



Resume Writing

Participant Handout

U.S. AIR FORCE

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Disclosure: The advice and information included in this workshop and handout are a compilation of ideas, discussions, and senior leader viewpoints based on my personal experience as a leader/manager and what I've learned in my current position as the Air Force Financial Management Career Field Team Chief.

Writing an Effective Federal Résumé

Workshop Materials · Handouts · Participant Activities

The Federal Government is making it quicker and easier to connect the best candidates with Federal jobs. Your resume is your application, is your first impression, and most often is the driving factor in determining who gets an interview. This workshop covers best practices for writing an effective résumé that highlights your strengths and accomplishments. It focuses on Air Force financial management positions, civilian developmental education applications, career broadening applications, and other training or development opportunities that require a resume. You may also use your resume to request career advice and feedback from multiple levels of Air Force Financial Management Leaders through the annual Career Planning Cycle (CPC) that launches in myFM Career each year around 1 April.

Course Objectives

During this workshop, you will:

- ✓ Learn overall tips on resume formatting, length, style, layout, etc.
- ✓ Learn tips to market **YOU**
- ✓ Understand what information to include on your résumé (and what not to include)
- ✓ Understand best practices for describing your experience
- ✓ Understand how to utilize your resume for opportunities other than applying for a job
- ✓ Obtain tools and website information available to assist you

Résumé Content

It is best practice to break résumés down into major sections, outlining a summary of YOU, personal information, education, experience, and other qualifications.

Recommended Length of Resume: For first time entrants into civilian service, the Human Resources professional (***note:** as of the date of this handout, a person reviews your resume, not a computer) must ensure you qualify for the job. In order to do so, they look at the duties and responsibilities you list to ensure you meet 52-weeks of specialized experience at the next lower grade. As such, more duties and responsibilities are acceptable. A resume length of up to five pages is typically acceptable. Once in civilian service, the Human Resources professional must still determine you qualify, but you are also uploading a copy of your SF-50 showing 52-weeks of specialized experience at the next lower grade. As such, less duties and responsibilities are acceptable. A resume length of up to four pages is acceptable. Ideal length is no more than three pages.

*Think horizontal not vertical when writing your resume—it shortens your resume!

Personal Information Section

- Full Name
- Security Clearance
- Mailing Address
- Email and Phone

Special Circumstances

This section is not always needed. Only use this section or information if you have special circumstances that you wish to explain. DO NOT put a purpose or objective. DO NOT use a cover letter. Use this option/section to articulate special circumstance items to a hiring manager.

- Relocating at Own Expense
- Explain a career gap
- Desire a move to be close to family
- Explain a downgrade

Summary Section

- Unique to **YOU**
- Highlights Key Experience Categories
- Result-Oriented
- Short

*Note: A summary cannot be utilized to determine if you qualify for a job, BUT—it offers hiring managers a quick review of your qualifications at the very top of your resume.

Education Section

- Degrees, Major/Minor, University, City, State, Graduation or **Anticipated Graduation Date**
- *GPA—Include if you are new hire or looking for an internship. Once in the system, not as necessary if you want to remove it.

*Note: Fit degree information on one line per degree—it saves space!

*Note: If you just started or not yet started your educational journey, you may move the Education Section to the bottom of your resume, rather than the top.

Work Experience Section

- Job Title, Pay Plan, Series, Grade (i.e. GS-501-12), Supervisory Status
- Employer's name (Org)
- Supervisor's name
- Hours per week
- Start/End dates
- Employer's City, State
- Supervisor Contact
- Annual Salary *

*Note: Salary only needed for a first-time hire. Not necessary once hired into civilian service.

1. Understand Yourself (Goals and Gaps).

In order to seek out the right job, you must first know yourself, both goals and gaps. First, understanding your personal drivers, fulfillments, goals help you seek out the best opportunities. Soul searching is key—and it is always evolving. Second, understanding your gaps from the What FM Values – Civilian slide helps you highlight the right items. Finally, a mentor is key in helping with exploring goals, gaps, and advising/helping with specific job opportunities.

Who is your mentor: _____
What drives or fulfills you: _____
What are your goals: _____
What Category (Technical, Functional Leader, Enterprise Leader) do you fall today: _____
What are your gaps: _____

2. Consider your Qualifications

Getting started writing a résumé can be challenging. It is common for people to get caught up in résumé format before they have really considered the content. One of the first things you should do before you start writing a résumé is to think about all of the things that might make you qualified for a job.

Look to Sources

- ✓ Former job descriptions
- ✓ Supervisory reviews and feedback
- ✓ Course / Project feedback
- ✓ Military honors
- ✓ Awards and Recognition
- ✓ Customer acknowledgements
- ✓ Survey results

Think Outside the Box

- ✓ Leadership roles in social / private / sports organizations
- ✓ Volunteer experiences
- ✓ Special Assignments / Projects
- ✓ Professional/academic challenges/successes

Training/Certifications/Awards Sections

- Competitive training
- Certifications
- Individual Awards
- Special Programs (i.e. ACC Stars)
- Key training to support job
- Decorations
- Quality Step Increase
- Notable Achievement/Time Off

References

References are not necessary; especially when your resume is getting long. However, if you choose to use references, make sure you confirm with them that it is ok to use them as a reference. Also, make sure they are going to give you a positive reference! Finally, ensure the contact information is current/accurate.

Useful Websites:

myFM Career: <https://www.my.af.mil/>

FM Professional Development Hub: <https://cs2.eis.af.mil/sites/10355/default.aspx>

Click on Experience

Click on Civilian Development

- ✓ Civilian Developmental Education (CDE) Toolkit
- ✓ Career Broadening Announcements and Templates

Classification Standards Handbook for 500 Series positions

<https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/classification-qualifications/general-schedule-qualification-standards/#url=0500-ndx>

References/Credits: Some of this material was adopted from “Resume Writing Participants Handout” from Workforce Solutions for Government by Government.