



**THE OFFICE OF CAREER AND  
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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# Resume Toolkit

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A RESOURCE GUIDE TO HELP YOU CREATE AND  
DESIGN YOUR RESUME



STETSON LAW



# Introduction

This is a toolkit for writing a resume *for employment*. There are other kinds of resumes for other purposes, and there are other documents that are used in pursuit of some kinds of employment or in other countries. A curriculum vitae (CV), for example, is used for academic and scholarly careers, some legal, medical or other professional careers, and jobs in most other countries around the world. The differences between a resume and an American curriculum vitae include:

- Purpose; a resume is a dynamic document that includes career and education highlights in marketing service to a particular job you may want, whereas a curriculum vitae is an exhaustive representation of all of your career accomplishments over time.
- Length; a resume is rarely more than two pages of highlights, unless you are asked for more detail by a decision-maker. Conversely, there is no limit to the length of a curriculum vitae; it gets

longer and is rarely edited for exclusions.

- Inclusions; a resume does not normally include many articles, presentations, or scholarship interests and awards, though it may include some, and a law student resume should include those relevant to law school performance and scholarship.

### [Simplicity Downloads](#)

#### Search “Resume” (also, see page 16)

- Resume Templates- Students
- Resume Templates- Graduates
- Resume Templates- LL.M
- Resume Templates -JD/MBA

- Design; a resume may be organized functionally, chronologically, categorically by skills, or some combination of those, whereas a CV nearly always begins with education and is always reverse-chronological in the experience and accomplishment sections.

The similarities between a resume and a curriculum vitae, when used for employment purposes include:

- Presentation; each should be accompanied by a cover letter or introduction that is not part of the document itself. The cover letter advises the reader of whatever vital context the resume or CV is unable to communicate due to form or convention.
- Content integrity; each is honest, true, and correct, factually.
- Creative flexibility; each has room for point of view, amplification, and priorities, and the writer’s own words to describe any and all content.
- Author insight; each requires a degree of insight into one’s intentions, the competitive landscape into which the document will flow, and organization that enhances the usefulness of the document to the reader.

# Introduction (continued)

One may have both a resume and a curriculum vitae, but in the U.S. only one at a time is used, and both are appropriately used with a cover letter at all times (unless a decision-maker specifically directs otherwise). Writing samples, copies of publications or excerpts from those, transcripts, recommendations, and similarly ancillary items are produced only upon request and should not be presented without such a request. To present them without a request might be disqualifying.

We don't view ourselves through the eyes of others. We wait until it's time to write the resume for a specific opportunity before we record our accomplishments and experience.

Writing either a resume or a curriculum vitae can be daunting; most people have difficulty getting started. Often, this is because most people are more inclined to survey what they don't have than itemize or describe what they have accomplished. We don't

view ourselves through the eyes of others. We wait until it's time to write the resume for a specific opportunity before we record our accomplishments and experience. And we strive to be painstakingly factual rather than confidently self-promotional.

Marketing oneself involves understanding:

1. The market
2. The competition
3. Your own priorities, limits, and potential (strengths and weaknesses)

Your resume, as a marketing tool, should reflect that understanding. Research is key to beginning the process of crafting both cover letter and resume—you can research all of these. Keep careful and detailed notes on conversations you may have in networking events and conferences and look up information to support your perception of where it fits in your plans. Your library and librarians have access to articles and papers. Your professors and other mentors are excellent sources of information, as is

your Office of Career and Professional Development. The more you learn, the more focused you can be when you author your materials.

Here are the right questions:

- What are employers in your market saying they need from the next generation of law school graduates?
- What do they value in a new clerk or associate?
- What do they find lacking? What do their clients want?
- What is important to law firms in your geographic market?

You use this information to craft and highlight the ways you meet the needs you have researched.

- Who else wants this job, and what are they featuring?
- How is your offering a higher value for the employer?
- What “extras” do you have in your work experience or volunteer work, or education that others don't have?

# Introduction (continued)

You use this information to select the items to put front and center on your resume and to discuss in your cover letter. Remember, these two documents work together.

- What do you want and what are you willing to give up?
- What is your career secret sauce?
- What are your short- and long-term intentions and ambitions?

You have to be able to see your own potential, both realistically and ambitiously. Some people reference passion in either resume or cover letter, or both; however, passion is a word that is overused in the context of profession, career, and work. When describing your drivers or igniters, choose words that are active and visually meaningful in the context of business, work, and performance.

In order to be certain that you have comprehensive material from which to draw when you begin to craft your resume, construct a portfolio. Your portfolio, which we sometimes call The Mothership, is the definitive collection of all of your accomplishments and

achievements: papers, trophies, paycheck stubs, notice of registrant clearance from the Florida Bar, badges of honor, photographs of you holding the winning entry, videos of your speech, notes on the book you are authoring—all of it, organized in whatever way you like. It can be a big box of stuff, it can be a file on your hard drive, of scanned material (in which case, be sure you back up every single thing, regularly, or it can be an organized banker's box of files and thumb drives. Whatever form you choose, if you begin this now, and keep it active, you will never have difficulty getting your resume out of your head and onto the page.

This Toolkit is for law students and law school graduates who may be targeting a job in a legal field, as a lawyer, law clerk, judicial clerk, or other professional role. It is also for individuals who are seeking a professional role that will benefit from a legal education and the many advantages it gives job candidates in a great many fields.

When describing your drivers or igniters, choose words that are active and visually meaningful in the context of business, work, and performance.

### Symplicity Downloads

- [Career Portfolio 1 \(Mothership\)](#)
- [Career Portfolio 2 \(Mothership\)](#)
- [Cover Letter Toolkit](#)

This Toolkit deals only with resumes, not CVs, and it is informed by employers and their professional development and talent management staff members who work directly with the Office of Career and Professional Development to hire Stetson Law students and graduates for their jobs and their organizations.

This Toolkit is only for the resume; cover letters are a different Toolkit.

# Getting Started

## Getting Started

Though your resume (working with your cover letters) tells a story about you, it should conform to certain standard expectations and structures in order to be readable. As a marketing tool, when used in concert with a companion cover letter, it should help you stand out in the crowd. Together, they tell your story authentically, and the story should compel the reader to want to speak with you and to learn more.

The purpose of the resume and cover letter are simple: to get you a conversation with a decision-maker who can advocate for you with another decision-maker, or who can ultimately offer you a job.

Things to keep in mind at all times:

- Real estate on the cover letter page and real estate on the resume page or pages has considerable value, so never waste it on design; it should be highly functional and purposeful. Lines, boxes, large font or quirky font, or more words than necessary will make you seem

less than focused.

- Whether you limit your resume to one page or two, once you get to three you should consider switching to a CV format. A resume is for highlights and to pique the reader's curiosity. You run the risk, with a long resume, of answering too many questions too early, and the more you answer, the more likely you are to lose your prospective advocate's interest.
- The resume and cover letter should not be redundant. One says what the other cannot. The cover letter is the more personal of the two documents.
- All resume form considerations have a local or regional flavor; ignore that at your peril.
- Your spelling, grammar, word usage, and tabs and presets must be perfect. Perfect.
- This material applies to the legal industry and law students and lawyers; all industries have conventions, unwritten rules, and

tolerances. Once you have become very successful you can do whatever you want, but for right now we don't advise going rogue.

**TIP:** Be sure to review and download the [Resume Templates](#) located in the Symplicity [Document Library](#)! There are several to choose from whether you are a student, graduate, JD/MBA, or LL.M!

## **The Header: both Content and Form**

The first items on your resume are your name and your contact information; this is called the header. Your name may appear in bold, and up to a 16-point traditional font. The font should be the same as that which you will use everywhere else on the resume. Only one font per resume, and only your name may be a different size, though that is not necessary.

Some individuals choose to exclude a physical address from the resume, but you may want to include your physical address if you believe that the address may advantage you.

## Content: What Sets You Apart

Here are the conditions under which you should consider including a local physical address:

- Your cell phone number includes a distant area code.
- Your physical address is near the employer's location.
- The job requires you to live within a specific area, and your address is within that area.
- Many employers still use U.S. Mail.

Here are the conditions under which you may want to exclude your physical address:

- Your address is distant from the employer's workplace.
- Your job involves a safety risk, and you don't want your address to be public.
- The job requires you to live within a certain area, and you intend to move there only if you get the job.
- You need space on your resume and each line is precious. You want to include an item more valuable than your address.

The header may include a link to your

blog, LinkedIn profile, or website, if you have any of these. You should not include a link to your Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter account, though you may assume these will be researched.

The Office of Career and Professional Development is always here to help you. To schedule an appointment to talk about your resume or career plans ideas, and goals, e-mail [career@law.stetson.edu](mailto:career@law.stetson.edu) or call 727-562-7815

### **Content: What sets you apart**

What makes you interesting? How are you different from all of the others? What will you bring to the organization that is uniquely yours? These are **content** questions that prompt people you want to meet, to want to meet and spend time with you.

If you have done your research, you know something about the market, the industry, and the employer you are targeting. Your content should reflect how you might fit into one or more of

an employer's, plans, solutions to a problem, or organizational culture. The words you choose should be the right words. For example, if you learn that intergenerational communication is an industry-wide challenge, be sure your words reflect your comfort with people of all ages. If you learn that leaders in your industry suffer high turnover, be sure to mention your loyalty in past employment. It is likely that the law firm you want to join places a high premium on service; don't leave out your service experience just because it wasn't in a law firm; instead, characterize it so that your reader will see its value.

The best resume words are descriptive without being ponderous or heavy, are straight forward and unambiguous, and are not trite (they don't appear on every law student resume). A resume looks most attractive when it looks very active and energetic; that's because you look most attractive when you are active and energetic. A resume is simply your surrogate.

## Content: What Sets You Apart (continued)

### *Headers*

In some fields and markets the first content item on a resume is a summary statement or objective. The summary statement is declarative and speaks to how you define yourself and your purpose or objective in offering the resume to the reader. In this legal market and geography, the summary statement or objective are not used and not necessary, unless you believe that this statement is a high value differentiator it is hard to see how it might be helpful to you.

Most recent law school graduates want to launch a career—if not as an attorney, then in a field where the JD is an advantage. Others have decided not to practice and are open to a wide range and variety of alternatives. In any of these cases, most law school graduates are open to ideas, options, and opportunities and are unfettered in considering how they might fit. In that light, a summary or objective statement feels restrictive and could lead to disqualification from a novel out-of-the-box job.

On the plus side, though, for the focused and highly intentional job seeker, that statement is a declaration of determination and single-mindedness, and may therefore be a differentiator in a sea of “whatever.”

Keep in mind that the focus can be set forth in that omnipresent cover letter and leave you more room on the resume itself.

### [Symlicity Downloads](#)

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- Resume Templates- Students
- Resume Templates- Graduates
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- Resume Templates -JD/MBA

### *Professional Licensure*

If you hold a professional license that you believe will help you garner a job you want, the license number and description belong just below your contact information and to the left or right side of the page. Inclusion of licensure or certification is not just for Bar admission, but also applies to a CPA license, Series 6 or 7, a real

estate broker or agent license, nursing or physician’s license, and so on. However, if you don’t have any content for this section yet, just omit it until you do.

For some legal employers, especially in Florida, it may be important to note your character and fitness clearance status with the Florida Bar or your status with the Patent Bar. If, for example, you have your “Notice of Registrant Clearance” from the Florida Bar, it is helpful to note that under this section. This is especially true if you are a graduate.

### *Education section*

Education comes next on your resume, before Experience, until you have been out of law school about 3 to 4 years. Your Stetson Law Juris Doctor (not doctorate) or LL.M, along with the full name of the university and law school (Stetson University College of Law, not School of Law) and the location (Gulfport, Florida) should be positioned ahead of other degrees, including the other half of any dual degree you may have earned while here, like the MBA.



## Content: What Sets You Apart (continued)

The MBA, if it is part of the Stetson JD/ MBA follows immediately and should include the full university name along with the DeLand address, as the program is headquartered on the DeLand Campus.

Your graduation date, or anticipated graduation date degree received or anticipated (e.g. Candidate for Juris Doctor, May 2019), and any honors, class rank and grade point average, if you choose to include them may be included in this section, along with leadership positions and any honors or scholarships or awards you may have received, by name. You may include activities, being sure to identify yourself as an active member or an involved member, to distinguish yourself from others who may have not been as engaged.

If you are accepted to one of Stetson Law's Certificate of Concentration programs you should include that on your resume in conjunction with your degree (e.g. Candidate for Juris Doctor with Certificate of Concentration in \_\_\_\_\_ or Candidate for Certificate of Concentration in \_\_\_\_\_).

If you transferred to Stetson from another law school, the other law school name comes next—until you graduate. After you graduate you may remove the other law school name from your resume.

The next section is the full and complete name of your undergraduate institution, full city and state location, major, minor, grade point average and class rank if you choose and if they are respectable, and any honors, awards, scholarships, or other distinctions that you believe will set you apart from others. Activities may be included but may not be as important as law school activities.

Graduation with honors from any degree program, undergraduate or graduate should state that you graduated with honors, and indicate the level, *cum laude*, *magna cum laude*, or *summa cum laude*, valedictory or salutary status, and any fraternity of honors or honors bestowed at commencement. Academic honors should be presented in the education section under the school to which the honor pertains, in the order of prestige.

It is important that you not call highest grade designation "Book Awards", as Book Awards are typically only awarded at graduation at Stetson Law - this is a contravention that is different at Stetson Law from other law schools.

These include scholarships, highest grade designations, graduation awards, Dean's List / Honor Roll, and placement in intramural competitions.

At Stetson Law, a special note is necessary for highest grade designations, as this is not simply achieved by attaining a 4.0 in a course, but rather you must receive notice from the Registrar that you received the highest grade in the course. If you have received this notification mention of it on your resume belongs in Academic honors, and it should include the year received and the Section if there were multiple sections offered during that semester (e.g. Highest Grade Designation in Contracts (Fall 2018, Section 2) or Highest Grade Designation in Admiralty (Fall 2018)).



## Content: What Sets You Apart (continued)

It is important that you not call highest grade designation “Book Awards”, as Book Awards are typically only awarded at graduation at Stetson Law - this is a contravention that is different at Stetson Law from other law schools.

A tricky resume consideration is inclusion of indicators of your academic performance (in law school or in undergraduate or other graduate programs), when your academic performance is not in the top tier(s). There are no firm rules for this, and the GPA and rank/percentile should be considered separately. Rank/percentile is typically included if it's within the top 40% of the class, but a strong case can be made to include GPA no matter where it falls. It can be a mistake to omit a GPA because it isn't in a top spot, because the exclusion suggests it's worse than it really is, and further hints that the student or grad lacks confidence. Inasmuch as the employer will eventually review your transcript, a case can be made to just put it out there.

If you do include your GPA, remember that GPA cannot be rounded (i.e. a 3.458 is a 3.458). Rank/percentile, on the other hand can be rounded, but you must always round up (i.e. if you are in the top 26.3%, you are in the top 27%, not the top 26%).

If you participated in Study Abroad, you should list your experience under the university who sponsored the program and include the name of the program and location.

If you earned an associate degree prior to attending your bachelor's degree program, you may mention it, but you may choose not to. It may be particularly relevant if your journey through higher education is part of a compelling narrative that you want to feature. If it is not, you may want to save the space and simply exclude that item.

Any activities or organizations in which you are involved in school should be presented under the school to which the activity or organization pertains. These should be presented in order of prestige. Common activities or

organizations include: journals (e.g. *Stetson Law Review*, *Journal of Advocacy and the Law*, *Journal of International Aging Law & Policy*, and *Journal of International Wildlife Law & Policy*), advocacy boards (e.g. trial team, moot court, alternative dispute resolution), research assistant and teaching assistant positions, and university recognized student organizations.

*About your high school....*

High school information has a short shelf life, even if yours was a prestigious prep school, and should almost always be ignored in both cover letters and resumes. Notable exceptions include:

1. Writing to a former classmate, in which case you may include it in the cover letter;
2. Applying for a job in the school district where you attended, but you no longer live there and did not attend law school there;
3. Applying for your first professional job and your prestigious prep school is well known and well-regarded in the specific market;

## Content: What Sets You Apart (continued)

and/or ,

4. Applying for a job at the high school.

### *Experience*

To be accurate, this section *may* best be called “Experience Highlights” to ensure that no one thinks it is exhaustive. There are many reasons for this, but the most important is that you want to conserve your real estate for the items most likely to capture the reader for you. The word “highlights” says a lot; it says you didn’t include the boring, mundane, or repetitive material, but instead you found the interesting parts, the special sauce, and the thing that made it all worthwhile to you. And, experience need not be paid. Last, the word “highlights” allows you to edit out some of your employment for purposes of this resume. That does not mean you can leave them off of an application calling for an exhaustive list of employers, leave the off important other applications such as an application to the Bar, or for a background check, or deny that you worked for any, if asked.

If your list of experiences is interesting but long, “highlights” allows you to save space.

If you are a career changer, you have experience that may not be right on point for the purpose of this resume. In that case, you may have a section entitled Legal Work Experience or Law Industry Experience, and a subsequent section entitled Other Work Experience.

All of your experience is valuable, and all of it has contributed to your growth and development, professional identity, and your future, but it may not all be relevant.

### *Publications, Presentations, Community Service*

These are important, if they relate either directly or indirectly to the job or career path, or employer organization you have targeted. They should be uninflated and offered as evidence of your serious interest in your practice, your field of interest, and your prominence or recognition in the field. They say to the reader, “this is someone to take very seriously.” They

set you apart from the pack.

These should be listed on your resume in reverse chronological order, but not bulleted, and not indented. The heading can be “Publications, presentations, community service,” or one or two of these, as appropriate to your list. Dates should be included.

All of your experience is valuable, and all of it has contributed to your growth and development, professional identity, and your future.

As regards community service, this should be:

- the tasks required to get something done,
- a position of authority or advocacy, or
- board service or committee chair role

Avoid “resume fillers” like membership in a large organization, even if it’s difficult to get into unless it is relevant to the reader or employer.

# Form: How You Fit In

Use your own judgment about political organizations and campaigns, religious organizations and drives, and cause-related activity. This is not to suggest you should conceal it, it is meant to suggest that your resume is a marketing tool, and it's important that you consider the possibility that your view is not the one you want to lead with. If you put lightning rod issues on your resume, it means they are prominent and more important than other things that you did not include. One rule of thumb is to consider what cannot or should not be asked in an interview, and don't provide the preemptive answer in your resume or cover letter. For more on interviews, please review the Interview Toolkit.

Seeking and securing opportunities to speak as an authority, publish as an authority, research, or represent, and volunteer in your community in positions of increasing importance is a time-honored method of building a career and a portfolio of experiences, meeting people with common interests, and networking via relationships. As a law student, some of your volunteer work may actually be itemized in the

Experience Highlights section of your resume, but as you gain experience you may move some of your community service to this section, which follows the work experience section.

### *Hobbies and Interests*

These are important, but list no more than three. They may appear as one line with items separated by commas.

The story you are telling is your story, so the words you should use to describe what you have done and where you have been are your own words. The voice is your voice, no one else's.

### **Symlicity Downloads**

- [Interview Toolkit](#)

### **Form: How You Fit In**

The *form* of the resume includes all of the structural and writing conventions and norms that your market prefers and is accustomed to. These may be diverse among geographical locations

(Northeast U.S. v. West Coast), organization sizes (large firm v. solo practice) and businesses and industries (health care v. manufacturing), specializations such as Elder Law v. Intellectual Property Law.

Resumes for aspiring lawyers and lawyers in general are more structured and less wordy. Resumes in this region do not typically include a summary statement or objective on the resume itself. And in general, employers are far less conscious of resume form, content, and style in a high demand market and talent shortage than they are when jobs are scarcer.

The story you are telling is your story, so the words you should use to describe what you have done and where you have been are your own words. The voice is your voice, no one else's.

In this market, conventionally, "I" is implied but not written at the beginning of every resume sentence: "Authored original contracts based on client

## General Formatting

objectives,” instead of “I authored original contracts. . .” Conventionally, the sentences are bullet-points, and are in groups of three (or five at most).

In some cases, where space is limited, and the target employer is flexible, descriptive sentences may flow in paragraph form. It helps if they actually flow, however, and are not grouped as a pretend paragraph just for the sake of space-saving. This format is more difficult to read, consumes desirable white space, and despite the “paragraph” form, nonetheless uses the implied “I.”

Never use passive voice in a resume or cover letter. Passive voice is . . . well, passive, and that is not the impression you want to make. “Original contracts were authored” is not really a good thing, as it appears no one wanted to claim responsibility for their abrupt manifestation.

While you don’t use the word “I” on a resume, you can use it liberally in your cover letter, which is exactly how these two documents work effectively together.

The following pages describe guidelines to consider when creating your resume.

### GENERAL FORMATTING

**Stand out on content, not style.** The legal profession is known for being conservative and traditional, and straying from conventional formats can cause unintended questions and presumptions to arise in the mind of the reader. A resume may be treated by the recipient as a writing sample, so it is imperative that you ensure that it presents your authorship as well as possible. How well you present yourself will tell an employer a lot about how you will represent the employer if they hire you. Punctuation, grammar, and formatting should be perfect.

**Fonts.** Stick with a classic font style, like Arial, Calibri, Cambria, Garamond, or Times New Roman, and stay away from anything too quirky, like *Comic Sans*. Don’t mix fonts within the document - only one font type should be used throughout the entire resume. Font size should be consistent throughout the entire document and can be

anywhere between 10 and 12 point for text (with the exception of your name which should be larger and in bold and can range between 14 and 16 point). You should never use smaller than 10-point font for text. To create additional space on the page, you can reduce the size of blank lines down to 6 point.

### Don’t overuse font styling.

Sparingly use **Bold**, Underline, and *Italics* to highlight various sections, headings, or descriptions, but avoid combining these. Excessive font styling such as **Bold Underline**, or **Bold Underline Italics** gets to be too much. In general, ALL CAPS should be reserved for section headers (e.g. Education, Experience, etc.), and SMALL CAPS should never be used.

**Margins.** Margins can be narrowed to 0.7inch--but no smaller--and should be the same on all four sides. Not only will this help the document avoid a crowded appearance but will also ensure that text doesn’t creep to the second page upon printing.

## General Formatting (continued)

**Number of Pages.** There is no established rule that a resume must be one page or two pages, although certain employers may prefer one page. As a general rule, most law students will be best served by a one-page resume, unless you possess *significant* relevant work experience gained prior to law school. The editing process (deciding what to include, and how to include it) can provide an employer with insight into your judgment and your understanding of the job and firm.

Your resume should tell your story in a brief, organized format and should almost never exceed two pages (the only exception being Curriculum Vitae prepared for an academic appointment). If you do choose to use a two-page resume, do not split employment entries across two pages and always include a header on the second page (e.g. Joseph Smith - Page 2 of 2).

**Dates.** Align dates at the right margin and always include the month and year. Including the exact date is not necessary, but get into the habit of

recording it, as it is important for certain jobs and appointments, security clearances, and admissions, especially for state bars. Items must be presented in reverse chronological order from end date - most recent first, extending backwards in time. If you use an em or an en dash to separate dates, use the same width (and spacing before and after the dash) throughout the entire resume. Do not use a hyphen, as it is too narrow. Consistency of the formatting of dates throughout the resume is crucial (and is one of the most common mistakes made on the resume).

**Leave plenty of white space.** There should be plenty of clean, open paper. It is easier on the eyes and makes the words you place on the rest of the page easier to read and find. You will disadvantage yourself if you cram too many words and thoughts onto the page because (1) it makes it hard for a reader to find the main points and (2) it makes you look cluttered, disorganized, and unable to summarize concisely, make decisions, or use judgement.

As a general rule, most law students will be best served by a one-page resume, unless you possess significant relevant work experience gained prior to law school. The editing process (deciding what to include, and how to include it) can provide an employer with insight into your judgment and your understanding of the job and the employer.

**Utilize standard paper and ink colors.** Your resume should be black and white, with no colors—not the paper, not the fonts. Black font only. **Horizontal Lines.** Should be used sparingly. As a general rule, try to use a horizontal line only below your name and contact information. The use of additional horizontal lines can distract the reader and has the effect of breaking up the reader's flow as they read your resume.

**Photos, Designs, and Logos.** Should not be used under any circumstance. **Objective Statements.** See the previous discussion of Headers for a

## General Formatting (continued)

discussion of Objective Statements.

### Experience Section

The experience section should include a listing of current and/or previous employers that explain your responsibilities.

- *Name and locations* Put the full name and city and state of every job that you list.
- *Utilize bullet points* Don't write extensive paragraphs when you are describing what you do/did at a job – no one gets excited about your story when it is difficult to work through. If you only have one bullet under a heading, either evaluate how the one bullet can be split into more bullets or do some additional reflection on your work experience to showcase additional experiences. In some cases, where space is limited, and the target employer is flexible, descriptive sentences may flow in paragraph form. It helps if they actually flow, however, and are not grouped as a pretend paragraph just for the sake of space-saving.

Use present tense for describing work that you are currently doing and past tense for describing work that you have done in the past. For current experiences, avoid -ing endings.

- For service/retail positions, you can omit bullet points if you can rely on your job title to convey your duties.
- *Describe what you did* If you are listing a current or previous employer, you should list your responsibilities. Try to describe what you do or did in action verbs from the point of view of either your supervisor or your employer's client/customer. Be consistent in your wording and try to use interesting and engaging descriptions of your responsibilities (without bending the truth). Consider the "Action/Objective" format. Describe (1) what you did by highlighting the skills you have earned and (2) why you did it. Make sure the descriptions are in

present tense for positions in which you currently work and past tense for those you have already completed. See Resume Action Verbs on page 16 in this section for a list of words to get you started with your descriptions, if you are having some trouble.

- *Use proper tense* Use present tense for describing work that you are currently doing and past tense for describing work that you have done in the past. For current experiences, avoid -ing endings.
- *Specific Names* It's never advised to include the names of specific individuals for whom you have worked at the jobs you've held or the names of clients for which you did work. Doing so can be seen as showing poor discretion. The exception to this would be if you worked directly for a judge in an externship, internship, or clerkship.
- *Reasons for Leaving a Job* Never, under any circumstance, include on your resume why you left a previous job. This is a holdover



## General Formatting (continued)

from the formal job application that has no place on the resume and can be viewed as unseemly and unprofessional.

- **Separating Legal Experience and “Other Experience”** Generally, do not separate experience gained in the legal field from experience gained outside of the legal field. From an employer’s perspective they often want to get a picture of your entire experience set. Separating experience into separate sections can also lead the resume reader to believe that you don’t see the value of transferrable skill sets. A common exception to this, however, may include extensive pre-law school careers that continue into law school. Since items must be presented in reverse chronological order from end date, a job that you’ve continued through law school may then appear before a legal position (such as an externship) that you would prefer to show higher on your resume. The key is to think about how you want your experience set to present and then

presenting it accordingly.

- **Customer Service / Retail Positions.** Many employers love to see customer service and/or retail experience on a resume. The reason for this is simple: it shows that you have client-facing experience, often under difficult conditions, where you had to act professionally. This is an important transferrable skill set to the legal profession and should be highlighted.

### **Publications Section**

If any of your work has been published you can include this information in a publications section. The content in this section should appear in proper ALWD or Blue Book format.

### **Languages Section**

If you are fluent in languages other than English, and this fluency could benefit the employer, you should include it on your resume. Be sure to include your level of fluency in both the written and spoken language. Be aware, however, that if you indicate verbal fluency you should be prepared

to conduct at least a portion of the interview (if not the entire interview) in that language.

### **Community Involvement Section**

This section is where you can include memberships, organizations, and activities that are not sponsored by Stetson University College of Law. Typical examples include voluntary bar associations, Inns of Court, Florida Bar section memberships, and volunteer / *pro bono* involvement. Be mindful when including political or potentially controversial memberships/organizations, however.

### **Personal Interests Section**

Many employers find great value in seeing items that you like to do in your free time, away from law school, to get a better idea of who you are as a person. Include real things that you like to do, and can talk about at length, even if your school load doesn’t permit you to do it as often as you’d like right now. The goal is to be genuinely interesting, not outlandish. Be cautious about including political or potentially controversial activities and/or accidentally disclosing personal

## General Formatting (continued)

information that an interviewer cannot legally ask you about.

### HONESTY

**Tell the truth.** If you are changing the actual title you held or the actual organization you joined to make it sound more important, you aren't telling the truth. If you are in the top 16.5% but state that you are top 16%, you aren't being honest. If the employer does some research into the things you claim on your resume, they should be able to verify the items exactly. The Stetson University College of Law Academic Honor Code specifically states the following:

#### **VIII. Types of Academic Dishonesty and Misconduct**

G. Deception and misrepresentation. Lying about or misrepresenting your work, academic records, credentials, or other academic matters or information. Examples of deception and misrepresentation include forging signatures, forging letters of recommendation, falsifying internship or clinic

documentation, falsifying pro bono records, and falsifying information in an application or on a resume.

### RECORDKEEPING

**Keeping track of your resume.** The resume you submit to each prospective employer should be constructed for the specific opportunity; remember, one size does not fit all. This is why you are starting from the foundation of your career portfolio or Mothership – so you can extract information you need for each resume you create. As you create each version, save it on your computer with the date and destination. Keep track of each resume you distribute.

### SUBMITTING ELECTRONICALLY

**Title the resume.** When choosing how to title to resume file (or any application document), be as helpful and strategic as possible. "Resume.pdf" is not helpful to the reader. "J.Robinson.Resume.2019" provides more information and may be easier for the reader or receiver to pass along. Always send your resume in a .pdf format.

# Resume Template Example

## Resume Templates

To the right, you will see an visual example of one of our student templates. Note not every resume will include all of these sections and yours may include other sections that aren't shown (but are discussed in the preceding pages). In Symplicity's Document Library, you will find a variety of downloadable templates for students, graduates and for those who are in pursuit or have earned their JD/ MBA and LL.M. To access the Document Library, click [here](#) or:

- Log-in to your Symplicity account. E-mail [Career@law.stetson.edu](mailto:Career@law.stetson.edu) or call 727-562-7815 if you need assistance logging into your account.
- Click on the Document Library located on the left-hand side of the page
- Search for "Resume"
- Review the templates and download and customize the one that you prefer by removing the brackets and entering in your information.

|   |                               |
|---|-------------------------------|
| <b>[Name]</b><br>[Street Address] • [City, State ZIP]<br>[E-mail] • [Phone] |                               |
| <b><u>Education</u></b>   |                               |
| Stetson University College of Law, Gulfport, FL                             |                               |
| Candidate for Juris Doctor  | [Month Year]                  |
| GPA: [X.XX] Rank: [AAA]/[BBB] (Top [CC]%)                                   |                               |
| Honors:   | [Insert]                      |
|   | [Insert]                      |
| Activities:   | [Insert]                      |
|   | [Insert]                      |
| Study Abroad:   | [Name of Program], [Location] |
| <b>[Undergraduate School Name], [City], [State]</b>                         |                               |
| Bachelor of [Insert], [honors], [Major]                                     | [Month Year]                  |
| Honors:   | [Insert]                      |
|   | [Insert]                      |
| Activities:   | [Insert]                      |
|   | [Insert]                      |
| Study Abroad:   | [Name of Program], [Location] |
| <b><u>Experience</u></b>  |                               |
| <b>[Employer Name], [City], [State]</b>                                     |                               |
| [Position Title]  | [Month Year] - [Month Year]   |
| • [Description]   |                               |
| • [Description]   |                               |
| <b>[Employer Name], [City], [State]</b>                                     |                               |
| [Position Title]  | [Month Year] - [Month Year]   |
| • [Description]   |                               |
| • [Description]   |                               |
| <b>[Employer Name], [City], [State]</b>                                     |                               |
| [Position Title]  | [Month Year] - [Month Year]   |
| • [Description]   |                               |
| • [Description]   |                               |
| <b><u>Publication</u></b>   |                               |
| [Publication Citation in ALWD or Bluebook Format]                           |                               |
| <b><u>Languages</u></b>   |                               |
| [Language] ([Level of Fluency])   |                               |
| <b><u>Memberships and Organizations</u></b>                                 |                               |
| <b>[Organization], [Level of Participation]</b>                             | [Month Year] - [Month Year]   |
| <b><u>Personal Interests</u></b>  |                               |
| [Interest]; [Interest]; [Interest]  |                               |

## Action Verbs

### A

Accelerated  
Accomplished  
Achieved  
Acted  
Adapted  
Addressed  
Adjusted  
Administered  
Advertised  
Advised  
Advocated  
Aided  
Allocated  
Analyzed  
Appointed  
Appraised  
Approved  
Arbitrated  
Arranged  
Articulated  
Assembled  
Assessed  
Assigned  
Assisted  
Attained  
Audited  
Authored  
Authorized

### B

Balanced  
Budgeted  
Built

### C

Calculated  
Catalogued  
Chaired  
Charted  
Clarified  
Classified  
Coached  
Coded  
Collaborated  
Collected  
Combined  
Communicated  
Compared  
Compiled  
Completed  
Composed  
Computed  
Conceptualized  
Condensed  
Conducted  
Conferred  
Conserved  
Considered  
Consolidated

Consulted  
Contracted  
Contributed  
Controlled  
Converted

Conveyed  
Convinced  
Cooperated  
Coordinated  
Corrected  
Corresponded  
Counseled  
Created  
Critiqued  
Customized

### D

Debated  
Debugged  
Defined  
Delegated  
Demonstrated  
Described  
Designed  
Detected  
Determined  
Developed  
Devised  
Diagnosed  
Directed

Discussed  
Displayed  
Distributed  
Documented  
Drafted

### E

Edited  
Educated  
Effected  
Elicited  
Eliminated  
Emphasized  
Enabled  
Encouraged  
Enforced  
Engineered  
Enhanced  
Enlisted  
Ensured  
Entertained  
Established  
Estimated  
Evaluated  
Examined  
Exceeded  
Executed  
Expanded  
Expedited  
Explained

Explored  
Expressed

### F

Fabricated  
Facilitated  
Familiarized  
Fashioned  
Filed  
Focused  
Forecasted  
Formulated  
Fortified  
Founded  
Furnished  
Furthered

### G

Gathered  
Generated  
Guided

### H

Handled  
Headed  
Hired  
Hosted

### I

Identified

Illustrated  
Implemented  
Improved  
Incorporated

Increased  
Individualized  
Influenced  
Informed  
Initiated  
Inspected  
Installed  
Instilled  
Instituted  
Instructed  
Insured  
Integrated  
Interacted  
Interpreted  
Interviewed  
Introduced  
Invented  
Issued

### J

Joined  
Judged

### L

Launched  
Lectured

Led  
Listened  
Located  
Logged

### M

Maintained  
Managed  
Marketed  
Measured  
Mediated  
Merged  
Modeled  
Moderated  
Modernized  
Modified  
Monitored  
Motivated

### N

Negotiated

### O

Observed  
Obtained  
Operated  
Optimized  
Orchestrated  
Organized  
Originated

## Action Verbs (continued)

|              |               |              |             |
|--------------|---------------|--------------|-------------|
| Outlined     | Recorded      | Searched     | Taught      |
| Overhauled   | Recruited     | Shaped       | Terminated  |
| Oversaw      | Rectified     | Simplified   | Tested      |
|              | Reduced       | Simplified   | Trained     |
| <b>P</b>     | Referred      | Simulated    | Transformed |
| Participated | Regulated     | Solicited    | Translated  |
| Performed    | Rehabilitated | Solved       | Transmitted |
| Persuaded    | Reinforced    | Spearheaded  | Tutored     |
| Pioneered    | Remodeled     | Specialized  |             |
| Planned      | Reorganized   | Specified    | <b>U</b>    |
| Prepared     | Repaired      | Standardized | Updated     |
| Presented    | Replaced      | Stimulated   | Upgraded    |
| Presided     | Reported      | Streamlined  | Utilized    |
| Printed      | Represented   | Strengthened |             |
| Prioritized  | Researched    | Structured   | <b>V</b>    |
| Processed    | Reserved      | Studied      | Validated   |
| Produced     | Resolved      | Submitted    | Verified    |
| Programmed   | Responded     | Succeeded    | Volunteered |
| Projected    | Restored      | Suggested    |             |
| Promoted     | Restored      | Summarized   | <b>W</b>    |
| Proposed     | Retrieved     | Supervised   | Wrote       |
| Provided     | Revamped      | Supplied     |             |
| Publicized   | Reviewed      | Supported    |             |
| Published    | Revised       | Surpassed    |             |
| Purchased    | Revitalized   | Surveyed     |             |
|              | Routed        | Synthesized  |             |
|              |               | Systematized |             |
| <b>R</b>     | <b>S</b>      |              |             |
| Recited      | Scheduled     | <b>T</b>     |             |
| Recommended  | Screened      | Tabulated    |             |
| Reconciled   |               |              |             |