



CAREER SERVICES CENTER

RESUME RESOURCE FOR STEM STUDENTS

(Information is to be used as a guidance and not repeated verbatim)

Note: *If the program/employer is requesting a CV or curriculum vitae versus a resume, see the Career Services Center for more information. A CV is different from a resume and follows another format.*

CREATING YOUR RESUME

Your job/internship search is in full swing. You've done your research. You know which program/employer you want to work at and now it is time to create an award-winning resume. The goal of a resume is to market your skills and experiences, supplement a standardized job application, and most importantly, a way for you to obtain a phone and/or in-person interview. You can also use your resume as a guideline, as you prepare for an interview. During an interview, an employer may also use your resume to guide the interview. Never misrepresent yourself. It can come back to you.

- **Aesthetics:** Craft a resume that is neat, easy to read, and professional. Be consistent in font choice, text size, type of heading, etc. For example, don't use caps for one job title and lowercase for the next job title. Try to avoid a busy resume. Leave generous margins. Avoid anything too flashy. You want an employer to be dazzled by your skills, knowledge and experiences and not distracted by images.
- **Content:** On average, employers spend less than 6 seconds reviewing a resume, so it essential to tailor your resume to the position you want. Make sure your resume is well-organized and avoids abbreviations. Appearance matters! To stand out from other candidates, create a document that is clearly written, error-free, and of high-quality content. Include experiences and accomplishments that are most relevant to the job description. If needed, include transferable skills. Make sure to read the job description carefully. Highlight any skills, abilities, qualifications, etc., indicated by the employer as required and/or preferred. Use these same or similar words in your resume. Do not include clip art, photographs, or other personal data information such as age, weight, height, social security number, driver's license, birthdate, or marital status.
- **Layout:** Start off with a blank document. Templates are usually not recommended because they may not allow you to easily move information or change bullet points, fonts, tables, text sizes, etc.
 - *Accuracy:* Review your resume. Check for proper grammar, spelling and punctuation. Don't rely on spell check. Ask several individuals to review your resume and provide feedback. Schedule an appointment to have your resume reviewed by the Career Services Center at SMC. Make sure your resume is 100% error free.
 - *Font:* Use a font that is easy to read. Avoid script fonts or fonts with too much design. Try to keep your font type size between 10 point and 12 point. Times New Roman, Arial, Calibri and Cambria are good font choices.
 - *Hard Copy (Paper):* Use a high-quality paper stock. Typically, white, ivory, off-white or a very light grey are generally used. Avoid paper that has patterns and can give an unclean appearance when photocopied. You should use the same paper for your cover letter and list of references. Don't fold, photocopy, double side, or staple your resume.
 - *Digital Versions:* For online job applications or when sending resumes via email, always convert your resume to PDF (Portable Document Format). Do not provide digital versions of your resume in Microsoft Word or Google Doc. files. Converting to PDF will preserve your formatting. When saving your document, always include your first and last name in your file name. You may even want to include the job title in your file name. In certain circumstances, an employer may even require you to save and upload your file, per their directions. In that case, make sure to follow their directions as noted.



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- **Length:** It is also recommended that as a new professional, you keep your resume to 1 page. In certain circumstances, people with extended professional experience can extend to 2 pages. Check with the Career Services Center for more information. To narrow down your resume, remove content that is not closely related to the job description. Make sure to pay attention to any applications that have a page, word, or character count limit.
- **Margins:** Use an appropriate amount of whitespace throughout your resume. Your resume should not look crowded. Standard practice is .8 inch to 1.5-inch margins, .5 inch for more experienced.
- **Order:** Each section of your resume, should always follow a reverse chronological order (most recent listed first, followed by older dates). Place your most important information at the top of your resume. See Career Services for exceptions to the “Education” section.

ELEMENTS OF YOUR RESUME

As STEM students, you have more options when it comes to what you can include on your resume compared to many other majors. Know that there is no correct way to frame your resume, but there are some best practices and standards, which will help you when it comes to employers using Applicant Tracking Systems or ATS software. Often employers may use ATS software to screen and weed out resumes that don't closely match their job description.

For your STEM resume, the following elements, unless noted as optional, should appear on your resume.

- **Heading:** The heading needs to be found at the top of your resume and should include your first and last name and the following contact information. Having a poor resume header format can even cause ATS software to reject your resume. Use the same header for your resume, cover letter, references, etc. When posting your resume on the Internet, consider whether you want your resume to be public. This may determine what information you list in your header
- **Name:** It should be a larger font type size that makes your name stand out, easy to read, but not look out of place. The font type size can range from 16 to 22 point and bolding is optional. Make sure your name matches your resume, cover letter, online application materials, calls to references and background checks. If you are referred to by a nickname, for example, some international students go by an alternative name and not their given name, you can share your preferred name, in addition to your given name.

Example:

First or Given Name “Preferred Name” Last Name, Surname or Family Name

- **Address:** In the past, listing your full (street number and name) address on your resume was standard. However, as the landscape of communication changes, your full address is sensitive information that you should list on your resume if you feel comfortable. Check to see if the job application requires your full address on your resume. An alternative might be to exclude your street number and name and just to list your city and state or city, state, and zip code.
- **Email Address:** List a professional email that you check regularly. If an employer needs to contact you, this is one of the methods they may choose to use. A combination of your first and last name is common. You may use your SMC student email address, just note that your email account may become deactivated once you are no longer a currently enrolled student at SMC.



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- *Phone Number:* List a phone number with a voicemail set up to receive messages. If you use your cell phone as your contact phone number, be prepared to handle a professional conversation whenever you answer your phone. Make sure to always use a professional outgoing message on your phone.

Example:

“You have reached the voicemail of Julie Connors. I am sorry I missed your call. Please leave your name, number and a brief message and I will return your call as soon as possible. Thank you.”

- *Personal website/social media usernames/LinkedIn profiles:* Only include personal websites, links to social media handles, GitHub, or LinkedIn accounts if they are current and up-to-date, relevant and will enhance your chance of obtaining an interview.
- **Education:** This section should include relevant educational information you as a candidate possess. List the institution, city, state and (expected) graduation month/year. Include the full name of your (expected) degree. You can also include minors. Degrees are written in singular form and typically, listed with the most recent or advanced degree first, working in reverse chronological order. However, there are exceptions, see Career Services for more information. To ensure the name of your degree is accurate, check with the department at the school issuing degrees. At SMC, check with Admissions and Records.
- *GPA:* You should only be listing your GPA if it is 3.5 or higher. Most resumes that include a GPA listing, will include a student’s cumulative GPA versus major GPA. However, if your major GPA is higher and you would rather share your major GPA, make sure to let the employer know on your resume, the GPA listed is your major GPA.
- *High School Information:* If you are an alum and applying for a position at an elementary/high school you attended, you can share this information in your cover letter, otherwise do not include your high school education on your resume.
- *Relevant Coursework:* If you are planning to include coursework, only list courses that are pertinent, especially if your major/degree do not relate to your employment goal. Listing your coursework under the “Education” section should be limited to two lines of your resume. You also can list relevant coursework in its own section, which will be shared later in this document.
- *Additional Educational Information:* If space permits, other areas you can include under your “Education” section include study abroad, academic awards, Dean’s list, honor societies and merit-based scholarships.

Example:

EDUCATION

Associate of Arts Degree, General Science

Expected June 2022

Santa Monica College, Santa Monica, California

Major GPA: 3.5

Relevant Coursework: Calculus, Anatomy, Physiology, Microbiology, General Chemistry



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- **Skills:** This section is important for STEM students to include on your resume. For students and new professionals, you should list this section at the top of your resume, following your Education section. This allows employers to easily see what skills you possess that they desire in a candidate.
 - *Certificates, Licenses, and Permits:* Under the skills sections, you should include any certificates, licenses, and/or permits you have earned that relate to the job description. It is also a good idea to include when you received or expect to receive them or expiration date, and if it pertains to a specific area/level. Examples might include CPR/First Aid or trainings such as any preventative healthcare.
 - *Technical/Hard Skills:* Avoid listing soft skills in this section. Focus on sharing any hard or technical skills you possess such as knowledge of any lab skills or procedures as well as computer software programs such as Microsoft Office. As you grow and develop in your career, it might be useful to distinguish between the different hard/technical skills but always make sure the skills you list in this section are relevant to the job description.
 - *Language:* Unless applying for a position in another country where English is not the main language, there is no need to list English. Make sure to list only languages in which your current proficiency level is at least at the level of advanced conversational. Always list your level of proficiency and never overestimate your knowledge of a language. You never know when you might be tested on your knowledge of a language.

Example:

SKILLS

Biology Techniques: Proficient: Handling of microorganisms, in vitro nucleic acid preparations, gel electrophoresis, PCR, protein purification, antibody analysis by ELISA, and spectrophotometry

Software Skills: Proficient: Microsoft Office Suite, Google Workspace

Languages: Spanish – Proficient

- **Experience:** This is the area that employers focus the most time reviewing and what should take the most space on your resume. Experiences can include paid or unpaid opportunities, part-time or full-time work, internships, volunteer work, significant leadership experience, class projects, service-learning experiences, etc. List the position title, organization name, location (city, state) and start to end date in month and year format. Experiences need to be listed in reverse chronological order (most recent listed first, followed by older dates) per each experience section. Keep in mind that after each experience listed, you need to include bullet points (accomplishment statements) detailing your experience more fully. More information about how to construct your accomplishment statements will be shared later in this document.

Always remember who your target audience is. Make sure to target your experience to the job description. A great way to do this is to group together experiences based on similarities and as it relates to the job description. For example, if the job description stresses research experience, you might want to include a separate section just focused on your research experience. If you are limited in space, be sure to focus more on your direct experiences that are related to skills desired by the employer. Again, it is important to choose experiences that are relevant and tailored to the position you want. It is not required to list all your experiences on your resume. These are some examples of how to group your experiences.

- *Relevant Coursework:* Having an experience section focused on relevant coursework can be very important for students trying to enter a STEM field. Most STEM jobs and internships require basic skills and/or qualifications, but how can a student who has never had an internship show an employer they have the basic skills and/or qualifications for an internship or entry level job? The best way is by



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including a “Relevant Coursework” section. In this section, you can share with employers how you have begun to develop the necessary skills for a position through your education; therefore, allowing the employer to imagine the possibilities of how you would be able to apply those skills in real-world applications with them. In this section, you will want to avoid simply listing your relevant courses. Instead, in this section, you will want to provide additional details of a few of your courses with the most relevant experience and most applicable skills. You should include the name of the course, when you took the course, the technical skills you achieved from taking the course, any labs or class projects completed, specialized processes or procedures, evaluations, analysis, product usage, etc. as well as other technical or transferable skills you gained that can be applied to real-world situations.

Example:

RELEVANT COURSEWORK

Genetics and Molecular Biology

February 2021 – Present

Santa Monica College, Santa Monica, California

- Use scientific principles, predictions, and probabilities to solve genetics problems for inheritance patterns of 2 or more genes, gene interactions, genetic mapping, mutational analyses, and population genetics
- Apply theoretical concepts of molecular biology, including the principles of DNA structure, gene regulation and RNA and protein expression to lab experiments and current biomedical applications

- *Research Experience:* Research is a great way to gain hands-on and practical experience. In this section, you should highlight the skills and experiences you have gained from conducting research. Share any relevant skills, knowledge and/or experience by detailing the actions you specifically took during your research experience as well as any results that came from your research. If your research is separate from a class, for example in partnership with a faculty/industry professional, make sure to acknowledge the partnership on your resume. You may also want to highlight information on the specific research/experiment, research methodologies, any presentations, even poster presentations, funding support, etc. If the research you are conducting will be published and/or you have presented your research, such as at a conference, this information can be included in this section or can be listed under its own “Presentations and Publications” section.

Example:

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Principles & Practice of Scientific Research Course

August 2020 – December 2020

Santa Monica College, Santa Monica, California

- Led group research on the ion content in water samples from the Ballona Wetlands
- Performed chemical experiments and analyzed qualitative results in Microsoft Excel

- *Projects:* Like research, projects are another way for you to share some of your hands-on and practical experience. Examples of projects might be associated with coursework, jobs you have held, or even projects you created on your own. Under each project, highlight the project itself, any skills and knowledge you have gained/used, the actions you took, and the results of your projects. Make sure to also acknowledge anyone’s role in the project as well. You also have the option of listing projects within your “Relevant Experience” section.



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- *Relevant (Professional) Experience:* This section is very similar for other majors as for STEM majors. You can list a variety or mix of jobs, experiences, trainings, student leadership in clubs and organizations, internships, volunteer work, independent projects, etc., if they are relevant to job description.

Example:

RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

Math and Science Tutor

August 2020 – Present

Mar Vista Family Center, Los Angeles, California

- Conduct 1 hour individual and group math and science tutoring sessions to underrepresented students attending the local elementary schools
- Design tutoring lesson plans to include quizzes and interactive games to ensure academic growth and comprehension
- Teach students about proper study habits

Upward Bound Peer Mentor

May 2018 – June 2019

Los Angeles Community College, Los Angeles, California

- Counseled and mentored first generation high school students by facilitating academic, cultural, and co-curricular group activities
- Monitored program-wide compliance with Upward Bound guidelines, goals and philosophy and ensured the emotional and physical safety of about 120 high school students
- Tutored high school math and science courses
- Assessed students' work accomplished during tutoring sessions and documented student attendance and progress

- *Clinical/Shadowing Experience:* Very similar to the sections “Relevant Experience,” “Research,” and “Projects,” make sure you highlight any skills you have gained, actions you took, etc.

Example:

CLINICAL SHADOWING

Hospital Volunteer

May 2019 – September 2020

Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, Los Angeles, California

- Greeted patients and guided visitors around the hospital setting
- Maintained professional relationships with peers and fellow nursing staff while creating memorable experiences for patients and families
- Assisted nursing staff by performing data entry and filing, answering patient phone calls, and running errands
- Acted as a liaison for healthcare teams by communicating patient needs to nursing staff
- Observed HIPAA confidentiality rules and all hospital policies and regulations

- *Teaching Experience:* This is an area where you highlight any paid, unpaid, internships, volunteer work through which you have gained teaching related skills/transferable skills. Examples might include camp counselor, tutoring, coach, childcare (nanny/babysitting). You should only include a separate section on Teaching, if you are applying for a job that requires you to teach, TA, or tutor.
- *Volunteer/Community Service Experience:* You can provide experiences where you volunteered for a day to extended opportunities in which you helped communities or populations with a particular interest. However, more consideration/weight will be directed toward longer term volunteer opportunities.



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- *Leadership Experience:* In this area, highlight the unparalleled leadership skills you learned as a student leader in a student club, sports program, or other organization.

Example:

LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

Club President	July 2020 – Present
Active Minds, Santa Monica College Chapter, Santa Monica, California	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead weekly club meetings on various issues related to mental health and wellness as it relates to young adults • Research, network, and secure professionals to serve as guest speakers at club sponsored events • Collaborate with 5 board members to increase campus knowledge of mental health issues facing college 	

Accomplishments Statement: As mentioned previously, in the “Experience” section, you need to include accomplishment statements for each experience. When you list your statements, use bullet points versus paragraph format. Use simple, but professional bullets such as circles and squares. Checkmarks, hand symbols or pencils bullet points are distracting and deters employers away from your accomplishments. Eliminate the words such as “I,” “my,” and “we” and quantify experiences, whenever possible. Always use present tense if the experience is current and past tense if the experience is no longer being done. Make sure to list no fewer than 2 bullet points and only use the jargon of a profession/technical language if you are applying for a job within that field. Don’t be humble. This is your opportunity to promote yourself and sell your skills, even transferable skills.

- *Constructing Accomplishment Statements:* When constructing your accomplishments, try to include statements that explain what you did in the position, how you did it and the results of your actions (action verb + example + result).

Examples:

- Created and led 5 preschool aged children in activities, following the Reggio Emilia approach to learning, empowering them to explore their individual interests and learn more
- Tutored an 8th grade student in pre-algebra, using teacher’s curriculum to raise student grade from a C to B+ over the course of a year
- *Action Verbs:* Start each statement with an action verb. For a list of action verbs to use in your STEM resume, view the PDF documents, “Action Words for your STEM Resume” and “Action Words for your STEM Resume by Function” on the following website: <https://www.smc.edu/student-support/career-services/career-interest-areas/stem-career-interest-area/stem-career-guides/>.
- **Objective:** A well-crafted objectives signals to an employer that you are clear about the position you are seeking and the positions available with an employer. This area is optional. Objectives can hinder your chances of obtaining an interview if you list an objective that does not match the position for which you are applying, are too general, or if it doesn’t support the content of your resume. Objectives are often used when posting a resume to an electronic job board or when handing out your resume at a job fair. A great alternative would be to share your interest in a position in your cover letter.
- **Summary of Qualifications:** Typically, this area is optional and reserved for those with more professional and direct experience. This area helps employers understand how your experiences fit together. It is a brief opportunity for you to communicate your experience, training, and abilities as it pertains to the specific job.



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REFERENCES

List your references on a separate document from your resume. Use the same paper and header format as your resume (be consistent). On this page, list 3-5 professional references including their current job title, name of agency or organizations with which they are currently affiliated, address, preferred phone number, and email address. In certain cases, you can also list your reference’s professional relationship to you (former supervisor, advisor, etc.). Bring extra copies of your reference list and resume to an interview but only provide your list of references when requested by the employer.

Professional references might include professors, lab instructors, past and/or current supervisors, volunteer/internship coordinators, co-workers, people you have supervised, counselors, advisors, etc. However, select your references carefully. Make sure they know you well enough to speak on your behalf in a positive way. Do not provide personal references, unless specifically requested by the employer. Furthermore, generally, roommates, friends, and/or family members do not make good professional references.

Be sure to ask for permission before listing people as references. Let them know you are applying for a job in education and there is a possibility, an employer may ask them for a reference. If it has been a while since receiving permission, ask for permission again. It is also important to let your references know whether your name has changed before an employer calls them for a reference check. It is also good practice, to send a copy of your resume to all your references, a description of the job that you applying to and examples of experiences that are most relevant to the position you are seeking. It will provide references with a better idea of your skills, knowledge, and experiences. At the end of your search process, be sure to send a thank you note/email to your references, acknowledging them for their assistance.

EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE

www.smc.edu/hiresmc is a free searchable employer database, like Indeed.com or LinkedIn, but only available to SMC students. Companies list off-campus jobs (part-time and full-time), internships, on-campus jobs as well as volunteer opportunities.

ADDITIONAL CAREER RELATED ASSISTANCE

The following are the services offered by the SMC Career Services Center to SMC students who are currently enrolled in 3 units or more or are currently enrollment in Counseling 12 or Counseling 16 at SMC. To receive assistance in these areas, please contact the SMC Career Services Center at (310) 434-4337 to schedule an appointment. The Career Services Center is located on main campus (1900 Pico Blvd., Santa Monica, CA 90405).

• Assistance with Major/Career Selection	• Mock Interviews
• Career Exploration and Planning	• Recruitment and Networking Events
• Class/Group Presentations (Request from the instructor)	• Resume and Cover Letter Development, Writing and Critiquing
• Part-Time and Full-Time Employment Resources/Listings	• Applied and Service-Learning Opportunities
• Internship Program and Resources	• Volunteer Opportunities
• LinkedIn Profile Development	• Workshop on Career Relevant Topics
• On-campus Employment Student Help and/or Federal Work Study (FWS) Listings	