

Spring 2020

GRAD SCHOOL

Prep Pack

Guidance for resumes, personal statements, and interviews

Brought to you by:

ACADEMIC ADVISING CENTER
& CAREER SERVICES
PRE+HEALTH STUDENT RESOURCE CENTER



Resume Writing Guidelines

A resume is a summary of your educational and professional experiences, and this may include information about colleges attended, internships, job shadows, volunteer experiences, work experiences, research or other relevant information, depending on your purpose for submission. You may or may not be asked to include a resume for a graduate or professional school application, but regardless, it is important to create one as a way to summarize your collection of experiences. Below are some general tips for resume writing, followed by a sample resume, a guide to writing effective bullet points, and an action verb list to help you think strategically about how to describe your skills.

Resume Do's

- DO tailor your resume to the role and/or program for which you are applying
- DO use a consistent format, including bullets and fonts (10-12 point font)
- DO set margins between 0.5" and 1" to keep a balance of white space
- DO include 2-5 bullet points per experience
- DO use phrases beginning with action verbs to describe your skills; use a variety of action verbs
- DO use terminology from the field to describe your experiences
- DO use first-person, present tense for current jobs and past tense for previous positions (i.e., Manage or Managed, not Manages or Managing)
- DO list positions in reverse chronological order in each section (most recent position first)
- DO quantify statements with numbers, percentages, etc. whenever possible
- DO consider creating a "master resume" that houses all of your experiences that you can pull from each time you apply for something

Resume Don'ts

- DON'T go over 1-2 pages for your resume (one page is usually recommended, but for graduate school applications, it may be acceptable to have two pages)
- DON'T use paragraphs or full sentences
- DON'T use personal pronouns (I, me, my, etc.)
- DON'T use a resume wizard/template
- DON'T go overboard with design elements or images – applicant tracking systems can't read these
- DON'T simply list positions without providing information about your role and skills gained
- DON'T use repetitive descriptions for similar positions; consider combining positions if needed
- DON'T include personal information like birthday, marital status, religion or political affiliations
- DON'T allow any grammatical or spelling errors

Find more tips for resume writing on the Academic Advising Center & Career Services website:

<https://www.uwlax.edu/aaccs/studentsalumni/searching-for-jobinternships/#tm-resumes>

Sara Student

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Education

Bachelor of _____, Graduation Month Year

University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, La Crosse, WI

Major: _____, Minor: _____

GPA: ____; Dean's List # semesters

Professional Experience

Position Title, Organization Name, City, State, *Month Year-Present*

- Skill (Power Verb) + What you did (Job Duty) + How/Why
- Skill (Power Verb) + What you did (Job Duty) + How/Why
- Skill (Power Verb) + What you did (Job Duty) + How/Why

Position Title, Organization Name, City, State, *Month Year-Month Year*

- Skill (Power Verb) + What you did (Job Duty) + How/Why
- Skill (Power Verb) + What you did (Job Duty) + How/Why

Relevant Coursework & Projects

Project Title, Course Title, UW-La Crosse, La Crosse, WI, *Month Year*

- Skill (Power Verb) + What you did (Job Duty) + How/Why
- Skill (Power Verb) + What you did (Job Duty) + How/Why

Campus and Community Involvement

Position, Organization Name, City, State, Dates

- Describe function of organization/nature of involvement if necessary
- Include offices held, committees, special recognition, achievements, etc.

Position, Organization Name, City, State, Dates

- Describe function of organization/nature of involvement if necessary
- Include offices held, committees, special recognition, achievements, etc.

Technical Skills

- List proficiency level in "hard skills" (e.g. computer programs, languages, lab skills, etc.)
- "Soft skills" (e.g. communication, teamwork, organization, etc.) do not belong here

Additional Employment

Position Title, Company, City, State, *Month Year-Month Year*

Position Title, Company, City, State, *Month Year-Month Year*

*Please note some sections and descriptions are optional depending on your experience and the positions for which you are applying.

Writing Bullet Points

Bullet points are often the hardest part of a resume to write. When crafting your bullet points, it is important to go beyond just describing your "duties" at a job. One of the strategies you can use is to think of the "5 W's and How".

WHO: Who did your job help? The company? Clients? Customers?

WHAT: What happened with the results of the job? If you did research, was that information published? If you had to do a report or presentation, what was done with the information?

WHEN: When did this happen? Daily? Weekly? Monthly? Talking about how often you did something is an easy way to show productivity in your job.

WHERE: Where did your duties occur? Did you have to travel for a job? Were you responsible for interacting with people outside of your organization?

WHY & HOW: Why did you do this? How did your job duties help or benefit to the organization's ability to function?

Bullet Point Formula

Use this formula as a starting point when writing your detailed bullet points.

SKILL + **WHAT YOU DID** + **RESULTS/OUTCOME**
 (power verb) (job duty) (how/why)

BEFORE: Made a documentary

AFTER + "HOW": Filmed a 10 minute documentary using the X3000 camera

AFTER + "WHY": Filmed a 10 minute documentary on AIDS awareness for a class presentation

AFTER + "HOW" + "WHY": Filmed a 10 minute documentary on AIDS awareness for a class presentation using the X3000 camera

Examples

Before	American Marketing Association (AMA) Member <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Created personal brand Attended weekly meetings Volunteered at services activities and fundraising events 	Fall 20XX - Present
After	President, American Marketing Association (AMA), La Crosse, WI <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced skills for future success and created own personal brand shared with 12 area employees Participated in bi-weekly meetings in order to expand knowledge of several marketing concepts Attended and participated in four services activities and three fundraisers in order to apply learned theory 	Fall 20XX - Present
Before	University Bookstore, La Crosse, WI Sales Associate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assisted with inventory Provided quality customer service Built displays for featured products 	June 20XX - Present
After	Sales Associate, UW-La Crosse University Bookstore, La Crosse, WI <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assisted with daily and monthly inventory of over 1,200 domestic and foreign products Provided quality customer service by handling customer questions, complaints, and problem solving Handled over 200 cash and credit card transactions, balanced drawer, and ATM accurately as part of each shift 	June 20XX - Present

**Adopted from University of Iowa Pomerantz Career Center for Leadership and Career Advancement*

Eagle Advantage Action Verbs

Adaptability: *Recognize challenges as opportunities to improve. Embrace a growth mindset that allows for action, reflection, failure and resilience.*

Achieved	Demonstrated	Finalized	Invented	Qualified
Advanced	Diminished	Fulfilled	Launched	Prevailed
Boosted	Eliminated	Generated	Lightened	Realized
Combined	Enlarged	Guaranteed	Minimized	Received
Completed	Ensured	Heightened	Orchestrated	Reduced
Consolidated	Excelled	Improved	Modernized	Rejuvenated
Constructed	Expanded	Innovated	Obtained	Renovated
Contributed	Expedited	Integrated	Overcame	Restored
Delivered	Extended	Introduced	Produced	Targeted

Collaboration & Leadership: *Build mutually beneficial relationships and achieve common goals by understanding, valuing, and leveraging strengths of others. Take responsibility for your own role and contributions within a team.*

Accelerated	Directed	Founded	Officiated	Returned
Assisted	Discovered	Guided	Overhauled	Rehabilitated
Assured	Empowered	Influenced	Oversaw	Spearheaded
Chaired	Encouraged	Initiated	Pioneered	Strengthened
Coached	Endorsed	Inspired	Polished	Supervised
Compared	Enlisted	Managed	Protected	Trained
Continued	Envisioned	Measured	Refined	Transformed
Controlled	Examined	Mentored	Regulated	Tutored
Counseled	Fostered	Motivated	Rescued	Validated

Communication: *Effectively articulate thoughts and ideas to others. Understand the impact of communication on your professional work image. Use communication skills to motivate and develop others.*

Adapted	Convinced	Fashioned	Marketed	Submitted
Addressed	Corresponded	Improvised	Mediated	Reported
Amended	Critiqued	Highlighted	Moderated	Suggested
Attested	Dedicated	Illustrated	Negotiated	Summarized
Briefed	Defined	Informed	Persuaded	Supported
Clarified	Edited	Instructed	Presented	Surveyed
Communicated	Educated	Interpreted	Questioned	Synthesized
Composed	Explained	Interviewed	Reinforced	Translated
Consulted	Fabricated	Lectured	Specified	Welcomed

Digital Literacy & Technology: *Leverage knowledge of information and communications technology to ethically and efficiently solve problems, complete tasks, and accomplish goals.*

Accounted	Compiled	Earned	Maximized	Rated
Appraised	Compounded	Enumerated	Multiplied	Reconciled
Approximated	Computed	Estimated	Netted	Recorded
Audited	Conserved	Figured	Produced	Reduced
Balanced	Converted	Financed	Profited	Sorted
Budgeted	Counted	Grossed	Projected	Systematized
Calculated	Dispensed	Increased	Purchased	Tabulated
Checked	Dispersed	Inventoried	Quantified	Totaled

Critical Thinking & Problem Solving: Exercise reasoning to independently analyze issues, identify options and alternatives, formulate opinions, make decisions, and overcome problems.

Administered	Debugged	Evaluated	Prepared	Revived
Alleviated	Decided	Forecasted	Prioritized	Revamped
Analyzed	Deciphered	Foresaw	Recommend	Satisfied
Anticipated	Detected	Formulated	Remodeled	Solved
Brainstormed	Determined	Found	Repaired	Strategize
Collaborated	Developed	Identified	Researched	Studied
Commission	Devised	Investigated	Revised	Synthesized
Conceived	Diagnosed	Observed	Reserved	Tailored
Conceptualize	Engineered	Planned	Revitalized	Theorized

Engaging Diversity: Cultivate awareness of your own identity and that of others through exploration of diversity. Appreciate multiple perspectives and participate in society as a conscious global citizen.

Activated	Committed	Exercised	Performed	Sought
Added	Consented	Familiarized	Programmed	Served
Admitted	Contracted	Guaranteed	Related	Specified
Apportioned	Disbursed	Indicated	Reserved	Submitted
Appraised	Dispatched	Instituted	Reviewed	Surveyed
Approximated	Displayed	Involved	Screened	Sustained
Attained	Enlisted	Issued	Satisfied	Traced
Certified	Excelled	Maintained	Secured	Transacted
Commissioned	Executed	Operated	Smoothed	Valued

Integrity & Accountability: Take ownership of your actions and learn from your mistakes. Act with the interests of the larger community in mind. Establish effective work habits.

Adopted	Decided	Inspected	Produced	Restored
Approved	Determined	Managed	Promoted	Reviewed
Assumed	Discussed	Navigated	Proposed	Revised
Circulated	Disseminated	Notified	Provided	Stimulated
Cleaned	Emphasized	Participated	Recommended	Streamlined
Cleared	Enforced	Practiced	Reorganized	Strengthened
Considered	Exerted	Prepared	Repaired	Terminated
Converted	Hosted	Prioritized	Replaced	Transcribed
Correlated	Improved	Proceeded	Reported	Verified

Self-Management: Identify and articulate your interests, skills, values, and experiences. Explore and make decisions about academic and career options. Demonstrate the continual development of a positive personal brand.

Acquired	Cataloged	Designated	Implemented	Processed
Acted	Centralized	Displayed	Incorporated	Prospected
Adjusted	Charted	Distributed	Installed	Routed
Allocated	Classified	Entered	Issued	Scheduled
Altered	Collected	Established	Labored	Secured
Appointed	Confirmed	Facilitated	Logged	Selected
Arranged	Coordinated	Forwarded	Operated	Simplified
Assessed	Customized	Handled	Ordered	Tracked
Assigned	Delegated	Housed	Organized	Transacted

Tips for Graduate School Essays

Getting Started

The basic purpose of a personal statement is to write an essay that represents your goals, experiences, motivations and qualifications in a positive manner as well as to demonstrate your writing abilities. This is your first introduction to the program admissions committee, so it is important that you take the time to create a quality piece of work. Remember, this is your chance to show them that you are a good match for their program. *Asher, D. (2000). Graduate Admissions Essays (Rev. ed.). Toronto: Ten Speed Press.*

Questions to Ask Yourself

- What is the MOST compelling reason you can give for the admissions committee to be interested in you?
- What is something you have experienced that sets you apart from other candidates?
- At what particular moment did you first think of pursuing this career path?
- Have you experienced a time when your career choice was confirmed for you?
- How has your coursework influenced your direction?
- What are your research interests?
- What research skills have you learned?
- What have you learned from internships or professional experiences?
- What are your short-term and long-term career goals?
- What are your reasons for entering the field?

Format

Introduction

- Grab the reader's attention with an opening that's tied to your experiences and goals. Consider starting with a story that's unique to you and avoid clichés common in your field. For example, many students choose to pursue PT because of an experience with a sports injury when they were younger – this won't stand out to an admissions committee!
- Be sure to introduce the purpose of the essay, and hint at topics you'll cover.

Body

- Supporting paragraphs should address specific questions or prompts from the application, including the strengths of the program/institution, your own qualifications, the factors that influenced your decision, and what you will contribute to the field after completing the program (long-term career goals).
- It is extremely important to give the reader concrete and relevant examples of your experiences that are able to support your stated qualifications.
- Provide clear transitions and connections throughout to avoid a "choppy" essay.

Conclusion

- Connect all the points you have discussed in your essay, reinforce themes, and reiterate your interest in the particular profession, program, and/or institution.
- End with a look to the future – this could be a time to mention long-term career goals or interests, even if they seem lofty now.

Additional Tips

- Treat each essay as a unique, original exercise. Play by the rules of each school/program and carefully follow their instructions. Never present the work of someone else as your own.
- Avoid the typical introductory paragraph that refers back to an earlier time in your life. Such as: “I have known that I wanted to do this since I was __ years old.” Or “Ever since I was child, I have been passionate about _____.”
- Avoid a step-by-step, incident-by-incident recounting of events in your life. (First I did this, then I did that, then I did that...). Be specific and descriptive, not superficial.
- Your qualifications are not simply the experiences you have racked up. What you learn from those experiences makes you a strong applicant and ultimately a strong professional in your chosen field.
- If you have an obvious flaw in your academic record, discuss it in your essay. Don’t make excuses. Address why it happened and highlight what you learned that will make you a stronger student.
- Don’t pepper your essay with words that you would never use in conversation. Keep the tone professional, yet conversational. To test for this, try reading your essay out loud to someone else, and/or have them read it out loud to you. This is also helpful to identify places where you need better transitions.
- Do not use contractions or slang.
- They are called “clichés” for a reason. Never use them in your essay.
- Avoid passive voice (If you don’t understand this, Google it).
- Review your essays to see if you have answered these questions for the reader: Why do I want to pursue this field? Why am I a good fit for this field? How have I grown professionally from my education and experience? Why do I want to attend this specific school or program over others?
- Typos, spelling mistakes and grammatical errors may be a fast way into the “no” pile. Proofread your own essay (read it *backwards or out loud* if you need to), use spell check and visit the Writing Center in Murphy Library. Consider downloading a free service like [Grammarly](#) to assist with grammar mistakes.
- Get feedback on the content of your essay. Ask a professional in your field, a faculty member and a staff member to read it. Family and friends are often not the best resources for critiquing essays. They may not have experience with this type of writing and their first concern may be to try to support you, not give you critical feedback.

Helpful Links

- Purdue University Online Writing Lab: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/642/01/>
- University of California Berkeley Career Center: <https://career.berkeley.edu/grad/gradstatement.stm>
- Peterson’s Grad School Blog: <https://www.petersons.com/blog/category/grad-schools/>
- Accepted.com Essay Writing Tips: <https://www.accepted.com/grad/personal-statement>
(Caution: this company charges for its services, but the free info on the website is insightful.)
- The Plagiarism Checker (Better safe than sorry!): <http://www.dustball.com/cs/plagiarism.checker/>

These links are presented as a service to the reader and should not be interpreted as an endorsement by UWL or the UWL Academic Advising Center & Career Services staff.

*Find more tips for writing a strong essay on the Academic Advising Center & Career Services website:
<https://www.uwlax.edu/aaccs/studentsalumni/applying-for-graduate-school/#tm-write-a-strong-essay>*

Interviewing Tips

Interview Preparation and Practice

Once you have submitted your application(s) for graduate school, it is time to formally prepare for potential interviews. You can prepare more effectively by following a variety of the tips outlined below:

- Attend events and talk with advisors, faculty, employers, and healthcare representatives.
- Take notes as you're preparing for an interview, but be careful not to script out your answers.
- Think through examples where you have demonstrated skills your graduate program may be seeking. If you're unsure which skills to focus on, start with the [Eagle Advantage competencies!](#)
- Utilize InterviewStream, a web-based interview software tool that allows you to choose interview questions, practice answering, and watch videos of your responses. You can access Interview Stream in [Handshake](#) by clicking "Career Center" → "Resources" → "InterviewStream." Please note that you will need to create an account the first time you access the tool.
- [Set up an appointment](#) with your Career Advisor. This is a great way to learn about interviews and/or get feedback on your responses and strategies.
- For your interview day, know where you need to go, where to park, and (if possible) who you might be talking with so you can do research ahead of time. If you don't know these details, ask!
- Immediately prior to the interview, get yourself in a good place. Talk to a friend or family member that will help build you up; do something that tends to put you in a good mood; review your notes and ideas, but avoid over-preparing; accept that nerves are a normal part of the interview day.

Get Successful Student and Admissions Perspectives

In an effort to give you a real-life perspective, we recorded several short interviews with students who have interviewed for various graduate programs. We also interviewed a faculty member involved with graduate school admissions to get a "behind the scenes" lens into what committees are seeking. The videos below can apply to any graduate or professional school interview process.

- [Hannah Schreiner, Pre-PA](#): Hannah talks channeling your nervous energy into preparation!
- [Josie Olson, Pre-PA](#): Josie, President of the Pre-PA Club, shares insights on questions at your interviews.
- [Jeffrey Janssen, Pre-Dentistry](#): Jeffrey compares different types of interviews you might expect, regardless of your professional path.
- [Mitch Bunting, Pre-Dentistry](#): Mitch, President of the Pre-Dentistry Club, gives advice for how to prepare for interviews: know your experiences and know the school.
- [Kelly Hinden, Psychology](#) (accepted to School Psychology Graduate Program): Kelly tells us how evaluation goes both directions in graduate school interviews.
- [Maney Thao, graduate student in Student Affairs Administration](#): Maney shares the questions you need to ask yourself as you prepare for an interview.
- [Ivy Heims, Clinical Associate Professor, UWL PA Studies](#): Ivy shares what faculty look for in interviews and what candidates should expect.

For tips on various interview formats, as well as possible questions you may be asked, visit the Pre-Health Student Resource Center website. The advice is useful for any graduate/professional school path.

<https://www.uwlax.edu/pre-health/apply-with-confidence/#tab-preparing-to-interview>

INTERVIEWING PREPARATION AND TIPS

During interviews, you will frequently be asked to give examples or stories to provide evidence you have the skills required for the program and profession. You must be able to recall many experiences quickly, select the most appropriate one, and then describe it effectively.

By using the **STAR** method, you are able to plan and better prepare your answers.

Situation/**T**ask: Give background information. Describe the situation you were in or task you needed to accomplish. Be specific.

Action: What was YOUR role in the situation? What did YOU do to accomplish the task? Keep the focus on you.

Results: What happened? What did you learn?

For each category below, draft an outline of a story from your past experiences which provides evidence of your achievements. Draw upon past situations in the classroom, academics, extracurricular, leadership involvement, volunteer, and work experiences. Practice describing these experiences using the STAR method. For additional topics and practice, refer to the [Eagle Advantage Competencies](#).

Accomplishment or goal you have achieved:

A time you showed leadership:

Problem or issue you solved:

A time when you've shown teamwork/cooperation:

A time when you've shown/taken initiative:

A time when you've been flexible/adapted to change:

INTERVIEWING PREPARATION AND TIPS

A time you've shown growth and commitment to diversity-related issues:

A time you made a mistake and what you learned from it:

A time when you've demonstrated effective communication:

A time you've successfully utilized technology:

What you want the interviewer to remember about you:

Demonstrate your research: List a few quick facts about the program and profession

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Questions you have for the interviewer

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

10 Extra Tips

1. First impressions matter – be professional, courteous, and friendly with everyone you meet.
2. Know where you are going and allow yourself plenty of travel time. Always be early!
3. Try out everything BEFORE the day of your interview. Shoes, shirt, accessories, etc.
4. Review the examples above and the UWL Eagle Advantage. Think through your achievements.
5. Feel free to bring a padfolio, pen, and extra copies of your resume.
6. It is okay to be nervous! But still let your personality shine through.
7. Answer all questions truthfully. It is okay to ask for clarifying information.
8. Listen carefully and answer questions thoughtfully, using STAR method whenever possible.
9. Remember, you are interviewing the program/school as well. Is this a good fit for YOU?
10. Always send thank you notes after any interview, even phone interviews. Email is acceptable.

Pre-Health Updates

Profession Updates

Given the unique environment we are in as a result of COVID-19, we strongly recommend that pre-health students follow the [National Association for Advisors of Health Professions \(NAAHP\) website](#) for the latest updates from the education associations for each profession.

Testing Updates

Please visit the following websites for testing updates:

- GRE [at-home test](#) and [postponements](#)
- MCAT [coronavirus page](#)

Keep in mind, everything has been changing daily. All parties, from grad schools to testing centers to advisors, are doing their best to rearrange processes to be remote. Know that rebuilding an entire admissions pipeline takes time. Remember that this is not just a problem for you, but for all potential applicants, and there is still an imperative to train future professionals via graduate programs and medical schools! Ask good questions, but remain patient when the answers aren't there yet.