

Building a Tech Resume

These are notes for Computer Science majors on building a resume to help you find internships (before you graduate) and jobs (after you graduate). Tech resumes look a little different from other sorts of business resumes; if you aren't in the tech world, talk to Career Services about what your resume should look like.

Attitude -- Here are some basic principles

- You get one side of 1 sheet of paper. No matter how accomplished you are, you have to fit your resume onto a single page.
- Most people hate reading resumes, so they do it as quickly as they can. Important things have to jump out.
- You can have multiple resumes. If you are a Double Degree student majoring in Organ and Computer Science, have one resume for church gigs and a different resume for programming jobs. Your tech resume can mention your music skills, but should focus on your tech skills.

- Should you put your gpa on your resume? Sure, if it is high enough to be impressive (maybe 3.5 or higher). If you don't think it will help you, leave it off. Grades vary so much from one school to another that they really aren't comparable. Most employers are more concerned with what you can do than what your grades were.
- Don't put high school experiences or awards on your resume. The only exceptions are if you worked for a tech company or were self-employed, perhaps a web-developer, while you were in high school.

- One way or another your resume should have a list of skills -- languages you know, systems you have worked with, etc. At the least, for most CS majors this includes Python, Java, C/C++, Scheme, and Eclipse. Many also have HTML, PHP, CSS, JavaScript, SQL. You don't have to be a master programmer in a language to include it, but you should be familiar enough with it to talk about what you like or don't like about it. If you list a language it is possible that you will be asked to code in it on an interview, though most interviewers will give you your choice of languages for coding quizzes.

- Some employers would like to see samples of your code. An easy and common way to make this available is through a GitHub repository. If you have one it should be listed on your resume. If you don't know what GitHub is, take CS 241.

Your resume will probably have the following sections:

- Your name and contact info. Unless you expect someone to contact you over the summer, your email address and your cell phone number are all that is necessary.
- Objective: "Summer internship in Software Engineering." or "Entry-level position as a Software Engineer." You don't absolutely need this, but if you keep it to one line it doesn't hurt. Note that "Software Engineer" is the most common job title for our alums.
- Education: "BA in Computer Science expected May 2022." Include your gpa if you think it helps. Include a list of important courses. If you have a second major mention it, but only list courses in CS.

- Skills: Languages and systems you can use. See notes above.
- Experience: This is the longest section for most resumes. You can list projects, jobs, leadership positions, and so forth, and give the dates and a brief description of each. What to list here depends on what you have -- for example, being a coordinator of some sort for OSCA might demonstrate leadership ability, but if it takes 5 lines to explain what you did and including it means you have to exclude something more tech-related (going to a 2nd page is not an option), leave it off. You should list whatever will help employers decide to hire you.

Remember that employers don't know the Oberlin lingo. Be wary of acronyms and abbreviations. If you built a web site for GSFS, say "Developed web site for Oberlin's Gender Studies Program".

There are various ways to organize the Experience section. One simple way is by date, with the most recent items first. If you have several projects and several jobs you can sort by category then by date. Try to find an arrangement that puts the most important items at the top.

- Honors, Activities, Memberships: You can omit this section, but it is a place for lots of small things that demonstrate professionalism.

After you write your resume show it to someone who is familiar with tech resumes. Any of the faculty would be happy to take a look at it. In particular, I would be happy to look at it. Members of CSMC would look at it. But do get feedback from someone before you start using it.

There are lots of resume templates on the Net. You can find some simple ones at

<https://www.template.net/business/resume/engineering-resume/>