

How to compose your Co-op Resume

Listed below are some guidelines for the creation of your co-op resume. Although you will have your own unique resume based on your education, skills, and experience, the guidelines presented below are those that we feel will provide you with a more useful and successful resume.

For more resources on how to design your resume, visit http://www.firefly.ryerson.ca/careercentre/students/tools/FT_Resume_Writing.cfm#How01 and http://www.firefly.ryerson.ca/careercentre/students/tools/FT_Resume_Writing.cfm#Tips on Ryerson's Career Centre web site or search for resume; resume tips; etc. on google. There are many sites offering advice out there!

Section I: Components of a Resume

Your resumes should have the following section headings *usually – see Section II Tips for Composing your Resume* in the order presented below. Other variations are acceptable but should be prepared in consultation with your co-op coordinator.

1. Name Address and Contact Information

Your name should appear on your resume exactly as the name under which you have registered at Ryerson. It should be presented first name last name (please do not reverse the order). Your name should be bolded and in a font size larger than the type used elsewhere on your resume. It can be centered, justified right or left, depending on your taste and the style of your resume.

Variations

If you are registered at Ryerson as Guiseppe Cellini and you go by the name Joe, your resume should be titled in the following manner:

- Guiseppe (Joe) Cellini.

If you commonly use your middle name instead of your first name:

- R. Stefan Kerry

If you use a short form or a name other than your given name:

- Ravinder (Ravi) Aggarwal
- Ka Lok (Jimmy) Shum

The top section of your resume should also include any of the following as they apply to you:

- current address with postal code
- telephone number
- cellular number
- pager number
- e-mail addresses and/or personal web pages

2. Objective Or Summary of Qualifications/Highlight of Qualifications/Highlights (optional)

This section of your resume either outlines the specific job you wish to obtain (objective), or provides a brief statement of what you can offer an employer in terms of skills knowledge or background (summary of qualifications). Please note that the objective and summary are two different types of statements.

For example:

Objective:	To obtain an 8-month co-op position as a programmer
Summary of Qualifications:	Junior computer science student with an excellent academic record and 2 years programming experience in JAVA, C, C++ .

3. Technical Skills (required)

You may list work experience ahead of your Technical Skills IF the experience is relevant to the job(s) you are applying for. Otherwise... outline your technical skills (programming languages; network experience; hardware knowledge, applications experience etc.) This should be done in an easy to read format with minimal descriptive phrases or words.

For example:

▪ Operating Systems:	UNIX, VMS, Windows 95/98/2000
▪ Programming:	C, Delphi, Java, Shell Programming
▪ Web Based Programming:	ASP, CGI, JavaScript, Perl, XML, XSL
▪ Database Platforms:	DB2, SQL
▪ Graphics:	3D Studio, Adobe Photoshop, AutoCAD, DreamWeaver, Flash
▪ Other:	Cognos PowerHouse, Crystal Reports, Microsoft HTML Help

4. Education OR Work Experience OR Relevant Experience (required)

This will probably be the trickiest part of the resume for most of you. The reason we list three different possibilities here is that you may choose to list one of the three options ahead of the other(s) depending on whether you have any relevant work experience which you may wish to highlight before your education.

If you have little or no experience, your Education section should appear at this stage. You will have to offer greater detail about your studies, and the relevant skills developed to show an employer that you have the potential – if not direct experience – to do the job. *Insightful descriptions of your school projects are very important for this section. See accompanying information on student data sheets for a guide to how to put together descriptions of your academic courses and projects.*

For example:

EDUCATION		
2002 – Present	B.Sc., Computer Science	Ryerson University, Toronto, ON
Relevant Courses:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data Structures • Computer Science I & II • Introduction to C & UNIX • Object Oriented Programming & Design • Database Systems I 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calculus I & II • Computer Org. & Assembly Language • Communications • Web Applications • Geometry 	
ACADEMIC PROJECTS		
Database Systems I (CPS 510)		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team project to create a database for a Gas Station. The database will hold all crucial information from employee records to in store products and financial information • Design the conceptual schema for the project, which includes the system overview, Entity-Relationship (E-R) diagrams, functional requirements, data dictionary and table overview • Create an interface in shell script, which handles all interactions between the user and the database • Create a user manual for the system. 		
Advanced Data Structures and Software Engineering (CPS405)		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team assignment to design and create scheduling software for a music studio. The software had to keep track of scheduling rooms, equipment in use, and keep track of regular customers. • The assignment demonstrated the life cycle of software (Requirements analysis to Operations and Maintenance) • Functional and non-functional requirements, Data Flow Diagrams and Data Dictionary had to be created in the requirements analysis • Design phase consisted of the interface design, structure charts and database/file design • Installation and user manual completed 		

If you have some experience, you may wish to list it here as Work Experience or Related Experience. Your experience should be fairly good to list it before your Education at this point in your resume.

For Example:

WORK EXPERIENCE		
2001 - 2002 Swerve.com		Toronto, ON
Founder		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively solicited support and funding, and generated interest from venture capital firm • Activities included strategic planning, management, publicity, content development, programming, design • Conceptualized and built fully integrated dynamic website and scripts including extensive backend administrative functions using ASP, SSI, and SQL/Access databases 		

If you have a lot of experience, then list it in this section as Work Experience. You can then list your education briefly in a section immediately following Work Experience.

If you have experience but it is not paid or work experience, use the term Relevant or Related Experience for your title. The title “Relevant or Related Experience” can also be used where you have a combination of work and volunteer/unpaid experience and would like to highlight both. Again your experience should be good enough to warrant placing it ahead of Education.

For example:

RELATED EXPERIENCE		
2002 – present	Distinctive Innovation Development	Toronto, ON
Volunteer PHP Programmer		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible for new client wing of upcoming web applications suite • Advanced development in PHP and MySQL • Applying DHTML, Javascript/DOM, CSS • Developing web FTP client in PHP • Assisting in the development of a universal web SMTP/Email client 		
Sept 2003 – April 2004	Ryerson University	Toronto, ON
Technical Support		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide support to Students and Staff • Provide support for various software and hardware used by the university • Collaborate with other departments for support and solutions to various software problems • Assist in installing, and setup of various Operating Systems on local desktops • Successfully provide telephone support to end users for different locations in the university 		

5. Awards & Achievements (include if applicable)

Please include any significant academic, athletic, community service, or work awards/recognition in this section. You may use awards won in university or high school from grade 12/OAC and higher. When listing awards please make sure you use the actual full title of the award and the full name of the organization that offered the award. If you are not sure of the name of the award or the organization get the correct names before you put them on your resume!

6. Activities & Interests or Volunteer Experience (optional, but recommended - especially for those with little work experience)

In this section you may outline any clubs you belong to, sports you participate in, hobbies you pursue, or other activities you enjoy. Be specific when including items here. The activities do not need to be related to computing or information technology. If you plan to have this section, use it to show that you are a well-rounded person who has interests outside of computing.

7. References

It is no longer required to list references on your resumes or include the section/title “References Available Upon Request” on your resume. Many co-op employers do not consult references during the hiring process unless they are hiring you for a longer period of time (12 – 16 months) and sometimes not even then.

However, you should still have three references (or referees as they are formally called) available just in case. Referees are people who know you well (other than your immediate family or close friends) and can speak positively about your character and abilities. You should have one academic referee (a professor or former high school teacher or guidance counsellor), a work/volunteer referee, and one other. Prior to applying for co-op jobs you should get each referee’s correct name, job title, work address, telephone number, and email address (if available). Keep the information on one page (with your name address etc. on the top like the heading of your resume) that you can take with you to interviews, and offer it only if requested by the interviewer(s). Again, please let your referees know that they may be contacted before you begin the job search process.

Section II: Tips for Composing your Resume

1. Your resume is the first contact you may have with a potential employer. Make sure your resume accurately and positively reflects who you are; your background, and your achievements/accomplishments. Your resume should “sell” you to potential employers. Correct spelling, grammar, and word use are important. Make sure your resume doesn’t have any errors in those areas.

2. Where possible try to quantify your accomplishments. For example:

- Designed new web site which increased online sales at the company by 15%
- Selected as Employee of the Month for exceptional customer service

3. Use action verbs – preferably in the present tense - to describe your skills, duties, and achievements. See list of action verbs in the middle of this http://www.firefly.ryerson.ca/careercentre/students/tools/FT_Resume_Writing.cfm#Tips page

Do not use the present participle of verbs (the – ing ending such as: submitting a proposal; developing web site; creating reports; maintaining databases etc.) in your descriptions

When describing your job duties etc. in your resume, ensure that the verb tenses (present or past) agree within the same section.

Here is a passage where the verb tenses don’t agree:

Technical Systems Analyst

- *Submitted* a proposal that will introduce a national, database driven company Intranet using Crystal Reports (dynamic reporting software)
- **Create** a dynamic reporting system (in ASP) with similar look-and-feel as the JAVA to DB2 interface
- **Develop** Visual Basic / MS Access applications as needed including an important System’s & Technology, Equipment Planning & Forecasting System (STEP/F)
- *Participated* in investigation/implementation of a standard reporting facility for the Technical Support group’s performance & capacity reports.
- *Maintained*, following bank standards, the Information Processing Service Information (IPSI) application
- **Create** new reports for the performance reporting system
- *Maintained* the mainframe-based performance reporting system

The words bolded in the text box above are present verb tenses, while the other verbs in the section (Italics) are past tenses. These should agree. They should all be either present or past tense. For your information, the present verb tense is considered a “stronger voice” on a resume.

4. Always present the most relevant sections (ie. Education, Work Experience etc.) first on your resume. Remember that in the initial screening, employers will only spend about 30 seconds or less scanning your resume. Therefore you should have the most significant or eye-catching points listed on the first page (if possible) with less relevant information on the second page. Do not force the reader to have to search for things on you resume that make you distinctive from other applicants. If, for example, you have won a number of significant academic awards, you might list those ahead of your education section. In fact your awards might precede your work experience, if that experience is not related to the job to which you are applying. With the exception of your name and address information and computer/technical skills which should virtually always appear on the first page of your resume, all other sections can be placed in whichever order you wish.

5. Although word choice is important, don’t use so many big or fancy words that your descriptions become vague. Let’s say for example that you have work experience in customer support. You could describe the experience:

“Cordially interacted with corporate customers within and without the organization by phone and electronic media”

A better way to describe it however, is a phrase such as the following: “Responded to internal and external customers by phone, fax, and e-mail”

6. Where possible try to avoid using abbreviations unless they are very commonly used (example: MS Word, VB, and B.Sc. are acceptable). Ryerson University should not be abbreviated R.U. If you wish to use a shorter version of the school name Ryerson is acceptable.

7. If you wish to use acronyms please use the complete term/name and then list the acronym in parentheses beside it before using the acronym in other parts of your resume (example: Ryerson Student Administrative Council (RYESAC) representative)

8. Always list your degrees, program name, job titles, awards, etc. accurately on your resume. Your degree and program are **always** to be listed in the following manner:

Bachelor of Science, Computer Science Ryerson University, Toronto ON

I also *strongly* recommend including:

Currently completing second (or third etc.) year studies

Current grade point average: (optional)

Expected graduation date: June 200-

9. Where possible keep the resume style relatively simple. Beware using special fonts and formatting that might make it difficult to e-mail, copy, fax, or scan your resume.

10. Your resume should be no longer than two pages. It should be appropriately spaced using fonts no smaller than 10pt. Sans serif fonts such as Arial and Helvetica are best to make your resume.

11. In your Education section it is not necessary to include your high school information.

12. Include URL's for any web pages where you may have samples of your work on your resume so that potential employers can see your work. You can list the URL at the top of the resume where your e-mail address is noted or in the body of your resume or both. If you do make your personal web site available, please check that there is no foul language, derogatory remarks, or vulgar/disturbing images on the site you are making available to potential employers.

13. When listing your academic, work, or other achievements they are to be listed in reverse chronological order (from most recent to the past)

For example:

Education		
2002 – present	B.Sc., Computer Science	Ryerson University, Toronto
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Currently completing second year studies ▪ Current grade point average: 3.20 ▪ Expected graduation date: June 2007 	
2001 – 2002	Computer Science	York University, Toronto
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed first year studies 	
1996 – 2000	Bachelor of Science, Mathematics	Urmia University, Iran

The notes above are just some suggestions as to how to put together your resume. As you already know there are many different ways to present yourself on a resume. If you have any questions about the quality of your resume feel free to contact your co-ordinator in the Ryerson Co-op Office.

We wish you the best in your co-op job search.