



Resume Guidelines

Most prospective employers will spend 30 seconds or less reviewing an individual resume. To ensure that your resume gets the attention it deserves, we recommend that all Thayer School students use the following guidelines in developing resumes.

Format

Length

Unless you are a Ph.D. student or have more than five years of work experience, your resume should not exceed one page in length.

A great resume is concise, yet also shows the depth and breadth of the skills and experiences that you offer employers. Career Services staff can assist you in what to include and what to exclude.

Appearance

Adapt the same formatting approach throughout your resume so that it looks clean and is easy on the eye.

Please avoid using Microsoft Word templates to create and modify resumes. These templates were designed in a table format that is very difficult to modify. We recommend that you type out your own document so that you can rearrange and update your resume easily.

Consistency of font + format = readability.

Format should be consistent. A few of our favorite formatting tricks: place school and company names in bold typeface, positions in italics, and dates in the right margin of your page. Use a typeface that is printer friendly i.e. Arial, Times New Roman and Tahoma are generally safe bets. You may use a different typeface for your name and subheadings, but do not use more than two separate typefaces throughout your document.

Font size should not look like the large print edition of a Reader's Digest, nor should your reader need a magnifying glass! Keeping your document between 10 and 12 point font is ideal.

Pay particular attention to state names if you spell out "New Hampshire" in your address, it needs to be spelled out throughout your resume. Alternatively, you can use state abbreviations throughout your document provided you also abbreviate state names in your header.

Print Quality

Unless you are submitting your resume electronically, it should be free of printing "skid marks" and on high quality paper. We recommend bond paper in ivory, pale gray or white. Avoid flecked paper as it doesn't copy well and is difficult to read.



Content

Resume Action Verbs

Your resume should include succinct phrases lead by action verbs. There is never a need for complete paragraphs or nouns such as "I" or "we". Example action verbs include:

Accomplished	Determined	Investigated	Promoted
Achieved	Developed	Judged	Recommended
Administered	Directed	Maintained	Reduced
Analyzed	Edited	Managed	Reorganized
Assembled	Established	Mapped	Researched
Budgeted	Evaluate	Measured	Selected
Calculated	Exhibited	Negotiated	Sold
Compiled	Expanded	Operated	Streamlined
Computed	Facilitated	Organized	Supervised
Conducted	Generated	Originated	Taught
Constructed	Identified	Oversaw	Trained
Contacted	Implemented	Planned	Troubleshoot
Contracted	Improved	Prepared	Updated
Controlled	Initiated	Presented	Upgraded
Coordinated	Inspected	Produced	Verified
Created	Interpreted	Programmed	Won
Designed	Invented	Projected	Wrote

For more examples of action verbs visit: www.writeexpress.com/action-verbs.html

Education

Current degree and school should be listed, as well as any other higher education institutions from which you have graduated. Degrees should be listed in reverse chronological order (current degree first).

If you are receiving an A.B. degree, you should list "Dartmouth College" as your school. For all graduate level degrees (B.E., M.E.M., M.S. and Ph.D.), we recommend that you list your school as "Thayer School of Engineering at Dartmouth College."

With the exception of the Ph.D. degree, all degrees should be properly spelled out without abbreviation.

Example of A.B. degree:

Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH	June 2011
Bachelor of Arts in Engineering Sciences modified with Biology.	

Example of B.E. degree:

Thayer School of Engineering at Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH	June 2011
Bachelor of Engineering concentrating in Chemical Engineering.	



Example of M.S. degree:

Thayer School of Engineering, Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH March 2012
Master of Science in Electrical Engineering.

Example of M.E.M. degree:

Thayer School of Engineering at Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH December 2010
Master of Engineering Management (M.E.M.)

*A collaborative program taught by faculty from the Thayer School of Engineering and the Tuck School of Business.

If you would like to use the program's acronym (i.e. M.E.M.), the acronym should be listed after the degree is spelled out (as shown above). (** The M.E.M. description above is the official program description to be used on resumes of M.E.M. students.*)

For each school from which you are receiving a degree, list only the month and year of graduation not the length of time in which you have been enrolled. Dates of attendance are not relevant, unless you are listing time spent at an institution at which you did not receive a degree. If, however, you are a transfer student or have participated in a study abroad program, this can also be noted. Examples:

Universidad de Belgrano, Buenos Aires, Argentina Spring 2010

Smith College, Northampton, MA Fall 2008-Spring 2009

If you are in a 3-2 program or in the M.E.M. program and want to include an explanation of your degree program, be sure it accurately reflects Thayer School and any other institutions involved. (Career Services will assist you with wording if you'd like.)

General notes: In listing Honors, list only those that are most relevant and/or important to you. This is particularly important in listing high school information. (If you were valedictorian, it's redundant to list that you graduated first in your class as this will be assumed).

Frustrated by having to take away information of many accomplishments? Consider the employer's perspective: providing strong focused descriptions of relevant experiences generally "trumps" a laundry list of past honors. For employers, it's all about the transferable skills and experiences you bring to a position.

Experience Section

Show, don't tell. Avoid descriptive adjectives unless absolutely necessary. Instead, provide concrete examples of your work that demonstrate your skills and personal attributes well-written resume and cover letter is a manifestation of superior writing skills!

Structuring the experience section of your resume is dependent on a minimum of two factors: what you are looking for and what you have done.

Regardless of how you to decide to organize your "EXPERIENCE" section, you should follow the following guidelines:



- All experience listings should include the organization name, your position with the organization, the location (city and state) and the dates of the experience.
- Try to describe your experience in as interesting a way as possible, being as brief as possible. Use active verbs to describe what you did (see verb list below). Be your own critic, and, if necessary, discard material that will have no meaning for your reader.

List what you've done in reverse chronological order, placing your most recent experience first and then working backwards.

Using Subcategories

For a majority of students, a general heading titled "WORK EXPERIENCE" will be appropriate

In some instances, however, you may want to divide your experience into sub-sections. For example, if you are seeking an engineering-related position, and most of your work experience to date centers around your experiences helping to run the family business in catering...you might create two separate headings one "ENGINEERING EXPERIENCE" and one "ADDITIONAL WORK EXPERIENCE" rather than a single "EXPERIENCE" heading. Within this context, you could include descriptions of your Thayer School related experiences before a section listing other work experiences i.e. the work that you've done with your family business.

Listing Unpaid or Non-Traditional Work Experiences

Depending on the amount of work experience you have and the position that you are applying for, it may be appropriate to include information about individual or team-based projects that you have participated in through your Thayer School coursework. It is also fair game to include unpaid internships and volunteer work along with paid employment in your "EXPERIENCE" section as long as you make sure to clearly indicate which experiences were gained through academic work (projects) and which from employment, either within the description or by listing them in separate sections.

One way of doing this is to describe what you've done on the project (i.e. your responsibilities, your findings, and the implications of your work) and then to add the phrase "Work completed in partial fulfillment of requirements for Engineering Design and Methodology and Project Initiation (ENGS190) course." If you've worked under the auspices of a company sponsored project for your coursework (i.e. ENGS190, ENGG290 or ENGG390), you can mention the company sponsoring the work provided that you have their permission.

Examples of engineering-related work that you might include run the gamut from team-based or individual projects undertaken as part of your coursework and extra hours spent volunteering in the Machine Shop, to research experience with professors, teaching assistantships, and SAE Formula Racing team participation. Organize the information in reverse chronological order (as mentioned above).

Activities/Interests

Most resumes contain a secondary section that provides information on interests and activities. The names of this section can vary from Extracurricular Activities to Leadership & Community Service. Thayer School Career Services can help you in determining the appropriate name for this section on your resume as well as what to include. When possible use the same formatting conventions in this section of your document as you do in other sections of your resume. For example, if you italicize position titles in your "Experience section" and you hold a leadership position in a student organization, it is suggested that you italicize that position titles also.



Skills & Certifications Section

It's always good to end on a "strength." For this reason, the SKILLS section is often listed last.

- Break out skills separately into subcategories. For example, if you have strong computer skills in both administrative applications and programming, you might create one "Software" category in which you list your knowledge of Microsoft Office and a "Programming" category in which you list programming languages. ("Language" is another popular subcategory.)
- Remembering that every item on your resume is fodder for a potential question for your interviewer, be honest about what you know. If you have taken one term of Italian, it is better to say "Familiarity with Italian" than "Fluent in Italian." You never know when you'll have an interviewer from Tuscany!

What Not to Include on Your Resume.

- **Personal information.** Resume writing conventions vary by country and by culture. In the U.S., it is illegal for employers to ask about your height/weight, marital status or other personal information. In the U.K., employers expect for a CV (curriculum vitae, or their catch phrase for resumes) to include both age and marital status. Thayer School Career Services Library owns several books which can help you in understanding application differences in different countries

For reasons of personal protection, never list your Social Security number on your resume. You should also delete your street address and phone number from any resumes posted online outside of those sites with a direct connection to Thayer School On-Campus recruiting.

- **Citizenship status.** Employers for the most part only need to know if you are legal to work in the United States, not whether you're a citizen or permanent resident. In most cases in which citizenship status is critical to making a hiring decision, an employer will ask. In all cases, students should respect the qualifications requested by employers and only apply for those positions for which they are appropriately qualified. (Note: In some cases, students may wish to volunteer information about citizenship, i.e. particularly if the information is in the student's favor. See Career Services for more information.)
- **References.** A reference list should not be included with your resume unless requested by the employer. Guidelines for creating a list of references are available through Thayer School's Career Services website.

Avoid the temptation to add the phrase "References available upon request" to the bottom of your page. Most employers will not hire you without asking for a list of references and making this statement generally leaves you open to producing a list of references immediately upon request.

Need Additional Help?

- Schedule an appointment with Thayer School Career Services. They can help you with all phases of the process, from figuring out how to write your first resume to proofreading your final copy.