

RESUME WRITING WITH A CAREER COUNSELOR

A Resource Guide for Programs, Classes, and Individuals

Resumes are unlike most other documents because they have many purposes, several of which they may serve at the same time. First and primarily, resumes promote an applicant's education, credentials, experience, and skills in order to land an interview and then a job. They also serve as a capture point for all that a student does in college or a professional achieves in a career. For aspiring professionals and students, they may function as a sort of planning document or map, presenting experience sections or headings that may benefit from being enlarged with more related experience, needed certifications, beneficial skills, service, or leadership. Resumes are dynamic, "living" documents that change and grow with a person. Students may also have more than one version of their resume, if their goals or options are varied.

Working with a career counselor to build or improve a resume, students will gain more than just formatting, editing, or proofreading guidance. In discussion, their career goals and related experiences will be connected in such a way that impacts the content sequence, descriptive headings, and actual language throughout the document. It is a collaborative and educational process and is unlike a writing project being critiqued by a tutor and evaluated for independent scholarship. Ultimately, a resume will be judged by an employer in a real-world setting with real-life consequences and rewards.

Research suggests that helping students with discipline or field-specific resumes offers a best practice for building partnerships between career centers and academic programs. Faculty assigning resumes in their classes may consider using the document as evidence of completion while basing assessments on what students can show that they learned through their responses to reflection or discussion questions.

Learning Outcomes for Career Center Resume Appointments

1. Students will gain an understanding of an effective, conventional format for presenting information.
2. Students will learn how to describe their education, experience, and skills in a strategic manner that focuses on their particular job or career goals.
3. Students will identify additional experiences, credentials, or skills that they may pursue to improve their resumes while increasing their eligibility or marketability for specific jobs.

Sample Discussion and Reflection Questions for Students

1. What are three structural or formatting strategies that I applied in my resume, and why are they important?
 2. In what ways does my resume "connect the dots" for employers to see a link between me and who they want to hire?
 3. What things can I do this year and next year to improve my resume and increase its relevance to my goals?
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Faculty can contact Michael Despeaux to schedule class presentations or discuss special assignments involving resumes.

Students can make an appointment in the Career Center regarding a strategically-focused, professional resume by calling 828.339.4352 and asking to schedule a meeting with Michael Despeaux, or contacting him directly at 828.339.4212 or m_despeaux@southwesterncc.edu.