

GRADUATE RESUME CHECKLIST

FORMAT/PRESENTATION

The overall appearance of your resume will affect how a potential employer views you as a job candidate. The format that you use for your resume should be clear, concise and easy-to-read.

- Use one font style throughout your resume. Font should match that of your cover letter.
- Use formal writing style (no jargon) and British (UK) spelling. Third-person only (e.g. no “I” or “my” statements).
- For dates, list month and year only and be consistent throughout resume. Position dates at the end of the line (aligned with the right margin using a right-hand tab). Use bullet points for descriptions (easier to read).
- A two-page resume is standard (For Level 1 and 2 students, a shorter resume is acceptable – until more academic and other experiences are gained).
- List your name (and phone number/email address) at the top of the second page.
- Sections should be ordered as: Highlights of Qualifications, Education, Experience, Skills, Extracurricular Activities (depending on format/content, may switch the order of “Experience” and “Skills” sections).
- When submitting a cover letter, do NOT include an objective statement/section on the resume (this is redundant). An objective may be useful if the resume is used when attending a career fair/networking event.
- Use the keywords – both technical **AND** transferable/interpersonal skills - from the posting in your resume. **Many employers now use electronic keyword searches to retrieve applications from electronic submissions.** The following transferable skills **MUST** be included in all of your resumes: teamwork, interpersonal, time management, communication, problem-solving, organizational (even if they are not listed in the job posting).
- Do not list names of references on the resume (a list of references should be brought to an interview instead).

HEADER

- Your name should be bigger and **bolder** so that it stands out.
- Include your city and province, centred under your name.
- Include a professional sounding email address (McMaster email) and include your LinkedIn profile address.
- Telephone number – include area code (e.g. 905-123-4560).

HIGHLIGHTS OF QUALIFICATIONS

- Highlights of Qualifications/Summary: Use 4-5 bullet points and summarize your relevant skills, abilities, and experiences that are applicable to the job description. Make connections to your education, part-time/summer jobs, technical skills, transferable skills, extracurricular/volunteer/community activities, memberships etc. *This section should be updated for each application to ensure you are highlighting key skills the job description is asking for.*
- Indicate your program and what you are seeking (ex: Current Master of Engineering student seeking a 4-12 month Co-op role for May 2023)*

EDUCATION

- Name of degree and discipline on first line** - then “McMaster University, Hamilton, ON” on the second line. Use the CORRECT degree for your program – check with ECCS for accuracy. Use this same format for any other universities or colleges you attended before McMaster. Example:

Bachelor of Engineering, Engineering Physics (Co-op)
McMaster University, Hamilton, ON

Expected Completion April 2018

Use bullet points for remaining lines:

- Major areas of interests/specialization related to your degree program. Consider providing a short description of your program/degree
- Additional subheading: **“Relevant courses”** (a description of a thesis/capstone project may also be included in this section). If you are including many projects/courses, consider creating a separate section.

Academic Awards/Scholarships/Honours:

- Create a separate section for these awards if you have more than **three** (otherwise listed under “education”)
- If Dean’s Honour List, include grade point average (explain what this is in % or letter grade)
- Explain what each award/scholarship was received for (ex. *academic excellence, community involvement*).
- Give dollar amounts for awards/scholarships of \$1k and above (convert to CAD).
- If highlighting a ranking, be sure to include the total number (ex. *Placed 3rd out of 8000 candidates for national entrance exam*).

SKILLS

- Computer skills – separate these skills into subheadings (software, hardware, systems, languages) and make sure you give examples in your Experience or Projects section that clearly demonstrate how you’ve used these skills.
- Technical skills learned in labs, in a job, independently and so forth.
- Licenses (other than for driving a car - unless it’s required for the job)
- Certificates from training programs such as WHMIS, First Aid, etc. – include a brief explanation if necessary
- If you are multilingual, list the languages (other than English) that you speak and include your proficiency (native, conversational, beginner)
- DO NOT** include transferrable/soft skills in this section – instead, embed these skills in the descriptions of your course projects, work experiences and extracurricular activities.

EXPERIENCE

- Embed job posting keywords – both TECHNICAL and TRANSFERRABLE strengths - in descriptions of experience. **Many employers conduct electronic screens before viewing submitted resumes. For student opportunities, many managers will place more emphasis on transferrable strengths.**
- For current students, experience can be paid OR volunteer work, as well as significant extracurricular activities (ex. *Treasurer for a student society*). If the experience is equivalent to a part-time job, include under the Experience description. Include ANY experience – it does not have to be technical/engineering experience. It is more important to demonstrate one’s transferrable skills.
- Position job title first – then employer, city and province listed on the second line (if outside Canada, list country)
Project Manager January 2020 – August 2022
ArcelorMittal Dofasco, Hamilton ON or Tata Motors, Mumbai, India

Use bullet points for remaining lines:

- Describe clearly WHAT you did, include activities demonstrating responsibility and technical complexity – avoid “responsible for”.
- Give outcomes to demonstrate how each job that you performed helped the employer and include achievements wherever possible. Quantify your descriptions (e.g. increased efficiency by 25%) to paint a clear picture and illustrate competencies.
- Describe what you achieved, learned, contributed, were commended for by supervisors or coworkers.
- Utilize action verbs (e.g. coordinated, organized, developed, initiated) to begin each job responsibility, and consider highlighting skills obtained in job as last bullet point for each job.
- If applicable, include number of hours worked per week while attending school full-time.
- Should be written in past tense.
- Experience should be listed in reverse chronological order, starting with the most recent position and ending with the least recent.
- If one (or more) positions may be related to the type of work to which you are applying, consider splitting this section in two: one titled “**Relevant Experience**” and the other titled “**Additional Experience**”.

EXTRACURRICULAR AND VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

This section can be included on the resume. If you need ideas for extracurricular/volunteer activities, please speak with a Career Educator in ECCS. Utilize this section to discuss activities other than just school/work to show that you are a well-rounded individual and illustrate attributes that may not be evident in your Experience section. Remember to highlight HOW you’ve participated. Include:

- Memberships in organizations, societies and clubs. All students are members of the McMaster Engineering Society. It is strongly suggested that students obtain the **free** student membership with Professional Engineers Ontario and the reduced student rate membership with Ontario Society of Professional Engineers, while currently enrolled at McMaster.
- Volunteer work – position, where, when, what you do/did, number of hours per week. If substantial, may include as a separate section with a heading of “Volunteer Experience”.
- Interests related to engineering/technical expertise (e.g. repairing cars/computers, developing websites).
- Any other *skill-based* interests and hobbies outside of school and work, including musical, athletic, arts, travel, reading – be specific (ex. *Avid Toronto Blue Jays fan; participated on local baseball team for 5+ years*)

ADDITIONAL SECTIONS

- Training and Certifications (ex. *LinkedIn Learning, Coursera*)
- Publications (include clickable link if space permits)
- Conferences (what did you attend/were you invited to speak?)