

Level up your resume

Be strategic | Stand out | Succeed



A resume is a tailored snapshot of your experiences, skills and achievements. It can be a powerful document that aligns your strengths to an employer's needs, demonstrating your potential to succeed in the role. The key is adjusting your resume for each application by drawing attention to experiences, coursework, skills and knowledge relevant to that role. See [Beyond the Job Ad](#) to guide you in unpacking employer expectations and priorities to help you tailor your application. Check out our [example resumes](#) for each study area for inspiration.

Personal Details

Include your mobile phone number, an email address that you check regularly and your current location / suburb. Consider adding a link to your LinkedIn profile or professional portfolio to give recruiters additional insights into your suitability. Just make sure it's up to date. Remember that you are not required to disclose your date of birth, marital status, health conditions, a photo or other personal information.

Profile *(optional but recommended)*

Make a strong first impression with a well-crafted, personal statement tailored to the role you are applying for. Aim for three to four concise, purposeful sentences that:

- Capture the core strengths, skills, experiences, values and/or personal attributes that you bring to the role.
- Show what drives you – your interests, motivations, aspirations and/or the impact you aim to make.
- Demonstrate how you align to the position – what makes you a good match for *this* job in *this* organisation.
- Use clear, confident language that reflects your voice, avoiding generic or cliché phrases.

Education

List your university degree/s and relevant VET qualifications in reverse chronological order. Include the expected completion date for ongoing study. Consider including academic highlights from your university degree/s such as your majors (if applicable), a strong GPA, awards or scholarships, academic achievements and/or thesis topic.

Publications *(optional section)*

Generally only relevant for students who have completed postgrad studies. Include full citation details.

Professional Experience

Showcase how you have applied your university studies in the workplace. This includes placements, internships and fieldwork. Avoid duplicating points across your placements. Rather, build a picture of the range of experiences you have had (e.g. responsibilities, contexts, client groups). Demonstrate how your skills have evolved i.e. the increasing complexity of your responsibilities and your ability to perform tasks with greater confidence and independence. It can be beneficial to note the number of days, weeks or hours of each placement. Depending on your course, this section may be labelled **Placements**, **Clinical Placements**, **Practicums** or **Fieldwork**.

Employment History

Note whether each position was casual, part-time or full-time. If your paid employment is not directly linked to the role you are applying for, consider transferable skills or personal attributes related to the role advertised, for example skills in teamwork or client engagement. If you have had an extensive work history, be aware that employers typically focus on achievements from the last 5 to 10 years. Unless earlier experiences are directly relevant, consider focusing only on more recent roles.

For both Professional Experience and Employment History:

Use reverse chronological order. Avoid simply listing your duties. Demonstrate your strengths and your potential to succeed in the role by describing experiences, responsibilities and/or achievements using bullet points:

- Commence each bullet point with a strong verb.
- Include quantitative or qualitative results if relevant to show your impact.
- Use past tense for all bullet points, except for roles that are still current, in which case use present tense.
- Include 3-6 bullet points per role (generally more detail for the most recent or relevant experiences).
- Ensure relevance by adding, omitting or reframing your bullet points to suit each job application.

Volunteer Experience *(optional section)*

List your volunteer experience in reverse chronological order. Describe responsibilities and achievements using bullet points just like in your Professional Experience and Employment History. Highlight how you added value as well as transferable knowledge and skills. Generally 2-3 bullet points per volunteering role is appropriate.

Skills *(optional section)*

Keep this section brief (e.g. no more than 6-10 skills), prioritising skills that will support you to excel in the role and that you can confidently evidence in an interview. Consider both technical skills and transferable skills.

- Technical skills are your industry-specific or role-specific abilities developed through formal education and hands-on experience. For example skills involved in project management, laboratory or fieldwork techniques, specific clinical competencies, or proficiency with particular software applications.
- Transferable skills reflect your personal qualities or abilities that are relevant across any type of employment, for example teamwork, time management, communication, leadership or initiative.

Professional Development *(optional section)*

List relevant, significant professional development completed outside your university studies in reverse chronological order. This could include short courses, workshops, conferences, webinars or mentoring programs.

Certifications *(optional section)*

If there are requirements specified for the role, note if you meet them in your resume for example industry-specific licences, accreditations or registration (e.g. AHPRA), First Aid and CPR, Working With Children Check (Blue Card), Disability Worker Screening Card or a Driver's Licence. This section can also be called **Licences, Accreditations, Registrations** or a combination of these terms depending on your focus.

Memberships *(optional section)*

List current memberships in relevant student or industry professional associations to demonstrate professional engagement and a commitment to ongoing development.

Interests *(optional section)*

Include this section if it helps to reinforce your values, personal qualities, skills or sector alignment. Some employers like to see evidence of personal wellbeing strategies. Keep this section brief (e.g. 3-4 interests).

Referees

Select 2-3 referees who can speak to your professional strengths, as well as your character e.g. interpersonal skills, work ethic. Always obtain permission to list each referee. Prioritise referees who can provide insights into your job-relevant technical skills and workplace behaviour (e.g. supervisors from placements or coursework, or paid employment). Employers from other industries can also be used. Avoid personal, or character referees.

Final Tips

1. Keep it concise, generally 1-2 pages for a part-time job and 2-3 pages for graduate positions.
2. Not sure what to include on your resume? Ask yourself the question: Is this adding value to my application for this particular role? If the answer is no, then probably leave it out. Keep it targeted and relevant.
3. Ensure your application is free from spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors.
4. Use a simple, professional, layout with subtle design accents (e.g. colour for headings), consistent formatting (e.g. alignment of bullet points), sufficient white space to enhance readability and a simple sans-serif font (e.g. Arial, Calibri) sized 12-16 for subheadings and 10-12 for body text.
5. Optimise your resume for Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS), which are used to filter applications during the shortlisting process. Align your language with that of the advertisement and role description to improve key word matching. Avoid columns, tables and text boxes, and save as a .docx file or a text-based PDF (not an image-based PDF). Find a range of ATS-friendly Resume Templates on our [website](#).
6. Use our [Big Resume](#) AI tool to get some initial feedback. Upload the job advertisement to get insights into your alignment with the role description and the employer's language to help increase your ATS match. Get further targeted feedback by connecting with the Careers and Employability team.

Seek expert support from the JCU Careers and Employability Team

Book your personalised one-on-one appointment for tailored assistance with job seeking, resumes, cover letters or preparing for interviews through our [CareerHub](#).

