefully. You will want to select people who can comment on your **professional or employment-related skills**. They may be asked to provide a written or verbal report on your abilities.

You could choose a:

- Current or recent supervisor
- Supervisors from your practicums/placement/vacation work
- Lecturer or tutor
- Mentor or other professional you have developed a good relationship with

Remember to **ask permission** before listing people as referees. It is a good idea to keep in touch with them throughout your job search to keep them up to date with your progress.

Referees who are friends or family **are not** normally a wise choice as employers view them as inherently biased.

What is the right format for a resume?

There is no “right” way to set out your resume. Everyone’s idea of a good resume is different. Get feedback from employers, lecturers and JCU Careers and Employability staff to work towards getting the best resume to **highlight your qualifications, experience, skills and abilities**.

Keep the following tips in mind:

- **Use a clear, easy to read font** – stay away from any complicated styles which could distract from the content and font size should be at least 11 points.
- **Use bold, uppercase or italics** to highlight different sections.
- **Use bullet points** where possible rather than lengthy text. Keep in mind that your resume always needs to look **professional** - it may be viewed on a screen, printed out or photocopied.
- **Do not** put information in tables, textboxes or columns as this can cause issues with applicant tracking systems (ATS)

More resources

- **During semester and vacation** – get feedback on your resume, cover letter, selection criteria and LinkedIn profile. Check our [website](#) to make an appointment with the careers team.
- [JCU Careers and Employability resources](#) - Can a Robot Read Your Resume, Stand Out In Employers’ Eyes, Career Snapshots, Skills Employers Want and many more
- The [JCU Career Development Program](#) has a suite of self-help, online modules including one on Resumes and Cover Letters.
- Check our [website](#) for discipline specific, part-time and postgraduate resume exemplars.