

Guide to Writing Resumes & Vitas



**St. Mary's College of Maryland
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Resume/Vita Formats

A resume is fundamentally a one-page fact sheet about you, listing education, experience, accomplishments, and credentials. Its primary *purpose*, however, is to sell a product (you!)...not simply to chronicle your life experience. (See <http://www.rockportinstitute.com/resumes.html> to get in a resume-writing frame of mind!) While resumes may differ widely in format and content, there are basically three styles: Reverse Chronological, Functional, and Combination. The academic resume, or vita, is explained below as well.

Reverse Chronological (Traditional)

If you are working from a resume you first created in high school, it probably looks like this. This style follows a date-order sequence of positions held (starting with the most recent) and includes responsibilities and accomplishments for each position. If you have a number of distinct professional relevant experiences (paid or volunteer) and leadership roles, or if you have worked at any recognizable organizations, you would probably be best served by this format. The most important aspect about this style (and the most frequent error) is that it is NOT a list of job descriptions and “tasks” performed while employed. A resume should highlight responsibilities and accomplishments, whatever its format.

Functional (Skills-based)

The Functional Style is less concerned with specific work experience and work settings, and more focused on categories of foundational competencies developed through all involvements including work experience, classroom assignments and projects, extracurricular activities or interests. For entry-level positions, employers are primarily looking for potential (though relevant experience helps too). Consequently, a resume that highlights the preliminary development of valued skills is generally more effective than one that forces the recruiter to estimate potential from a chronological listing of summer jobs and courses taken. For example, a student who works in the bookstore may not pursue similar work after graduation but that experience can provide illustrations of organizational ability (maintaining inventory) and interpersonal skills (customer service). It is a good choice for students who feel they do not have enough relevant or professional work experiences to “fill a resume.” Keep in mind, however, that a functional resume is not solely a list of abilities as you perceive them; each point must include a specific illustration. Specific job titles, organizations, and dates are still provided on a function resume, usually in a small section near the bottom of the page. Note that some employers may specifically request a Reverse Chronological Resume, so you may want to have one ready to go even if you feel the functional resume is the best format for you.

Combination (Hybrid)

If neither of the formats above feels like a perfect fit for you, there are many ways to combine them. You might, for example, start with a summary of key traits and skills, and then include detailed descriptions of specific work experiences (e.g., FYS Peer Mentor, Math Tutor” under different functional headings (e.g., “Instructional Skills”).

Curriculum Vitae (“CV”, “Vita”)

“Curriculum vitae” is Latin for “Course of Life.” The vita is basically an academic resume used primarily in research, teaching, and health care settings. You may be asked to submit one if applying to graduate or professional school. It is a “living” document that gets updated routinely with each new accomplishment, not just when changing jobs. Because of this, it tends to be much longer than a traditional resume, especially for established professionals (yours will probably be under 2 pages). Because the goal of a vita is to represent a scholarly identity rather than a professional identity, the sections can be different. In addition to basic contact and education information, it may include sections on teaching and research experience, relevant coursework, awards, research interests, certifications, instrumentation experience, professional development, committee work, service and leadership, and professional development, professional affiliations. The specific labels used and order of arrangement are quite flexible. The main difference between a vita and a resume (and the main contributor to the increased length) is the inclusion of the publication and presentation sections. Though you would likely include such accomplishments in some way on a resume, they would not likely appear as full references the way they typically do in a vita. Beyond that, resumes and vitas of new graduates are more similar than different because in both cases students are defining their professional experience quite liberally (including coursework, club leadership, etc.). Be sure to include your name on every page.

Note: If you are asked to submit a “**scannable**” or **electronic resume**, there are additional considerations to keep in mind. Relevant resources are available on the CDC web site and in the CDC resource Library.

Transferable Skills Worksheet for Resumes and Vitas

As you prepare to enter graduate school or the world of work, you may be concerned about the amount of relevant professional experience that you have obtained. If you consider only positions directly related to your future goals (research assistant, editor) you may indeed fall short. But chances are that you have done many things over the last four year that have allowed you to develop “transferable skills” that easily apply across environments or occupations. All you have to do is commit some time to reflecting back on what you learned from your many recent experiences. This worksheet can help you do that.

The qualities that employers (and graduate admissions committees) generally seek are listed in the sections below. For each, work to identify accomplishments and skills you’ve developed that are applicable to the job or graduate placement that you seek. Be sure to consider skills developed in all of the following settings:

- | | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Jobs | Travel/Study Abroad | Oral Presentations |
| Classes (major & elective) | Research | Major Achievements |
| Extracurricular/Clubs | SMP | Tutoring/Mentoring |
| Internships | Sports | Group Projects |
| Volunteer Work | RA/RHC Positions | Competitions |
| Creative Arts | Fundraising/Budgets | |

Communication Skills (Oral & Written)

Interpersonal Skills

Teamwork Skills

Leadership Skills

Information Technology Skills (Computers)

Problem-Solving Skills

Organizational Skills

Analytical Skills

Quantitative Skills

Ultimately these categories may form the foundation for some of the categories of a functional resume. You are encouraged to combine and re-label as appropriate (e.g., Analytical + Quantitative = Research Skills or Experience). In a more traditional chronological resume or CV, you can use skills as bullet points under particular positions.

Now list skills necessary for the type of position you are applying for. You can find this information on position descriptions, web sites, application materials, etc. Another good place to look is the O*Net Occupational Database at <http://online.onetcenter.org/find/>. Search for a relevant occupation in the top left box. The “tasks” section (and others to some degree) of the summary report should give you an idea of skills necessary for the occupation. List them below.

Do these necessary characteristics bring to mind any additional personal accomplishments and skills? If so, record them below, or add them to your earlier list where appropriate.

Finally, begin to organize, prioritize, and select skills for inclusion as “action phrases” in your resume, and work to ensure appropriate and consistent wording. Each should begin with a past-tense action verb (see p. 5 for additional tips). Here are some examples; the sample documents at the end of this packet include effective bullets as well.

- Developed and implemented lesson plans on photosynthesis for a class of 20 third-grade students
- Coordinated an effort by club leaders to engage all campus clubs in service activities during National Day of Service
- Wrote a 30-page APA-style research paper on the impact of peer tutoring on exam performance of Biology students.
- Tested properties of Polyvinyl Chloride (PVC) resin (particular size, heat stability, and viscosity testing) for a specialty chemicals manufacturer
- Generated sales leads through aggressive cold calling from database of 1,100 companies
- Served as Creative Director for 30-second spot for county political candidate, completing the project within management’s mandated two-hour deadline
- Spearheaded two region-wide events, each with three student committees comprising 7 different colleges
- Researched potential environmental stories for daily CNN news broadcasts
- Increased sustainable resources available to students by overseeing the creation of a resource ‘bank’ that contained books, tutorials, newspapers, and basic school supplies

Tips for Action Phrases

- *Avoid very brief statements
- *Use professional language
- *Avoid uninteruptable “resume speak”
- *Clearly illustrate a specific skill or skills

- *Focus on results and achievements, not simple duties
- *Be specific, quantify when possible
- *Keep all phrases parallel
- *Use industry buzz words (appropriately)

Action Verbs

Management/ Leadership Skills

administered
assigned
attained
chaired
consolidated
contracted
coordinated
delegated
developed
directed
eliminated
enhanced
enforced
established
evaluated
executed
generated
headed
hired
improved
incorporated
increased
inspected
instituted
managed
motivated
organized
oversaw
planned
presided
prioritized
produced
recommended
reorganized
reviewed
scheduled
strengthened
supervised

Communication Skills

addressed
advertised
arranged
collaborated
communicated
composed
condensed
contacted

convinced
corresponded
defined
directed
drafted
edited
elicited
explained
expressed
formulated
influenced
interpreted
interviewed
judged
lectured
marketed
mediated
moderated
negotiated
observed
participated
persuaded
presented
promoted
publicized
reconciled
recruited
referred
reported
resolved
responded
spoke
suggested
synthesized
translated
wrote

Research Skills

analyzed
clarified
collected
compared
conducted
determined
examined
extracted
formulated
gathered
evaluated
identified

interpreted
interviewed
invented
investigated
located
measured
organized
researched
reviewed
solved
summarized
surveyed
systematized
tested

Technical Skills

applied
assembled
built
calculated
conserved
constructed
designed
determined
developed
installed
maintained
operated
programmed
resolved
specialized
upgraded

Teaching Skills

adapted
advised
arranged
clarified
communicated
conducted
coordinated
critiqued
developed
enabled
evaluated
explained
facilitated
guided
individualized
instructed

motivated
set goals
stimulated
taught
trained
transmitted
tutored

Creative Skills

acted
composed
conceptualized
created
designed
directed
displayed
drew
entertained
fashioned
formulated
founded
illustrated
introduced
invented
modeled
originated
performed
photographed
planned
revised
shaped

Helping Skills

advocated
aided
answered
assisted
cared for
clarified
counseled
diagnosed
educated
encouraged
facilitated
familiarized
furthered
helped
influenced
insured
mentored

provided
referred
rehabilitated
resolved
simplified
supplied
supported
volunteered

Organizational Skills

approved
arranged
catalogued
categorized
charted
classified
coded
collected
compiled
corresponded
distributed
filed
generated
implemented
inspected
maintained
monitored
operated
organized
prepared
processed
provided
recorded
reviewed
scheduled
sorted
submitted
standardized
systemized
updated
validated
verified

Financial Skills

analyzed
appraised
audited
balanced
budgeted
calculated
computed

developed
estimated
forecasted
managed
marketed
planned
projected
reconciled
reduced
researched

More Verbs...

achieved
completed
contributed
effectuated
electrified
expanded
improved
navigated
negotiated
pioneered
perfected
promoted
quoted
reduced
resolved
sparked
spearheaded
spoke
succeeded
supervised
surpassed
transferred
unified

General Guidelines

- Remember that the format and appearance of your resume/vita are at least as important as the content. It should represent not only what you have done and learned, but also your attention to detail, ability to communicate and market yourself. Make it stand out, but not in a way that is overly flashy or distracting. Be sure all formatting choices are consistent (e.g., if you use periods, use them after every bullet).
- Use the materials available to you on the CDC Web site and in the CDC Resource library to generate ideas and improve the look and content of your resume/vita. Then ask for feedback from everyone you know, as well as the CDC and Writing Center. Make time for many substantial revisions and continuous refinement, and perhaps some tailoring for specific positions. If you are starting with a resume that you've been updating since high school, recognize that it may be best just to start from scratch so that you don't feel tied to the format and style that you first began using years ago, and without much thought.
- Typically, the first review of a resume/vita is only seconds long...give your resume to a friend for just 10 seconds. What is their first impression? What do they remember? Make an impact!
- A strong resume/vita can look many different ways...there is no single right way to format it, and no "template" with standard sections that work for everyone. The samples included here are only intended to get you thinking about possible design and wording choices for your own resume/vita. You must choose categories that allow you to logically group your experiences. Make the document your own!
- Your resume/vita must include contact information, education, and in some form, skills and experiences. A vita must also include any research presentations or publications. Some experts feel that an objective or qualifications summary is essential on a resume; others say that it is optional, especially for new grads. If yours isn't strong and specific, leave it out (or revise it). (An objective is not typical on a vita.)
- If you have relevant information to share that just doesn't fit elsewhere, a thoughtful "Additional Information" section is generally acceptable.
- It is NOT typical to include personal information or information from high school if you are about to graduate from college.
- Include your GPA only if it is 3.0 or above; if it is on the low side, also add a Major GPA or Junior-Senior Year GPA. Do not include test scores.
- Always tell the truth, and be prepared to back up and elaborate on anything you have included.
- Focus on things that set you apart. When a resume is cluttered with basic tasks (filing) and skills (word-processing), it is difficult to find what really sets you apart.
- If sending a resume by email, ALWAYS send it as a PDF. If you send a Word document you have no idea how it will appear on the other end. You can download a freeware PDF writer from <http://www.cutepdf.com/>.
- References can be listed at the bottom or provided on request in a separate document. We suggest an extended reference page that provides information about your relationship with each referee (see sample). The top of the reference page should match the top of your resume/vita. Always speak with your referees before including them on your reference page.

Resume/CV Checklist

Adapted from <http://career-advice.monster.com>

First Impression

- Does the resume look original and not based on a template?
- Is the resume inviting to read, with clear sections and ample white space?
- Does the design look professional rather than like a simple typing job?
- Is it clearly printed on a laser printer and on high quality paper?
- Is the length and overall appearance of the resume appropriate given the career level and objective?

Appearance

- Does the resume provide a visually pleasing, polished presentation?
- Is the font choice and size (10-12 point) appropriate?
- Are there design elements such as bullets, bolding and lines to guide readers' eyes through the document and highlight important content?
- Is there adequate white space to allow for easy reading and navigation?
- Is there more white space between sections than within?
- Are margins reasonable (1 inch) and even on all sides?
- Are design elements like spacing, font size, bolding, italics, and punctuation used consistently throughout the document?
- If the resume is longer than a page, does the second page contain a heading? Is the page break formatted correctly?

Resume Sections

- If there is more than one address, is the current address on the left?
- Are all resume sections clearly labeled?
- Are sections placed in the best order to highlight the applicant's strongest credentials?
- Is the work history listed in reverse chronological order (most recent job first)?
- Is secondary language fluency clearly described?
- Are publications/presentations formatted appropriately for the discipline? (Vita only)

Career Goal

- Is the career goal included in an objective or qualifications summary? (Optional)
- Is the resume targeted to a specific career goal and not trying to be a one-size-fits-all document?

Accomplishments

- Does the resume include a solid listing of career and academic accomplishments?
- Do bullet points communicate strengths and emphasize results?
- Are accomplishments quantified by numbers, percentages, or other concrete measures of success?
- Do accomplishment statements begin with strong, varied action verbs?

Relevance

- Is the information relevant to the needs of the reviewer?
- Do the resume's content support the career goal?
- Is the resume keyword-rich, packed with appropriate buzzwords?
- Is applicable additional information, such as awards and affiliations, included, while personal information like marital status, age and nationality unrelated to the job target omitted?

Writing Style

- Is the resume written in an implied first-person voice with personal pronouns, such as I, me and my, avoided?
- Is the content flow logical and easy to understand?
- Is the resume as perfect as possible, with no careless typos or spelling, grammar or syntax errors?

(Reverse Chronological Resume)

Alana Miles

1345 Valley View Drive
Pylesville, Maryland 21132
anmiles@smcm.edu ~ (443) 417-5059

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Arts in Political Science
St. Mary's College of Maryland

Anticipated December 2007
Cumulative GPA: 3.60; GPA in Major 3.79

PROFILE (Optional!)

Liberal arts graduate with well-developed research, writing, and oral communication abilities and oral and written fluency in Spanish. Extremely organized and detail oriented. Experience in interpreting legislation, public relations, professional publishing and reporting, fundraising, event planning, and administration.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Office of Communications Intern, Maryland State Comptroller's Office

June- August 2006

- Developed a brochure that featured the Comptroller's career accomplishments.
- Collaborated with team members to create and edit press releases, brochures, and speeches.
- Identified promotional opportunities for the Office of the Comptroller by monitoring local media and researching potential issues.

Legislative Liaison Student Intern, St. Mary's College of Maryland

December 2005- May 2006

- Represented St. Mary's College of Maryland student body at Maryland General Assembly Committee meetings.
- Monitored legislative processes at the state-level by observing committee meetings and researching proposed legislation; reported higher education and fiscal issues to the College President and CFO.
- Coordinated research activities and legislative communication strategies with other representatives of Maryland's higher education community.

Staff Reporter, *The Point News* College Newspaper

September 2005- May 2006

- Researched controversial events occurring on campus, and regularly contributed articles to newspaper's final edition; three articles were featured on the front-page.
- Assisted other staff members with editing and brainstorming article topics.

Vice-President, St. Mary's College of Maryland Crew Team

January 2004- May 2005

- Coordinated team activities, including travel plans, regatta registration, and boat maintenance sessions.
- Planned three major fundraising events, including two regattas and an Alumni Banquet.
- Worked with team leaders to plan budgets and schedules, and developed equipment lists for the St. Mary's College Business Office.

(Functional Resume)

Trevor T. Banks
ttbanks@smcm.edu

Current

Campus Center Box 4567
16800 Point Lookout Road
St. Mary's City, Maryland 20686
240-434-8078

Permanent

59 Charles Street
Melville, New York 11747
903-555-7643

OBJECTIVE (Optional!)

To obtain a research position in biology that will allow me to apply my strong interpersonal and organizational skills, research competence, and effective analytical and writing abilities.

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Arts in Biology
St. Mary's College of Maryland, St. Mary's City, Maryland

Anticipated May 2008

PROFESSIONAL SKILLS

Interpersonal

- Assisted international student residents with their adjustment to the cultural, social, and educational context of the St. Mary's campus
- Served as captain of the varsity swim team and led the team to third place in all-state competition
- Contacted customers regarding overdue bills; achieved 80% success rate after working with customers to develop individualized payment schedules

Analytical

- Designed and conducted an empirical study on the genetic basis of artistic talent as a senior research project; presented results at a regional undergraduate biology conference
- Assembled data on housing costs in all state counties; summarized and illustrated results in a graph

Organizational

- Planned fundraising events for sports teams that raised over \$10,000 for new equipment
- Managed time efficiently as varsity athlete with a challenging major curriculum
- Developed data retrieval system of delinquent accounts for a major county employer

Communication

- Met with local leaders and residents to discuss the housing shortage in Southern Maryland and compiled a summary for presentation to the County Commissioners
- Represented the College at a convention sponsored by the U.S. Olympics Association

EXPERIENCE

Resident Assistant	St. Mary's College of Maryland	Fall 2007-present
Accounts Receivable Analyst	JPH & Associates, Inc.	Summer 2007
County Government Intern	St. Mary's County Government	Spring 2006

ACHIEVEMENTS

- Member of Alpha Beta Honor Society at St. Mary's College of Maryland (2007)
- Dean's List: Fall 2006, Spring 2007

(Vita)

Jean Melissa Simons

(555) 821-2484 ~ jmsimons@smcm.edu

Current Address

Campus Center #2223
16800 Point Lookout Road
St. Mary's City, Maryland 20686

Permanent Address

3331 Lady Marian Court
Midlothian, Virginia 23113

Education

St. Mary's College of Maryland, St. Mary's City, Maryland

Bachelor of Arts: Psychology ~ Minor: Educational Studies ~ Anticipated May 2008

Current GPA: 3.86 ~ Psychology GPA: 4.00

Teaching Experience

First Year Seminar Peer Mentor (2008)

St. Mary's College of Maryland

- Invited by faculty member to assist with instruction of First Year Seminar on Children's Literature.
- Will respond to weekly response papers, provide feedback on student writing, and lead study sessions for exams.

Student Teacher (2007-present)

Piney Point Elementary School

- Assist teachers in activities for 1st grade, 7th grade, and special education pre-k classrooms.
- Conduct weekly individual reading sessions for two 1st grade students.

Research Experience

St. Mary's Project (2007-present)

- Conducting a comprehensive independent senior project examining the prevalence of eating disorders and counseling center usage on the campus of St. Mary's College of Maryland.

Research Assistantship (2007)

- Assisted Dr. Kathleen Tallent with a research project on the impact of parenting style on family dynamics in counseling settings.
- Recruited and scheduled participants, transcribed and coded counseling sessions, assisted with data analysis, and contributed to a professional manuscript submitted for publication.

PSYC470 Psychotherapy and Counseling with Lab (2007)

- Created a questionnaire, analyzed data, and composed a lab report on the influence of support networks on individuals' willingness to seek professional help.
- Participated in, coded, and transcribed a mock therapy session; Utilized data to analyze my style as a helper and verbal response modes.
- Conducted a 25-minute role-play helping session and reviewed recorded session with "client" to determine her perception of helpfulness and the impact of therapist self-talk; Analyzed findings to determine most effective elements of the session.

PSYC430 Developmental Psychology with Lab (2006)

- Explored the influence of gender and age on social participation through observation of preschool-aged children's free play. Compiled data and reported findings in a 20-page lab report.
- Completed an independent empirical study on the influence of pubertal timing on body image and self-esteem in college females; Analyzed data and presented findings in a 20-page lab report.

Other Professional Experience

Mental Health Technician (2007 – present)

Palmer Psychiatric Pavilion

- Conduct direct care, observation, and communication with child, adult, and geriatric patients.
- Assist patients with activities of daily living and perform vital signs and Accuchecks.
- Facilitate patient community groups and document participation.

Camp Counselor (2006)

Meadow Lake Summer Camp

- Planned activities and monitored campers ranging in age from seven to thirteen.

Assistant Coach/Camp Counselor (2005-2007)

Harborview Sports Camp

- Supervised and supported Basketball players living in college residence halls.
- Assisted coaches with planning and carrying out daily practice sessions.

Leadership Experience

Treasurer, Student Athlete Advisory Board (2007-present)

- Assist in organizing community-service activities.
- Report to the Board on progress of the basketball program.

Vice President, CAC (Capital Athlete Conference) Advisory Board (2007 – present)

- Coordinate community service activities throughout the conference.
- Plan meetings and report on issues within college athletics.

Captain, St. Mary's College of Maryland Basketball Team (2003-2007)

- Account for the team's academic and athletic endeavors.
- Organize team events and off-season training.

Publications and Presentations

Simons, J. M. (2008, April). *The Relation between Eating Disorders and Counseling Center Usage on a College Campus*. Poster accepted for presentation at the annual meeting of the Eastern Psychological Association, Washington, DC.

Tallent, K. A., Simons, J. M., & Bauer, P. J. (2008). *The impact of parenting style on family dynamics in counseling settings*. Manuscript submitted for publication to Journal of Counseling Psychology.

Honors/Awards

- St. Mary's Senior Scholar, 3.5 GPA or Higher (Spring 2007)
- Psi Chi, The National Psychology Honor Society (Spring 2005)
- Dean's List (Spring 2005 – Spring 2007)
- Chi Alpha Sigma, The National College Athlete Honor Society (2007)
- NBCA (National Basketball Coaches Association) All-Academic Team (Fall 2005 – 2006)
- Team Most Valuable Player (Fall 2007)

(References)

MICHAEL VAN SANT

20884 Deer Park Lane
Leonardtown, Maryland 20650
H: 301.475.7894

mvansant@smcm.edu
C: 301.481.9876

REFERENCES

CONTACT

POSITION AND RANGE OF KNOWLEDGE

Michael Campos
St. Mary's College of Maryland
18952 East Fisher Road
St. Mary's City, Maryland 20686
240.895.1234 ~ mrcampos@smcm.edu

Vice President for Academic Services
Dr. Campos can comment on the usefulness of the faculty/student advising survey that I developed in conjunction with Academic Services for my St. Mary's Project.

George Nightly
St. Mary's College of Maryland
18952 East Fisher Road
St. Mary's City, Maryland 20686
240.895.1235 ~ ggnightly@smcm.edu

Professor of Psychology
Dr. Nightly can speak to my enthusiasm in working with first-year students as a First Year Seminar peer mentor, and also about my active participation in his laboratory course on counseling research.

Lois Riden
St. Mary's College of Maryland
18952 East Fisher Road
St. Mary's City, Maryland 20686
240.895.1236 ~ lkriden@smcm.edu

Associate Professor of Psychology
Dr. Riden can describe my successful contributions to her research projects on infant memory development and children's recollections of traumatic events.
