

# BUILDING A WINNING RESUME

Your Handy Guide





# Why Resumes Matter



Your resume is often the first impression you make on admissions officers and employers. It's your chance to stand out from the crowd and showcase your unique potential. A well-crafted resume tells your story, highlights your achievements, and demonstrates why you're the perfect candidate. Let's explore the three key reasons why resumes are so important!





# What Makes a Strong Resume?



A winning resume isn't just a list of achievements—it's a strategic document that showcases your potential. Here are the four pillars of a strong resume:

- **Clarity:** Use clean formatting, clear headings, and bullet points so recruiters can scan quickly.
- **Relevance:** Tailor your content to match the course or job you're applying for.
- **Professionalism:** Check spelling, use consistent fonts, and maintain a polished tone throughout.
- **Tailored Content:** Highlight experiences and skills that directly relate to your target opportunity.





# Essential Sections



## **Personal Details & Professional Statement:**

Start with your name, contact information, and a brief 2-3 sentence summary that highlights who you are and what you bring to the table.

## **Education & Skills:**

List your academic background (Higher Nitec, GCE O-Levels / N-Levels) with grades, followed by relevant skills that match your target course or job.

## **Experience Sections:**

Include projects, CCAs, community service, achievements, and any work experience. These showcase your capabilities beyond academics!





# Personal Details



Your personal details section is the first thing employers see. Include your full name, phone number, email address, and LinkedIn profile URL.

Keep your email professional  
(firstname.lastname@email.com).

Do NOT include your address, NRIC, age, photo, marital status, or religion.



# Professional Statement



A professional statement is a 2-3 sentence summary at the top of your resume that summarises who you are, what you are passionate about, and what value you bring.

To craft a compelling summary, start with your current status, add your key strengths or interests, and end with your course/career goal.

Example: "Motivated Higher Nitec in IT Applications Development student with strong problem-solving skills and a passion for technology, seeking to pursue a diploma in IT."





# Education Section



List your schools in reverse chronological order, starting with your most recent. Include the full name of the institution, dates attended, and any relevant coursework or subjects.



Include academic achievements that demonstrate your abilities: Dean's List, subject prizes, scholarships, or high distinctions. If you took additional courses, certifications, or participated in academic competitions, add these to showcase your commitment to learning.



# Skills Section



## Technical Skills

These are technical, teachable abilities you can measure.

Examples include: coding languages (Python, Java), software proficiency (Excel, Photoshop), data analysis, foreign languages, or equipment operation.

## Transferrable Skills

These are interpersonal qualities that show how you work.

Examples include: communication, teamwork, problem-solving, time management, and leadership. Back these up with brief examples from school projects or CCAs.





# Projects Section

Include school or industry projects, personal initiatives, and collaborative work that demonstrate your skills. Describe what you built, the tools you used, and the outcomes you achieved. Include class assignments if they showcase problem-solving or creativity.





# CCA Section



## Leadership Roles

Highlight positions like House Captain, President, or Committee Head. These show employers you can take initiative, manage teams, and handle responsibility beyond academics.

## Teamwork

Group activities reveal collaboration skills. Describe what you contributed and learned about working with others.





# Community Service



## VIA Experiences

Include the organisation name, your role, dates, and specific contributions. Example: "Volunteer Tutor, Care Corner (2024-2025) – Provided weekly tutoring to 5 primary school students in Mathematics."



Highlight transferable skills gained through volunteering such as teamwork, communication, empathy, and leadership. Admissions officers value candidates who demonstrate initiative and care for their community beyond academics.



# Achievements Section

## Awards & Certifications:

List academic awards, scholarships, competition wins, and any certifications you've earned. Include the awarding body and date received. Participation certificates can be included.





# Work Experience



## **Include part-time jobs, internships, and volunteer work:**

For each role, clearly state your job title, company name, and dates.

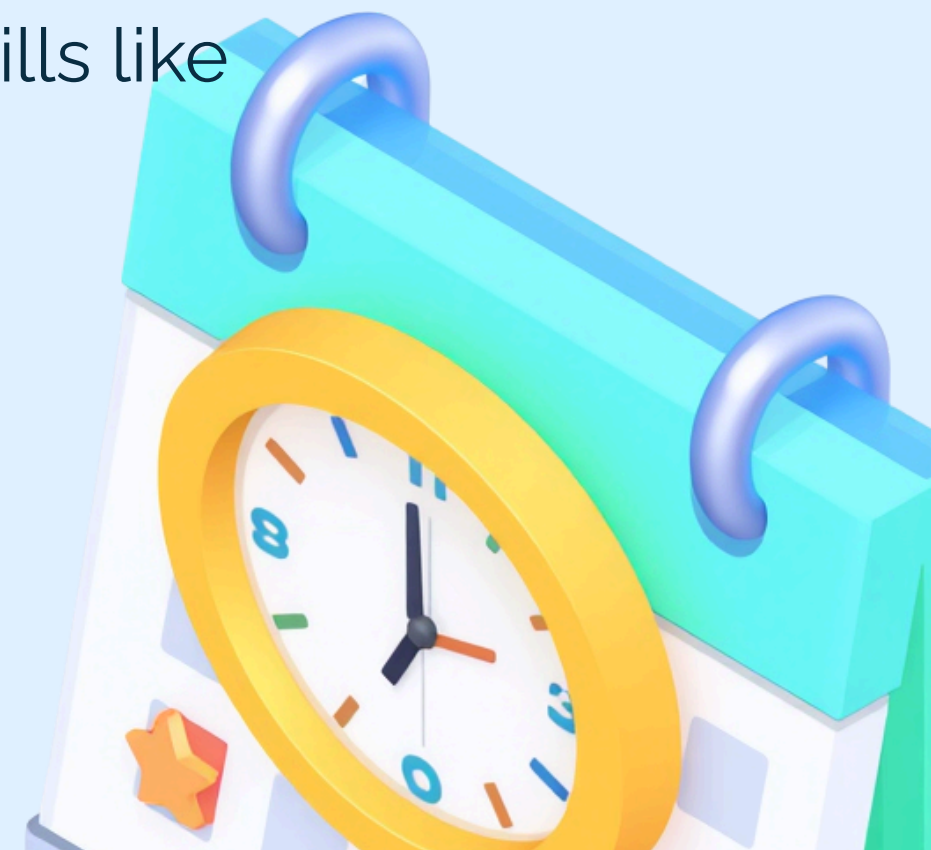
Describe your responsibilities using action verbs like "managed," "assisted," or "coordinated."

Focus on achievements and skills gained, not just tasks.

Even retail or F&B jobs teach valuable skills like customer service, teamwork, and time management.

Quantify results where applicable.

Example: "Served 50+ customers daily."



# Portfolio Section

## **When to Include a Portfolio:**

Include a portfolio when applying for creative, technical, or design-related courses. If you have visual projects, coding work, design pieces, or multimedia content that showcases your abilities, a portfolio adds powerful evidence to your resume.

## **How to Present Your Work:**

Create a simple online portfolio using free platforms like Google Sites or Canva. Include clickable links in your resume. Organise samples by category and add brief descriptions explaining your role and what you learned from each project.

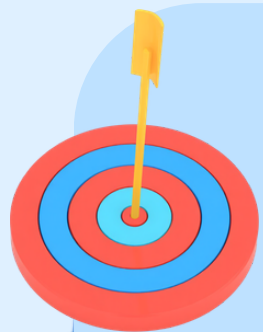




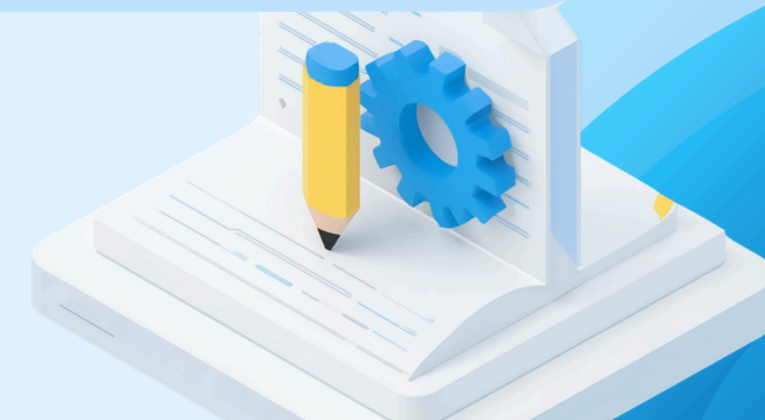
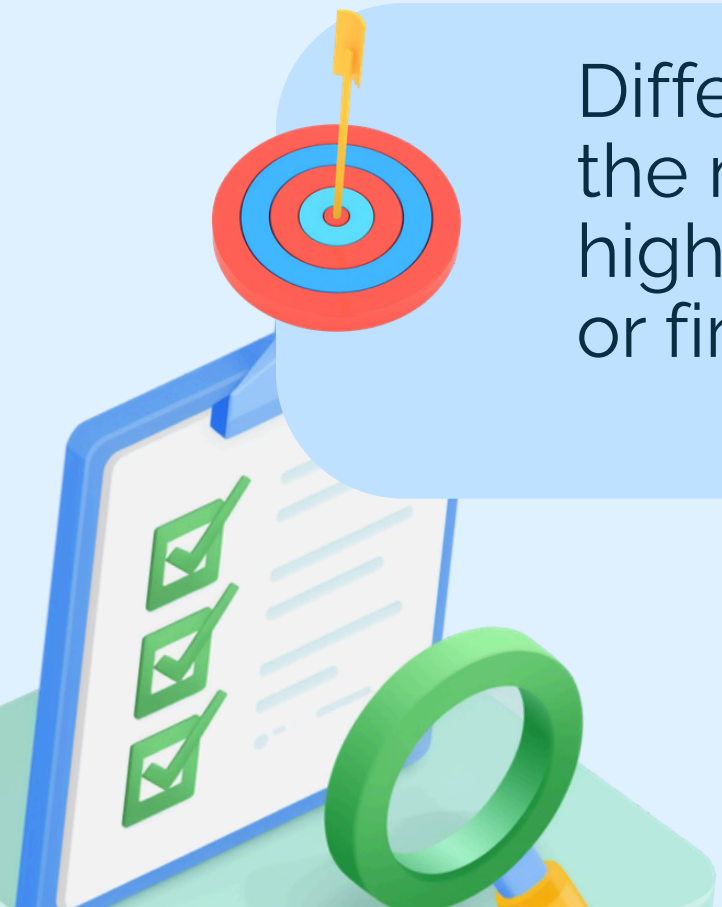
# Now Let's Customise!



You've learned all the key sections of a winning resume - from your personal details and professional statement to education, skills, projects, CCAs, and achievements. Let's tailor your resume to stand out for specific opportunities!



Different polytechnic courses and job roles value different strengths. In the next section, let's learn how you can customise your resume to highlight the most relevant experiences and skills for your target course or first job to make your resume work for YOU!



# Customising for Engineering & IT Courses



## Highlight Technical Skills & Projects:

List programming languages (Python, Java, C++), software tools (AutoCAD, MATLAB), and hands-on projects like robotics builds, coding apps, or circuit designs. Include any GitHub repositories or technical portfolios.

## Showcase Certifications & Competitions:

Add relevant certifications like Microsoft Office Specialist, Cisco IT Essentials, or Arduino courses. Include certificates of participation in hackathons, coding competitions, or STEM olympiads.





# Customising for Business & Media Courses

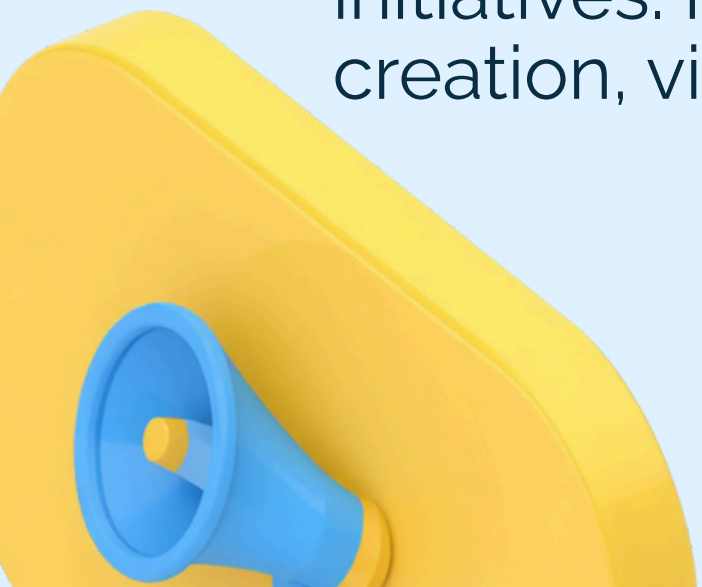


## **Highlight Communication Skills:**

List presentations you have delivered, group projects you have led, and your public speaking experiences.

## **Showcase Creativity & Relevant Experience:**

Include creative projects, social media management, event planning, or marketing initiatives. Mention any experience with content creation, video editing, or design work.



# Design & Arts Courses



## **Portfolio:**

For design courses, your portfolio speaks louder than words. Include links to your best creative work, whether it's graphic designs, illustrations, photography, or digital art.



## **Showcase Creative Projects:**

Highlight any design-related projects from school, personal work, or competitions. Describe your role, tools used (like Photoshop, Illustrator, Canva), and the creative problem you solved. Present your resume itself with good visual design to demonstrate your skills.





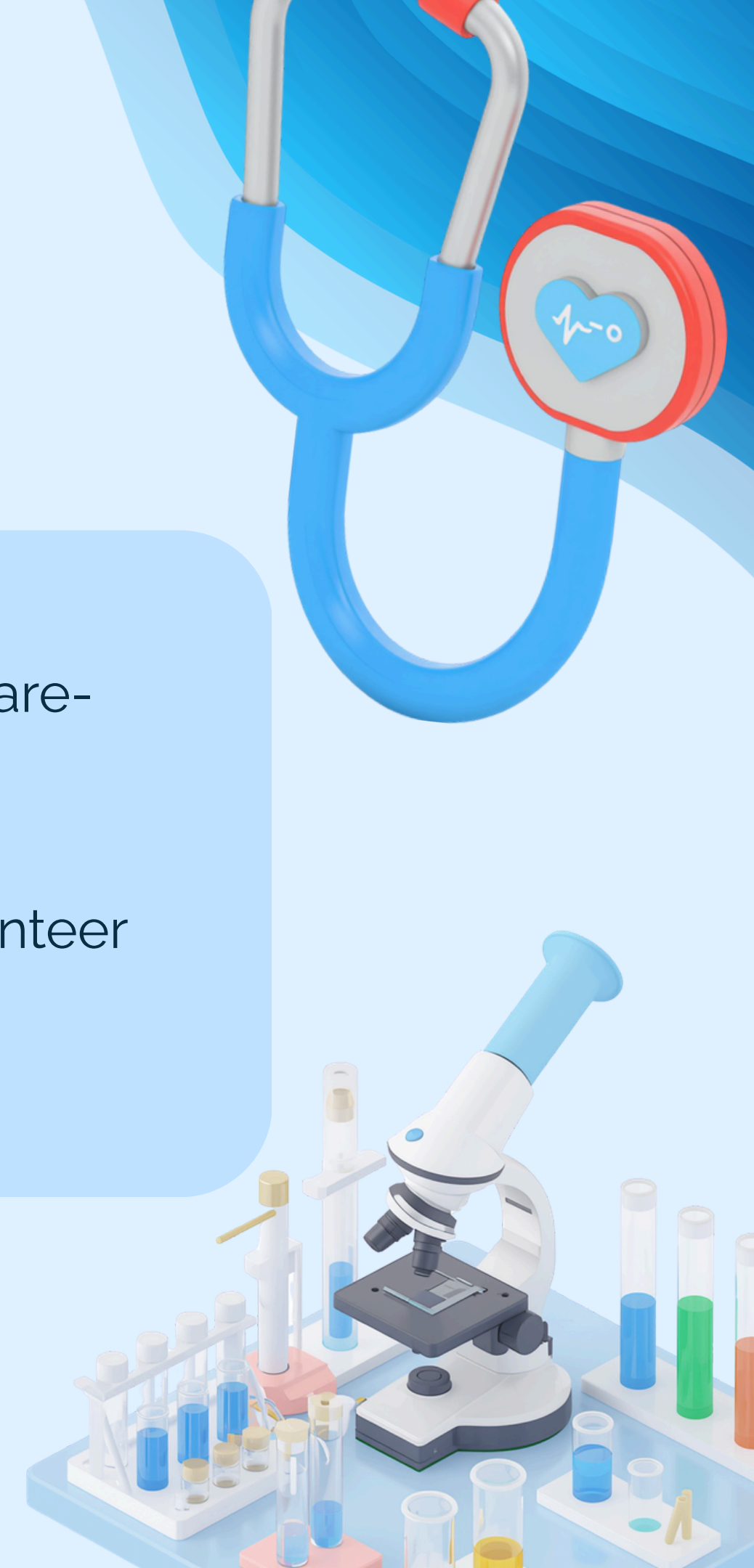
# Customising for Healthcare & Science Courses

## **Highlight Relevant Certifications:**

Include first aid, CPR, or lab safety certifications. Mention any healthcare-related courses like anatomy, biology, or chemistry.

## **Emphasise Lab Work & Community Service:**

Detail any laboratory experience or research projects. Showcase volunteer work at hospitals, clinics, or community health events.



# Power Up Your Resume: Action Verbs



Action verbs transform weak resume statements into powerful achievements! Instead of "Was responsible for projects," write "Led cross-functional projects."

Examples of strong verbs include: Achieved, Developed, Organised, Coordinated, Implemented, and Created show employers exactly what you accomplished. Every bullet point should start with a strong verb!





# Power Action Verbs



Led & Organised – Use these when you've taken charge of a project, event, or team. Example: "Led a team of 5 students to organise the school carnival" or "Organised weekly study sessions for classmates."

Developed & Designed – Perfect for creative or technical work. Example: "Developed a mobile app prototype for the school hackathon" or "Designed promotional materials for the environmental club."

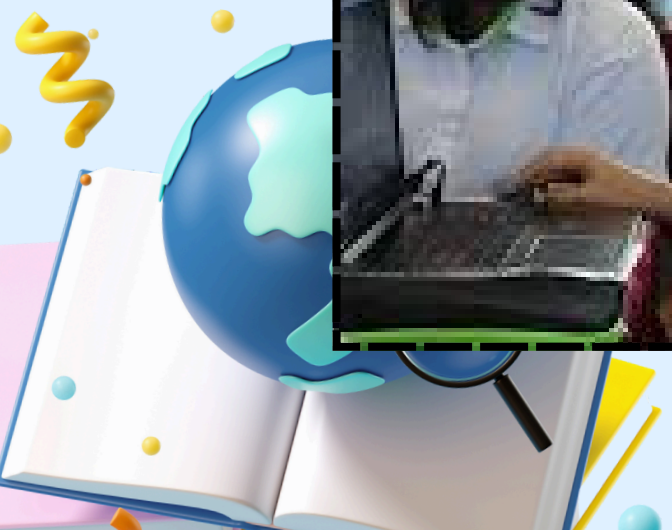
Achieved & Collaborated – Highlight results and teamwork. Example: "Achieved top 3 placement in the national robotics competition" or "Collaborated with peers to complete a community garden project."





# Transferable Skills

Transferable skills are abilities you can use in any job or course. These include communication, problem-solving, teamwork, and time management. Highlight them on your resume to show employers and admissions officers you are ready to succeed!





# Industry-Specific Skills



## Technical Skills by Field Engineering:

CAD software, programming languages, technical drawing, lab equipment operation. IT: Coding, database management, cybersecurity basics. Business: Excel, data analysis, accounting software, CRM tools.



## How to Showcase Them

List specific software and tools you've used. Include certifications or training completed. Mention projects where you applied these skills. Rate your proficiency level honestly (beginner, intermediate, advanced).



# Common Mistakes to Avoid



## **Typos and Grammar Errors:**

Always proofread multiple times, use spell-check tools, and ask a teacher to review it before submitting.



## **Irrelevant Content:**

Tailor your resume to each application, highlighting relevant skills and experiences, and removing irrelevant details.





# Formatting Tips

## **Keep It Clean & Consistent:**

Use a uncluttered layout with plenty of white space. Use 1-2 professional fonts throughout your resume. Ensure consistent formatting for headings, bullet points, and spacing.

## **Mind Your Length:**

For course admissions and first jobs, aim for one page maximum. Recruiters spend only 6-7 seconds on initial scans, so make every word count and prioritise relevant experiences.



# Key Takeaways

**Proofread Thoroughly:** Read your resume aloud to identify errors, use spell-check tools, and review it multiple times over different days. Check for consistent formatting, correct dates, and proper punctuation.

**Get Fresh Eyes on It:** Ask teachers, career counsellors, family members, or friends to review your resume. They can spot mistakes you missed and provide valuable feedback on clarity, tone, and whether your strengths come across effectively.





# Final Tips for Success



## **Tailor Each Application:**

Customise your resume for each course or job you apply to. Highlight the skills, projects, and experiences most relevant to each specific opportunity.

## **Quantify Your Achievements:**

Use numbers to make your accomplishments concrete and impressive.  
Example: "Coordinated 5 school events with 200+ attendees."

## **Keep It Updated:**

Review your resume regularly to add new achievements, skills, or experiences as you gain them to showcase your growth!



# More Final Tips



## **Be Honest:**

Never exaggerate or lie on your resume. Admissions officers and employers verify information, and dishonesty can disqualify you instantly.



## **Use Keywords & Save Correctly:**

Include relevant keywords from the course or job description to pass screening systems. Save your resume as a PDF to preserve formatting across devices, unless specifically asked for another format.





# Helpful Resources



<https://www.template.net/>  
<https://www.careerreload.com/>  
<https://www.canva.com/resumes/templates/>  
<https://cvdesignr.com/en>  
<https://smashresume.com/> (for students without work experience)



# You've Got This!

Start Building Your Winning Resume Today!

