



CAREER SERVICES CENTER

RESUME RESOURCE FOR PRE-LAW/LAW PATHWAY PROGRAM

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

CREATING YOUR RESUME

Your job search is in full-swing. You've done your research. You know which companies/organizations you want to work at, now it is time to create an award winning resume that is always up-to-date. The goal of a resume is to market your skills, experiences and accomplishments, supplement a standardized job application, and most importantly, a way for you to obtain a phone and/or in-person interview. You should always 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.

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 without any 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. Never misrepresent yourself. It can come back to you.

If needed, include transferable skills. 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 Microsoft Word document. Templates are usually not recommended because they may not allow you to easily move information or change bullets, fonts or text sizes.

- **Accuracy:** Review your resume. Check for proper grammar, spelling and punctuation. Don't rely on spell check. Have several individuals 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. Keep your font type size between 10 point and 12 point. Times New Roman, Arial, Calibri and Cambria are good choices for fonts.
- **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. Converting to PDF will preserve your formatting. When saving your document, always include your first and last name in the title of your file.
- **Length:** It is also recommended that new professionals, keep their resume to 1, no more than 2 pages. To narrow down your resume, remove content that is not closely related to the job description. Note that some law school applications have a strict 1-page limit, while others are flexible.
- **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.
- **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.



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CRITICAL ELEMENTS OF YOUR RESUME

Know there is no correct way to frame your resume, but there are some best practices and standards. The following elements, unless noted as optional, appear on every resume used to apply for jobs.

Heading: The heading needs to include your first and last name and the following contact information. 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.

- **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, one of the ways to list your name is
 - First or Given Name “Preferred Name” Last Name, Surname or Family Name
- **Address:** Typically, listing your address is standard on resumes. However, as the landscape of communication changes, your address is sensitive information that you should list on your resume if and when you feel comfortable. Check to see if the job application requires a physical address on the resume. Some alternatives to listing a physical address include
 - City, State
 - City, State, 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.
- **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. When listing your number, do not use a hyphen directly after the area code. Make sure to use a professional outgoing message on your phone. For example, *“You have reached the voicemail of Julie Conners. 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/LinkedIn public profiles:** Only include personal websites/LinkedIn accounts if they are current and up-to-date, relevant and will enhance your chance of obtaining an interview.

Certifications/Trainings: List certificates and training and when you received or expect to receive them. Only list certificates/training related to the job description.

Education: 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 with the most recent degree first. 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 should only be listed if it is 3.25 or higher. If space permits, other areas include study abroad, relevant coursework, academic awards, Dean’s list, honor societies and merit-based scholarships. Do not include your high school unless it is nationally recognized or you are applying for a position at that school. 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.

Experience: The area that employers and law schools focus the most time reviewing is your experience. 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. Examples include January 2018 – Present or January 2018 – March 2019. Experiences need to be listed in reverse chronological order (most recent listed first, followed by older dates). Aside from your education and academic performance, employers and law



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schools are most interested in your work experience and community/campus involvement. They will be looking for evidence of American Bar Association's recommended skills such as the ability to analyze/problem solve, manage your time, research, written and oral communication, and community involvement.

Your experience can be listed/grouped together in a variety of ways. Group experiences together based on similarities. If you are limited in space, be sure to focus more on your direct experiences that are related to your ability to analyze/problem solve, manage your time, conduct research, write and speak, and your community involvement. Again, it is important to choose experiences that are relevant and tailored to the position you want. It is not required to list all of your experiences on your resume. These are some examples of how to group your experiences.

- *Legal Experience:* This area is where you highlight any paid, unpaid, internships, volunteer work in any law-related work. You can also include any work performed as part of your educational experience that is law-related. For example, you should include your experiential learning experience in POL SCI 94. Note any product you have completed and the areas in which you were working.
- *Academic Experience:* In this area, you should include any relevant class/research projects, field work, service-learning experiences completed in other courses. You can also list any academic presentations/publications.
- *Professional Work Experience:* Although employers and law schools might focus more on experiences directly related to law, you could also include experiences obtained in other industries where you have accomplished and gained skills that are transferable to the legal profession such as your ability to analyze/problem solve, manage your time, research, your strong written and oral communication skills, etc.
- *Volunteer/Leadership 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. You can also highlight the unparalleled leadership skills you learned as a student leader in a student club, sports program or other organization. For law schools especially, admissions committees are very interested in filling their incoming classes with active and engaged students who will contribute to their student life.

Accomplishments: After each experience, highlight your accomplishments, skills and knowledge, using bullet points. Use simple, but professional bullets such as circles and squares. Checkmarks, hands or pencils bullet points are distracting and can deter 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. List no fewer than 2 bullet points. Use the jargon of a profession/technical language only if you are applying for a job within that field.

Construct statements that explain what you did in the position, how you did it and the results of your actions (action verb + example + result). Examples include:

- Prepared and drafted 10 restraining orders based on interviews with witnesses, victims and law enforcement
- Assisted with fact development for litigation by interviewing potential named plaintiffs
- Researched insurance law to develop strategy for settlement negotiations for client's ADA and medical claim
- Prepared 6 to 10-page self-help guides for consumers in plain language that explained immigration rights.



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| Action Verbs for Pre-Law/Law Pathway Program Resumes | | | | | | |
|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------|-------------|-------------|
| accelerated | clarified | designed | forecasted | listened | printed | selected |
| accomplished | cleared | detected | formed | maintained | produced | served |
| achieved | coded | determined | formulated | managed | protected | shaped |
| acquired | collaborated | developed | fostered | marketed | provided | shared |
| activated | compared | devised | founded | mastered | publicized | showed |
| adapted | compiled | directed | functioned | measured | questioned | simplified |
| adjusted | completed | distributed | generated | mediated | raised | solicited |
| administered | composed | drafted | governed | modeled | recommended | solved |
| advised | computed | edited | grouped | modified | recorded | specified |
| allocated | conducted | educated | guided | molded | recruited | spoke |
| analyzed | consolidated | effected | helped | monitored | reduced | stimulated |
| annotated | constructed | elicited | identified | motivated | rendered | structured |
| anticipated | contacted | encouraged | illustrated | named | repaired | studied |
| applied | continued | established | immunized | negotiated | reported | supervised |
| appraised | contracted | evaluated | implemented | observed | represented | supported |
| arranged | convened | examined | improved | obtained | reproduced | synthesized |
| articulated | conveyed | executed | increased | operated | researched | targeted |
| assembled | coordinated | exhibited | informed | ordered | resolved | taught |
| assessed | corresponded | expanded | initiated | organized | responded | tested |
| assigned | counseled | expedited | instituted | outlined | restored | trained |
| authored | created | experienced | instructed | oversaw | retained | translated |
| balanced | critiqued | experimented | interpreted | perceived | retrieved | tutored |
| briefed | decided | explained | interviewed | performed | reviewed | updated |
| budgeted | defined | explored | introduced | persuaded | revised | utilized |
| built | delegated | facilitated | invented | planned | rewrote | verified |
| catalogued | delivered | figured | investigated | planted | routed | wrote |
| categorized | demonstrated | financed | judged | presented | scheduled | |
| chaired | derived | focused | led | presided | searched | |

Skills/Language: Always list skills or knowledge of a language near the top of your resume, if it is related to the job description. This area is optional and can be placed near the bottom of your resume, after any experience, if the language/skill is a bonus. If listing language, always note level of proficiency. Only list skills that are relevant to the job.

Objective: A well-crafted objective 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 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. You do not need to include an objective for resumes required for law school admissions. The objective for a law school is self-explanatory. You want to gain admissions to law school.

Summary of Qualifications: Typically, this area is optional and reserved for those with more professional 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.

REFERENCES

List your references on a separate document from your resume. Use the same paper and header as your resume (be consistent). On this page, list 3-5 professional references including current job title, name of agency or organization with which currently affiliated, address, preferred phone number, and email address.



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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 them when requested by the employer.

Professional references might include professors/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. Generally, roommates, friends, and/or family members do not make good professional references.

Be sure to ask for permission before listing them. Let them know you are applying for a job 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 of your references, a description of the job that you are 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. For more information, visit the following page: <http://www.smc.edu/StudentServices/CareerServicesCenter/Documents/OCR/hireSMC%20student%20full%20sheet.pdf>

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).

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| • 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 | |