

The Work Experience

Section



What is the Work Experience Section & Why it Matters

The work experience section is one of the most important sections of your resume since it provides context to everything else. It is made up of usually paid professional experience. It can also contain volunteer and other experience if you think it makes more sense to include that than separate sections. This is a must-have section because it gives your history, puts your skills in context, provides a good spot for achievements, and is the main part of your resume that employers are going to read.

What goes in your Work Experience Section

In your work experience you are going to include your present and previous work experience and if you want, volunteer or other related experience. Depending on your resume format, you might choose to limit how much is in your work experience section, but each experience should have:

- Your position title.
- Company name.
 - The full, official name, not abbreviated.
- Date.
- Location of the company.

If you are doing a chronological or hybrid resume you are going to need to include more than just the above information. You need to explain in bullet points more about what you did while you worked. These are important parts for doing so:

- Keywords from the job description.
- Skills you used and developed.
- Achievements.

Formatting your Work Experience Section

Formatting your experience section is very important since you want it to be readable. You also want it to show you in the best way possible, so take care when putting it together. When putting together the section, you should do it in reverse chronological order. This means starting with your most recent experience and going backwards. Employers are expecting this format and know how to read so it is good practice to do it, and diverging from this format will make it difficult for employers to read your resume.

Here are some tips, followed by an example:

- You are trying to show your growth overtime, so make sure you include any promotions.
- Use experience only within the last 10-15 years.

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- In some industries it looks bad to list experience from before then, such as in tech.
- Put names, position titles, and experience on the left and justify dates and locations to the right.
- If the name of your old position does not sound professional, modify it so that it does.
 - You are not a 'data guru' you are a data scientist.
- Always tailor your resume to employers.
- You could include a "Key Achievement" piece for each experience.

Example:

Park Ranger	2020-2022
Algonquin Provincial Park	Huntsville, Ontario
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Enforced park rules and regulations through park standards of practice.- Used demographic data to plan and lead over 50 educational and community service programs.- Designed and led park tours for groups of 20 people including children.- Monitored condition of park's flora and fauna to ensure the park area was preserved.- Administered first aid in 5 major incidents allowing time for medical professionals to arrive and take care of the casualty.	

Addressing Employment Gaps

At some point in time you might have a major gap in employment that is not because of your education at Lakehead or elsewhere, but for other reasons. There is no shame in having an employment gap, but you will have to provide an explanation to your potential employer. Here are some examples:

- Illness.
 - It is reasonable that you might have had to take time off work due to illness, just say "gap due to illness."
 - Mental illness is still an illness, you do not have to say anything more than that you were ill.
- Lack of available jobs.
 - The pandemic made it hard for people to have and hold jobs because of the shifting conditions. In addition, sometimes employment is hard to find. Just say so.