

# Resume Guide

The purpose of a resume is to showcase your experiences and relevant transferable skills.  
Your resume should include a minimum of six sections:

1. Contact Information
2. Education
3. Work Experience
4. Career Skills and Awards
5. Extracurricular/Volunteer/Community Activities
6. Interests

## 1. CONTACT INFORMATION

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- Your name should be bolded and a slightly larger font than the other text
- Address is now optional. Add your home or school address if it is in the same city as the company of choice
- Ensure you have a professional voicemail message for the number you provide
- Include LinkedIn profile address. Personalize this address on LinkedIn when creating your profile
- Use your McMaster e-mail address

## 2. EDUCATION

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Variations      EDUCATION AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS  
                         EDUCATION AND AWARDS

- Include expected date of completion
- Do not include a list of specific courses unless they are specifically requested
- Scholarship and Academic Awards: state merits for receiving - do not include if awarded only for financial need
- Include GPA if requested by employer or if you feel confident that it will strengthen your application
- Include any relevant designations, either completed or in progress; if in progress include dates, level
- Include exchange experience, format in the same way as DeGroote Education (see example)
- Include coursework/special projects if relevant to role, particularly if you have limited work experience

## 3. WORK EXPERIENCE

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Variations      PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE  
                         RELATED EXPERIENCE

- In heading – Job title should come first (bold); next line, employer, city and province (italics)
- List experiences in reverse chronological order; dates should be right justified
- Include three to five STAR statements per work experience (see Pg. 2 for details)
- Do not repeat words - vary the action-verbs used
- Include experiences from the last four years (high school experiences should be limited)
- All STAR statements should be in the past tense

## 4. CAREER SKILLS

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Variations      SKILLS AND QUALIFICATIONS  
CAREER RELATED SKILLS  
AWARDS AND CAREER SKILLS

- Include specific computer related skills with level of proficiency
- Include language skills (state level of proficiency and differentiate between verbal/written skills)
- List achievements that would directly enhance brand and relate to role (i.e. certificates, community awards), if irrelevant, do not include (i.e. smart serve or lifeguard certification for a job in finance)
- If including awards, these should be community awards; all academic awards belong in the education section.
- Do not simply list words or soft skills (i.e. organized, team player), as these should be incorporated within your work and extracurricular STAR statement experiences

## 5. EXTRACURRICULAR AND VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES

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Variations      COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT  
LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

- In heading – Title should come first (bold); comma, organization name (italics)
- Reverse chronological order, including dates (right justified)
- Treat these activities the same way you would your work experience - ensure that you are highlighting transferable skills and achievements
- Include two to three STAR statements per activity; you can use character skills/qualities here (i.e. encouraged, motivated, showed compassion, persevered)
- Include roles within clubs, organizations and sports teams (if beyond basic membership)
- Basic club memberships can be listed under Interests with dates of participation

## 6. INTERESTS

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Variations      ACTIVITIES AND INTERESTS

- Include a minimum of three interests
- Be specific, not just "travel" or "music" – include why, what, dates, etc. See resume for examples.

## STAR STATEMENTS

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For the WORK EXPERIENCE, EXTRACURRICULAR, VOLUNTEER AND COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES sections of your resume, every bullet describing your experiences should be written in STAR statements.

Your experiences may not seem relevant to your future career. However, all your experiences help you develop transferable skills. You simply need to identify these skills and share their value with a prospective employer. Adding quantitative details (how much, how often, how many) can also add impact.

By using STAR statements you will highlight relevant transferable skills and demonstrate proof that you've used this skill to a positive outcome. This can make every experience relevant and add great value for the employer!

**S**kill: Which skill was used?

**T**ask / **T**ime: How did you use that skill? When did you use that skill?

**A**ction: What specific action did you take?

**R**esult: What impact/outcome was achieved? (See Pg. 3 for examples)

Sometimes it can be hard to articulate which skills you used. Below is a list of some transferable skills:

Adaptability/Flexibility	Facilitating	Managing Others
Attention to Detail	Judgment	Planning and Organization
Communication	Influencing/Persuading	Problem Solving
Critical Thinking	Initiative	Presenting
Customer Focus/Managing Relationships	Innovation	Technical & Professional Knowledge
Creativity	Integrity	Teamwork
Conflict Management	Interpersonal Skills	Time Management
Decision Making	Leadership	Work Ethic

### **MOST IMPORTANT SKILLS TO INCLUDE:**

On every job description the employer will list skills and qualifications they are looking for. Incorporate as many of these that you possess and can demonstrate (provide proof) through your experiences. The more closely your resume reflects the job posting the better! Try to get the most important experiences on your first page and order your bullet points to reflect the most important skills to the area of business you are seeking.

### **EXAMPLE RESULTS:**

- ...**increased** speed and service to clients
- ...**ensuring** all customer questions were answered and problems resolved
- ...**resulting** in awareness of products and profitability for the store
- ...**receiving** positive feedback from children and parents
- ...**enhancing** customer satisfaction and retention
- ...**developing** team cohesion and efficiency
- ...**saving** processing time for staff to complete other duties

\*Any results which also include quantifiable outcomes or accomplishments are highly encouraged

### **FORMATTING TIPS**

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- All dates should be right justified
- Resume should NOT exceed two pages – FINANCE RESUMES SHOULD BE NO MORE THAN 1 PAGE
- Must fill at least 2/3 of page two in order to justify a second page
- At the top of page two – include NAME, E-MAIL, PAGE 2 of 2
- Do not include the same year twice for an experience (May-June 2015 *not* May 2015-June 2015)
- Ensure all bullets and spacing are consistent
- All bullet points should be written in past tense (to be accomplishment oriented and create flow for the reader)
- Do not use any personal pronouns - "I", "me", "my"
- Number one to ten written in full; 11+ written numerically
- Limit of 2 different font sizes
- Same font throughout
- Don't overuse bolding/italics
- The bullets for an experience should not be broken up over two pages
- Spell check – once, twice, three times at least!

# Sample Resume:

## Jane M. Smith

(905) 555-1234 • janesmith@mcmaster.ca  
www.linkedin.com/your.profile

### EDUCATION

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#### Honours Bachelor of Commerce, Level 4

September 2016 - Present

*DeGroote School of Business, McMaster University, Hamilton, ON*

- Area of focus: Accounting, Pursuing Minor in Economics
- Dean's Honour List 2015, 2016
- Member of Golden Key Honour Society for being amongst top 15% of class, September 2017 – Present
- Completed a 16-month internship at IBM Canada
- Expected Completion: April 2020

#### Level I Candidate in CFA Program

#### Honours Bachelor of Commerce

September – December 2018

*Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand*

- Participated in BizX Academic Exchange Program

### WORK EXPERIENCE

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#### Sales and Operations Support

May 2019 - August 2020

*IBM Canada, Markham, ON*

- Trained four new sales representatives on the Forecasting template and sales growth strategy for 2018, which allowed individuals to update and manipulate data as required
- Prepared Personal Business Commitment packages for representatives and Manager, improving internal customer relations
- Created e-contact customer list and new tracking system in Microsoft Access identifying new business leads for national sales force
- Recognized for "Excellent Sales Support and Willingness to Learn" and for "Quickly Picking up the Role and Adding Value to the Team" as part of the Thanks! Award Program

#### Shift Supervisor

January - April 2019

*ABC Coffee Time, Hamilton, ON*

- Led and directed a team of 12; received 'Moves of Uncommon Greatness' award for receiving 99 percent store 'Snapshot' based on excellent service provided to secret shopper
- Delegated tasks based on personal strengths and interests to a team of six shift employees, which motivated them to perform tasks to best of ability
- Brainstormed with other supervisors to design and implement new strategies to improve store dynamic; created communication log increasing consistency in delivery of store and promotions announcements.
- Coached 16 new employees, one-on-one and delegated responsibility with respect, resulting in increased speed and service to patrons
- Analyzed inventories of coffee and paper supplies created stock orders and partnered with suppliers ensuring shipments delivered on time

### **Employment Clerk**

April - August 2018

*Mohawk College, Hamilton, ON*

- Implemented strong attention to detail when completing typing, printing, and the assembly of custom courseware manuals and course outlines, optimizing the operations of the office
- Prepared databases and performed merges for large mail-outs using Word, managing tight timelines and using organization skills, ensuring timely distribution to external clients
- Handled reception of visitors, transfer of calls, answered general inquiries, delivering quality customer service and upholding the brand standard of the college

### **SKILLS AND QUALIFICATIONS**

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- Proficient in Microsoft; Word, PowerPoint, Access and Excel (Excel functions include V lookups)
- Basic knowledge of HTML programming
- French: strong written and basic verbal communication skills

### **EXTRACURRICULAR AND VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES**

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**Volunteer**, *Hamilton Cancer Assistance Program, Hamilton, ON*

March 2018 – Present

- Organized four annual events, in collaboration with the Coordinator, to help raise over \$1K annually for the Hamilton Cancer Society
- Recruited and trained over nine student volunteers for telethon promotions, supporting the organization to successfully meet monthly targets for fundraising

**Welcome Week Greensuit**, *DeGroote Commerce Society, Hamilton, ON*

September 2017

- Directed traffic and unloaded belongings for over 600 first year Commerce students during Welcome Week, using initiative, organization and strong interpersonal skills to help effectively transition them to the university and campus

**Administrative Assistant**, *Ontario Ball Hockey League, Hamilton, ON*

June 2014 – July 2016

- Organized practice and tournament dates and collected fees from players to ensure smooth execution of the league each week

### **INTERESTS**

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- Student Member, CPA Ontario (January 2020 – Present)
- Student Member, DeGroote Accounting Association (September 2017 – Present)
- Participant, McMaster DECA U Business Case Competition (January 2017)
- Attended the Sports and Business Conference, John Molson School of Business (2016)
- Sports – recreational swimming, snowboarding
- Travel – backpacked across India and Turkey (Summer 2016)
- Daily reader of the Wall Street Journal and avid followers of the TSE

# Additional Resources

## Action Words

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Using “action words” when describing your past experience helps to convey the impression that you have taken action and achieved results in the past. Action words also help to demonstrate and describe your uniqueness.

### GENERAL VERBS AND DESCRIPTORS

affected	effected	monitored	revised
accelerated	eliminated	motivated	scheduled
accepted	encouraged	observed	served
achieved	enjoyed	obtained	set priorities
acted	established	organized	set up
adapted	evaluated	participated	shaped
administered	examined	performed	significantly
approved	excelled	persuaded	simplified
assisted	expanded	pinpointed	solved
automated	expedited	planned	sparked
collected	facilitated	practiced	strategize
completed	followed through	predicted	streamlined
composed	found	prepared	strengthened
comprehend	generated	presented	structured
conceived	guided	prioritized	studied
concentrated on	handled	produced	successfully
conducted	heavily involved in	programmed	supplied
conferred	helped	proposed	synthesized
copied	identified	provided	taught
created	improved	purchased	tended
debated	increased	recommended	tested
delegated	influenced	recorded	translated
delivered	interpreted	reduced	trimmed
demonstrated	investigated	reinforced	tutored
designed	launched	reorganized	upgraded
developed	led	reported	utilized
directed	maintained	represented	wrote
displayed	manipulated	researched	
distributed	mediated	revamped	
edited	modified	reviewed	

## **WORDS RELATED TO ABILITIES AND SKILLS**

ability to	counseled	lectured	strong dedication to
adept at	created	mastered	supervised
analyzed	delegated	operated	taught
appraised	developed	performed	technical competence in
aptitude for	assisted	planned	thorough understanding
artistically presented	implemented	practiced	trained
assembled	increased productivity	proficient in	understood
built	increased profit	recruited	well versed in
capable of	initiated	reduced expenses	worked well with others
communicated	innovated	repaired	wrote
composed	installed	scheduled	
conceived	instructed	solved problems	
constructed	interviewed	strength in	

## **WORDS STRESSING ABILITY TO ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY**

accelerated	guided corporate policies	operated	solid foundation in
accepted responsibility	handled	planned	sound overview of
alerted	handled stress	prime emphasis on	sparked
automated	heavily involved in	prioritized	streamlined
concentrated on	identified	processed	strong dedication to
controlled	implemented	produced	well versed in
coordinated	improved	revamped	worked well under
drove	increased efficiency	scheduled	pressure
guided	independent	shaped and directed	

## **WORDS AND PHRASES WHICH INDICATE DESIRE TO GET AHEAD**

accepted responsibility	enormous capacity	improved	results-oriented
action-oriented	entrepreneurial viewpoint	invented	self-motivated
adapted	high-energy person	launched	strategic
compulsive drive		met deadlines	success-oriented

## **WORDS REFERRING TO COMPETENCE WITH DATA**

analyzed	completed	evaluated	summarized
automated	computed	filed	synthesized
calculated	coordinated	formulated	
compared	copied	memorized	
compiled	estimated	solved	

## **WORDS AND PHRASES TO INDICATE MANAGEMENT ABILITY**

administered	inspired confidence
advised	instituted
aptitude for	involved
authority over	led
built	leadership ability
capable of formulating and directing	managed
capacity for	mastered
closely supervised	motivated
command respect	negotiated
conducted	operated
constructed	organized
controlled	oversaw
coordinated	promoted
decision maker	recommended
delegated	recruited
directed	reorganized
drove	set up
effective in	shaped
established	spearheaded
expanded	strict control of
founded	strong leader
guided	successful with people
headed	supervised
high-level supervisory skills	took charge of
hired	trained
in charge of	well-grounded
increased productivity	willing to take the initiative
initiated	

## **WORDS AND PHRASES TO SHOW PROFIT ORIENTATION**

ability to trim costs and increase efficiency	increased profit
ability to identify and solve problems	problem solver
organizational cost cutting measures	profit-conscious
bookkeeping	profit-minded
budgeted	raised funds
controlled spiraling costs	reduced excessive costs
cost-oriented	results-oriented
curtailed spending	set priorities
drastically cut without reduced sales	shortcut to
efficient	simplified procedures
eliminated bottlenecks	sold
expense-minded	streamlined
generated cost savings	strict control of



### **WORDS AND PHRASES WHICH STRESS COMPETENCE**

ability to	energetic about	perform well under	self-motivated
demonstrated	enthusiastic about	pressure	skillful
knowledgeable	expertly trained	persistent	strength in
confident in	passionate about	results-oriented	thoroughly trained in

### **WORDS REFERING TO COMPETENCE WITH OTHERS**

advised	encouraged	participated	signaled
communicated	listened	partnered with	spoke to
cooperated	helped	persuaded	supervised
crises intervention	instructed	resolved	team player
developed support/trust	mentored	respected	understood
diverted	negotiated	served	

### **WORDS OR PHRASES THAT REFLECT INTELLIGENCE**

able to think analytically	common sense	creative
fast-thinking	good memory	idea generation
inquisitive	logical thinker	mental capacity
numerical ability	perceptive	probing mind

*Adapted from: The Complete Do-It-Yourself Resume Manual, H.A. Bezanson, Fleetwood Communications, 1985*

## Action Oriented Words and Phrases

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The following lists can help you develop STAR statements for your activities; these are examples of activities that demonstrate the skills employers are seeking. **Use them to help you get started, however you must add specific details and results to show how and where you demonstrated these skills.**

LEADERSHIP SKILLS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• independently moved into totally new situations</li><li>• took initiative in developing relationships</li><li>• continually searching for more responsibility</li><li>• excellent at organizing my time/time of others</li><li>• works without supervision/self-directed</li><li>• unwilling to automatically accept status quo</li><li>• keen perception of the potential of things rather than accepting status quo</li><li>• acts as agent of change/promote major changes</li><li>• plans, initiates, affects change</li><li>• sees a problem and acts immediately to solve it</li><li>• deals well with the unexpected or critical issues</li><li>• able to act decisively in emergencies</li><li>• adept at confronting others with difficult personal matters</li><li>• no fear of taking manageable/educated risks</li><li>• adept at policy making</li><li>• able to terminate projects/people/processes when necessary</li><li>• inspiring, motivating, and leading organized groups</li><li>• skilled at chairing meetings</li><li>• leads others/impresses others with charisma and enthusiasm</li></ul>
ABILITY TO PERFORM
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• confidently participates in group settings</li><li>• poised in public appearances</li><li>• exceptional speaking ability</li><li>• articulates/stimulates people and generates enthusiasm</li><li>• understands value of the ridiculous in illuminating reality</li><li>• conducting and directing public affairs and ceremonies</li><li>• develops strong, artistic (visual) presentations</li></ul>
INFLUENCE/PERSUASION SKILLS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• establishes rapport quickly</li><li>• inspires trust in minds of others</li><li>• expert in reasoning persuasively/developing a thought</li><li>• influences the attitudes, ideas of others</li><li>• promotes ideas, products effectively without tearing down competing ideas or products</li><li>• sells program or course of action to decision-makers</li><li>• develops markets for ideas/products</li><li>• motivates others and stimulate them to action</li><li>• gets diverse groups to work together, adept at conflict management</li><li>• mediates between contending parties or groups</li><li>• negotiates to joint decisions</li><li>• crisis intervention</li></ul>

<b>DETAIL AND RESULTS ORIENTATION</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• follows detailed instructions</li> <li>• expert at meeting deadlines, within budget</li> <li>• skilled at making arrangements for events, processes</li> <li>• adept at finding ways to speed up a job</li> <li>• able to handle a variety of tasks and responsibilities simultaneously and efficiently</li> <li>• works well under stress and can still improvise</li> <li>• keen and accurate memory for detail</li> <li>• excels at systematic ordering and manipulating of data</li> <li>• collates data accurately and compares with previous data</li> </ul>
<b>NUMERICAL/ACCOUNTING/FINANCIAL SKILLS</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• high accuracy in computing</li> <li>• financial planning and management/maintain financial records</li> <li>• conducts economic research and analysis</li> <li>• performs cost analyses, estimates, projections, comparisons</li> <li>• develops a budget/budget planning, preparation, justification, administration, review</li> <li>• skilled at allocating scarce financial resources</li> <li>• prepares financial reports</li> <li>• uses numbers as reasoning tool/sophisticated mathematical abilities</li> <li>• effective at solving statistical problems</li> </ul>
<b>COMMUNICATION SKILLS/ABILITY TO CONVEY IDEAS</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• expresses self clearly, effectively; intelligently expresses a position</li> <li>• able to explain difficult or complex ideas, concepts, problems</li> <li>• verbal/linguistic skills in foreign language(s)</li> <li>• adept at translating jargon into meaningful terms</li> <li>• explicit and concise writing skills</li> <li>• flair for writing reports and speeches (technical or otherwise)</li> <li>• creates imaginative advertising and publicity programs</li> <li>• relates well in dealing with the public</li> <li>• excels at customer relations, services</li> </ul>
<b>HUMAN RELATIONS/HELPING/SERVICE SKILLS</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sensitive to other's needs</li> <li>• keen ability to relate to people</li> <li>• listens intently and accurately/conveys awareness</li> <li>• expertise in interpersonal contact</li> <li>• tactful, diplomatic, discrete</li> <li>• effective in dealing with different kinds of people</li> <li>• works well as part of a team/collaborates with colleagues skillfully</li> <li>• motivates others</li> <li>• readily willing to share credit with others and express appreciation</li> <li>• works well in hostile environment/handles difficult customers/employees tactfully and effectively</li> <li>• able to ignore undesirable qualities in others</li> <li>• thorough understanding of human motivations</li> <li>• adept at helping people with life/work adjustments</li> </ul>

### **INSTRUCTIONAL/EDUCATIONAL SKILLS**

- fosters a stimulating learning environment
- adept at using visual communications
- advises/aids people in making decisions
- ability to hear and answer questions perceptively
- keen ability to help others express their views
- facilitates personal growth and development of others
- clarifies goals, values of others
- designs educational events/organizes and administers in-house training programs
- trains/group facilitating/provides leadership to groups, encourages discussion

### **OBSERVATION SKILLS/ABILITY TO LEARN**

- highly observant of people, data, things
- skilled listener
- committed to personal growth and learning
- learns from example of others
- assesses and identifies potential in others
- assesses situations quickly and accurately
- instinctively understands political realities

### **ORGANIZATION AND PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT SKILLS**

- approaches goal-setting systematically
- establishes effective priorities among competing requirements
- policy formation and interpretation
- excels at program development, planning
- skilled at planning well-run meetings, seminars
- adept at bringing order to chaotic environment
- brings people together in cooperative efforts
- able to call in experts/helpers as required
- recognizes and utilizes skills of others
- creates and maintains on-time work schedules
- coordinates operations and details
- assesses the effectiveness of other people
- property, plant, facilities management
- makes decisions about others and supervises/manages the output of others

### **RESEARCH/ANALYSIS/EVALUATION SKILLS**

- anticipates situations before they become problems
- recognizes the need for more information to make an intelligent decision
- skilled at clarifying problems or situations
- adept at gathering information
- analyzes community needs, values, resources
- perceives and defines cause and effect relationships
- ability to trace problems to their source
- organizes material, information in a systematic manner
- excels at problem-solving, trouble-shooting
- reviewing and evaluating proposals by measurable or subjective criteria
- high level of decision-making skills, not afraid to re-evaluate programs, decisions, ideas