

Resume Tips for Those with Limited Work Experience...

OSU Career Services

Everyone has to start somewhere. It can seem daunting to create a resume when the bulk of your “experience” has been coursework, academic, or maybe that summer job at the local pool. Don’t despair—the good news is that you’re starting this process! The key to creating a good resume is to *be creative* and develop a format that works for YOU. (Be sure to check out the outline on the backside of this tip sheet...)

1. Don’t feel limited by the “traditional” resume examples.

Yes, most people eventually develop a “chronological” resume that focuses on their relevant experience. Don’t limit yourself by forcing your experience into a format that just doesn’t work.

2. Be creative with your sections.

Traditionally, resumes have sections like “Education”, “Experience”, and maybe “Activities” or “Awards”. Be creative, and think about how YOU would classify your most **relevant** and meaningful assets. The experiences you list do NOT have to be paid. See backside of this handout for suggestions.

3. Highlight your transferable skills.

A “Transferable Skill” is a skill you developed in one place that you can take somewhere else. Examples might be writing, problem-solving, laboratory experience, foreign language, etc. You may have developed these skills in a classroom environment, rather than a work environment, which is just fine. Highlight them on your resume in a special section like a “Skills Profile”. Highlight the skills that are TRANSFERABLE to the scientific environment you’re targeting.

4. What about High School?

At this point, high school *education* doesn’t belong on your resume. However, you may have experiences from your high school days that are relevant or that show off those transferable skills. Feel free to include those UNTIL you gain enough other experiences that you can omit them altogether. And there may be special or unique experiences that you leave on for some time. For example:

- Exchange programs or international experiences
- Special camps or workshops you might have done over the summer
- Special distinctions like Valedictorian, Eagle Scout, etc.
- Certifications you earned in high school that are still transferable

5. Put yourself in the employer’s (or professor’s) shoes...

If you were hiring a lab assistant, for example, what would YOU want to see? Analytic skills, attention to detail, responsibility, basic familiarity with lab procedures, etc.

6. Still feel lost? Start small...

- Look for brief opportunities to volunteer in a lab—they don’t need to be paid or long-term to be legit additions to your resume.
- Join campus organization(s) in your field of interest, and volunteer for a leadership role.
- Ask to do an “informational interview” with a professor—these can often lead to experiences.

(<http://oregonstate.edu/career/informational-interviewing>)

Don’t forget!!

Career Services offers resume and cover letter drop-in critiques...

Monday-Thursday, 1-4 (No appointment necessary)

Resume Outline

Must-Haves:

- Name and Contact Information
- Education (with expected graduation date)
- Some kind of experience—does NOT need to be paid employment (see below)

Optional Sections:

- Relevant Coursework
- If applying for lab work, a section on labs taken/completed at college level
- Honors and awards—especially those that are science-related
- Activities—again, especially those that are relevant to the work you’re applying for
- Lists of relevant and/or transferable skills
- Objective, or statement of interests
If applying to a posted position and including a cover letter, objectives aren’t necessary. But if you’re sending a general inquiry to a prof about lab experience, an objective can be a useful way to articulate your goals.
- Strengths (emphasizes “soft” skills like being a hard worker or “strong follow-through”)

Types of experience you may want to list:

- Volunteer Experience (these can even be brief one-day events)
- Hands-on Class projects (science or research-related)
- Service projects you completed (river or beach clean-up, etc)
- Tutoring/note-taking
- Campus organizations and memberships
- National organization memberships (often there are special rates for students to join these)
- Part-time and full-time jobs, if you’ve had any. Again, if you haven’t, don’t panic, and just focus on the other types of experiences listed above.
- Study abroad or brief international experiences, if you’ve had any (This could go in either the “education” section if study abroad, or as an “experience” if it was more applied.

References:

**These should go on a SEPARATE page. Do not write “available upon request” on your resume. Simply include them on a separate page.

Resume Sample:

See the following web link for an example of a science resume

http://biology.science.oregonstate.edu/files/biology/sample_science_resume.pdf