

# Writing a Résumé

## Objectives

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1. Understand the purpose of a résumé.
2. Become familiar with the design, length, and format of typical and alternative résumés.
3. Describe the basic and optional categories of information on a résumé.
4. Develop the ability to write a quality draft of your résumé for critique by others.

## Purpose of a Résumé

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A résumé is a written document that describes one's qualifications for a position. It is a personal marketing tool used to introduce a potential employee to an employer, while helping an employer screen and choose candidates to interview for hire. Résumés should be unique in both content and format to highlight facts about an individual as they relate to a specific job or position; meaning **each résumé submission should be tailored to a specific position and organization**. Résumés may include examples of one's educational and experiential work qualifications, as well as unique skills, abilities, and attributes that might be useful to employers. Résumés can be used by candidates applying for work, graduate schools, and/or scholarships, fellowships, or campus leadership positions. This guide will focus on the résumé primarily for a job search.

## Traditional Formats

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### Chronological or General Format

A chronological résumé lists, describes, and dates the details of each job and educational experience separately. Listings under each category are placed in reverse chronological order, starting with the most recent position. This approach is most appropriate if you have extensive, uninterrupted work experience in the area in which you seek employment.

### Functional Format

This résumé format consists of selections from your total experience, but only those parts which relate to the job you seek. Under each category, list qualifications, skills, experiences, etc., that logically support your objective in functional areas such as management, research, writing, teaching, sales, human relations, etc. This approach is more difficult to construct but may be more effective in documenting the skills or functions you want to perform, especially if your background is varied.



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**Functional résumés are generally not appropriate for traditional college students.**

### Combination Résumé Format

Most individuals applying for open positions in today's economy utilize a combined format of résumé. This format takes the chronological listing of experiences from the chronological format and merges it with the emphasis of specific skills and abilities from the functional format. This approach allows individuals to highlight their most relevant information in a format that is easy-to-read and accessible to hiring officials.

# Basic Résumé Categories

## Professional Objective (Optional)

An *objective* section is not required, but many individuals do still choose to include it on a résumé. This contains a personal statement defining the specifics you wish to attain via professional work. The objective should be no longer than one to two sentences, and it should be broad enough to cover any suitable employment and to interest a wide array of employers. Yet, it should be specific enough to give an impression of sound career direction. Objectives should be personal, action-oriented, and specific, and they should speak to future goals.

## Education

The *education* section is where you list any degrees, certificates, schools attended, or other educational experiences you have obtained or are currently seeking. The highest level achieved (or the degree you are currently pursuing) should come first and continue backward with other schools attended, degrees earned, or training received. It is not necessary to include high school after sophomore year of college. However, if some items in your high school background show high honors or generally reinforce the career objective, then those experiences may be included. List the names of schools, dates attended or graduation date, degrees earned, and major/minor subjects.

You may also include honors, awards, Dean's list, grade point average, study abroad experiences, and other items which may enhance this section of your résumé.

## Experience

The *experience* section may include full- and part-time jobs, research, internships, volunteer work, summer jobs, special projects, or military experience. It is alright to have multiple experience categories on your résumé if listing experiences in separate categories makes the document easier to read and understand.

List position titles, names of organizations, locations (city and state), dates (month and year), duties, and accomplishments. Present this in a format where the most relevant information comes first. In this section, employers are mainly interested in seeing the degree of responsibility you held and the skills you demonstrated.

Outline your duties in a way that accentuates the marketable transferable skills you gained through the experience.

## Identification

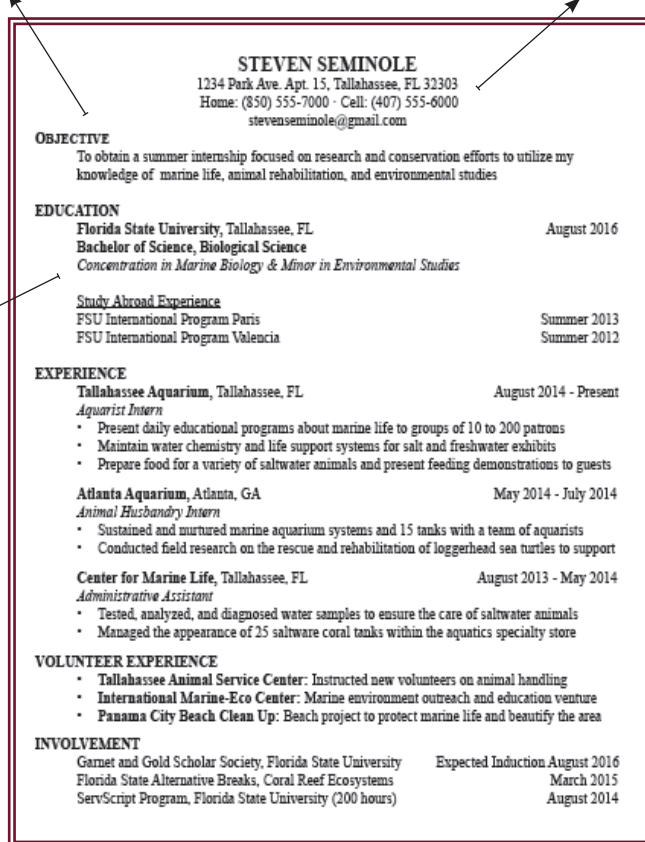
Identifying information, including full name, mailing address, phone number(s) with the area code, and email address are usually included at the top of a résumé (no heading needed). If you are at a temporary address, you can include this in addition to (or in place of) your permanent address. Make sure your email address is

professional in nature and does not contain slang or profanity. It is also important to choose a professional email address that you check daily or weekly. Your FSU email address or some version of your name is appropriate, for example, "jane.doe@email.com."

## Other Categories

If you have information which you feel is important, but does not fit into any of the above categories, create sections to encompass this information and/or the requirements of specific job targets. You may have categories unique to your field of study, e.g., clinical nursing experience. The key is having categories that best fit the position(s) you are seeking.

Some possibilities for other categories include:



- Activities
- Performances/
- Volunteer
- Certifications
- Art Shows
- Experience
- Honors/
- Special Skills
- Computer
- Awards
- Workshops/
- Skills
- Interests
- Seminars
- Professional
- Campus
- Memberships/
- Involvement
- Affiliations
- Leadership
- Publications/
- Languages
- Presentations
- Licenses

## Sample Action Verb List

accomplish	clarify	devise	hire	measure	promote	structure
account	collect	diagnose	implement	meet	propose	submit
achieve	communicate	direct	improve	mobilize	provide	supervise
act	compete	discover	increase	model	publish	supply
administer	complete	document	influence	motivate	purchase	synthesize
advertise	compile	draft	initiate	negotiate	qualify	talk
advise	compose	draw	inspect	operate	raise	teach
aid	conduct	edit	install	order	read	test
analyze	contribute	engineer	instruct	originate	recommend	train
appraise	control	entertain	interpret	organize	recruit	translate
appeal	coordinate	establish	interview	paint	repair	travel
arrange	correct	estimate	invent	perform	report	tutor
assemble	counsel	evaluate	investigate	persuade	research	type
assign	create	exercise	judge	photograph	review	understand
attend	dance	exhibit	landscape	plan	schedule	verify
audit	delegate	experiment	lead	play	select	write
authorize	demonstrate	explain	learn	predict	sell	
budget	decrease	facilitate	listen	prepare	serve	
build	decide	formulate	make	present	solve	
calculate	design	furnish	manage	preside	speak	
catalogue	determine	guide	manufacture	produce	staff	
chart	develop	handle	market	program	start	

### Constructing Effective Experience Descriptions Exercise

Every position requires skills which are transferable to work after college. Effective bullet point descriptions contain references to these skills or describe examples of projects you completed that produced tangible, positive results for an employer. Below is a diagram of two effective bullet-writing strategies. Each bullet point may contain three important elements: an action verb, skill, and tasks that evidence the skill OR an action verb, project, and result produced from the project (accomplishment).

*Seminole FSU Eatery, Tallahassee, FL*

March 2013 - Present

#### Server

- **Provided** gracious **customer service** while **managing dining experience for up to 30 customers at once.**  
(Action Verb) (Skill) (Tasks that Evidence Skill)
- **Created new order-taking system decreasing guest wait-times by an average of 2 minutes.**  
(Action Verb) (Project) (Result)

In the space below, try writing your own bullet-point in each of the two formats:

- -----  
Action Verb Skill Tasks
- -----  
Action Verb Project Result



## Style of a Résumé

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### Formatting

Résumés may be designed using a variety of formatting styles. There is not one correct design, but certain elements of the résumé have become standard, while others remain a matter of preference. The following tips are intended to help you create a résumé that may serve your needs and represent your individual qualifications.

The format you choose should attract attention and create interest. Choose appropriate categories that showcase your most relevant and marketable information. As a guideline, it is best to place more relevant experience descriptions closer to the top of the page in most circumstances. You may use CAPITAL LETTERS, underlining, **bold face**, *italics*, indentations, and white space to help emphasize and draw attention to important information, but be careful not to overload your résumé with these. To see examples, turn to pages 7-11 of this guide.

Once you have selected a format, be consistent within categories. The résumé should be easy to follow and pleasing to the eye. Make sure margins are even (0.5-1 inch margins recommended), bullets are aligned, and there is a nice balance of text and white space. An easy-to-read font (like Times New Roman or Calibri) is recommended in size 11-12 point. Avoid using Internet or software templates for your résumé as these can interfere with an employer's ability to read the document when sent via email or an online application. It is also best to avoid using color or images unless your desired industry prefers more creative formatting (for example, graphic design).

### Length

The length of your résumé depends on the purpose for which you are using it. In the private, non-profit, and government sectors (with the exception of federal government), the traditional résumé length is one page. Multi-page résumés may be appropriate when applying to graduate school programs, scholarships, federal government agencies, or more academically oriented positions.

Keep in mind the idea of "quality over quantity," and select only those experiences which strongly support your candidacy for a particular position. It may be helpful to keep a multi-page master résumé, which documents all of your experiences. You can save different one-page versions of your résumé targeted at particular positions when it is time to apply.

## Résumés for posting on the Internet

A common job-hunting practice involves posting résumés on the Internet. There are a few recommendations to consider before posting your résumé:

- It is best to keep lines of text to 3-5 lines or less, including spaces, to ensure readability of your document.
- Employers searching for online résumés typically use keyword search programs to find résumés of interest. If your résumé does not include these words, it may not be retrieved during the search process. To select keywords, read through position descriptions and identify words that indicate a skill, ability, or knowledge-set employers appear to be seeking. Use as many of these words that accurately describe your qualifications. You can also consider specific skills and qualifications necessary for success in the field of interest.
- Keep in mind that the information you place in your résumé will be available to anyone who wants to see it, so carefully consider whether or not to include private information, such as your address and telephone number.

## Frequently Asked Questions

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### 1. Should I include personal information in my résumé?

Personal information about age, gender, marital status, and ethnicity is typically not included on a résumé. In fact, many employers become uncomfortable when receiving this information out of fear they may violate federal equal opportunity laws. It is important to note that this information may be necessary when using a résumé to apply for a position abroad. Other information, such as hobbies and interests, should only be included if it is relevant to the position to which you are applying. For example, a person applying for a sales position with Nike might list relevant sporting activities.

### 2. Do I need to write "References Available Upon Request" on my résumé?

It is not necessary to write this phrase on your résumé in the United States; however, you can do so if you choose. Most employers expect that you will have references available and that they will receive this information either in an online application form or on a separate sheet of paper from your résumé (see example at the end of this guide).

Remember to **ask permission** before listing an individual as a reference. You may want to provide your references with a copy of your résumé and the position description to which you are applying. Provide this list to the employer only when requested. Your *FSU Career Portfolio* is a good place to store your references (accessible through [portfolio.fsu.edu](http://portfolio.fsu.edu)).

### 3. How do I save/send my résumé electronically?

Most individuals create their résumé using some form of word processing software to submit applications electronically. When submitting this way, make sure you give your document a professional and easy-to-identify file name (e.g., "JDoe\_Résumé\_2015.doc" or "Manager\_KMSystems\_JDoe-Résumé.pdf"). When sending an electronic document directly to an individual, it is best to attach your résumé as a PDF document. When applying to an online applicant tracking system (for example, through an organization's website), follow any provided directions for file format of attachments (usually a Microsoft Word document is preferred).

### 4. I've never written a résumé before...how do I get started?

If you need help getting started, *SeminoleLink* (accessible at [career.fsu.edu](http://career.fsu.edu)) has a feature called "Résumé Builder" that can help you build a first draft. To start the process, click on the "Create a Résumé" button located under the "Shortcuts" side menu in *SeminoleLink*. Résumé Builder should be used as a starting point, not as a way to build the perfect document. Individuals are encouraged to bring in their résumé drafts to The Career Center for revision.

Students can access a variety of computer labs on FSU's campus to create and print their résumés. For information on campus computer labs visit [www.its.fsu.edu/Computing/Computer-Labs/](http://www.its.fsu.edu/Computing/Computer-Labs/). Students and alumni can also use The Career Center's computer lab located in DSC 1200. If you save your file on a USB drive or hard drive, you can easily update it, but be sure to keep a backup of this file in a safe place so you do not lose your résumé should something happen to the drive. Both the online *FSU Career Portfolio* and *SeminoleLink* (accessible via [career.fsu.edu](http://career.fsu.edu)) are great places to upload your résumé for safe keeping.

## Do's and Don'ts of Résumé Writing

### Do

- **Quantify information and give specific skills gained.**
- **Be brief, clear, and concise.** A résumé that is easy to read and well-organized is more competitive.
- **Be consistent.** Experiment with the arrangement of headlines, captions, indentations, blocks of text, and the use of capitalization and underlining. Then choose a layout which is readable and appealing to the eye and stick with it.
- **Be positive.** Start statements or phrases with verbs denoting positive actions (see the *Sample Action Word List* for ideas). Avoid the use of the personal pronoun "I." Omit negative statements.
- **Be honest.** Included information should accurately represent you to employers.
- **Be careful.** Double-check for typos and mistakes in grammar, spelling, or punctuation. Use a dictionary. When in doubt, check it out. Errors in detail suggest careless workmanship.
- **Be neat.** Balance white space with text when creating your résumé to avoid the cluttered look. Make sure you print a clear, unmarred copy.
- **Get your résumé critiqued!**

### Don't

- State salary requirements. If asked, research the value of the position and your skills and give a range of mid to high.
- Give reasons for quitting previous jobs.
- Limit geographical considerations unless absolutely necessary.
- Expound on philosophy or values (e.g., religious or political views).
- Offer any negative information.
- Use standard résumé templates found in popular computer software or books as these can cause documents to be misread when submitted electronically.

## Hints and Suggestions

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Before you begin the task of actually writing your rough draft, thoroughly familiarize yourself with the *Do's and Don'ts of Résumé Writing* included in this guide. By following these guidelines, you will increase the probability of producing a readable and straightforward account of your unique qualifications. This list represents some standard expectations of modern résumés. However, the résumé is YOUR document, and you must construct it in a way that you feel best presents you to readers. Consider which hints will help you write the résumé most appropriate for your job objective.

### Have Your Résumé Critiqued

It is a good idea to have several people critique your résumé. When you are ready, bring your revised draft to The Career Center, and a career advisor will be glad to review it with you.

### Résumé Printing

Once you have completed your résumé, you may want to print it on high-quality or linen paper. If you prefer a certain type of paper on which to print your original document, specialty papers are sold at most office supply stores and copy centers. Avoid textured or marbled paper as it does not scan or copy well.

## Additional Resources

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### Select Career Center Library Print Resources

<i>101 Grade A Résumés for Teachers</i> .....	VA A53
<i>Best Résumés for College Students and New Grads</i> .....	VA K9
<i>Expert Résumés for Career Changers</i> .....	VA E51
<i>Expert Résumés for Managers and Executives</i> .....	VA E5444
<i>FSU Beta Alpha Psi: Meet the Firms Résumé Book</i> .....	VA F556
<i>How to Land a Top-Paying Federal Job: Your Complete Guide to Opportunities, Internships, Résumés and Cover Letters</i> .....	VIB2 W5
<i>Military to Federal Career Guide: Federal Résumé Writing for Veterans</i> .....	IG T7
<i>Real Résumés Book Series by Industry</i> .....	VA M356 - VA M368
<i>Résumé Writing Made Easy: A Practical Guide to Résumé Preparation and Job Search</i> .....	VA C6
<i>Sample MBA Résumés</i> .....	VA F554 BU
<i>Sample Résumés: Book A</i> .....	VA F551
<i>Sample Résumés: Book B</i> .....	VA F5511
<i>The Federal Résumé Guidebook</i> .....	VA K73

## Résumé Examples

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At the end of this guide are four sample résumés. *These are only intended as examples. Feel free to create a format that fits your own style and career goals.* Please note that the font sizes and margins of the sample pages may have been reduced for inclusion in this guide.

Notice that each sample highlights a particular population that might use the sample format. Graduate student résumés may be longer or look more comprehensive than undergraduate résumés. Certain industries may have preferences for how content is presented on a résumé and may have special sections they prefer added to the document (see *Specialized Industry* example). Use these samples as an introduction to various formatting options, and be sure to visit The Career Center for additional resources and critiques. Career Center Library, Career Advising, and Career Liaison office hours can be found at: [career.fsu.edu/About-Us/Hours-of-Operation](http://career.fsu.edu/About-Us/Hours-of-Operation).

## First Year Résumé Example

# Fiona Spear

**School Address:**  
123 Learning Way  
Tallahassee, FL 32306

fspear@my.fsu.edu  
555-555-5555

**Permanent Address:**  
321 Center St.  
Portland, OR 97217

## EDUCATION

**Florida State University**, Tallahassee, FL

*Bachelor of Science Candidate; Intended Major: Nursing*

- Relevant Coursework: Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Statistics

**Expected: April 2019**

**Central High School**, Portland, OR

Advanced Studies Diploma

- Activities/Leadership: Relay for Life volunteer, Swim Team, Photography Club

**June 2015**

## CERTIFICATIONS

EMT-Basic, Portland Community College

Basic Life Support, American Heart Association

**January 2013 - Present**

**October 2012 - Present**

## EXPERIENCE

**City of Portland Community Hospital**, Portland, OR

*Emergency Medical Technician (EMT)*

- Completed 100 hours of direct patient contact performing assessments, first aid, and basic life support in response to emergency and non-emergency calls at the scene and en route to the hospital
- Provided patient care according to clinical protocols, standing orders, and safety requirements
- Educated the public in the role of emergency medical services through monthly demonstrations and supported the coordination of special safety promotions events for the community

**June 2011 - May 2015**

*(May 2014 - May 2015)*

*Candy Stripper*

- Demonstrated empathy and compassionate communication while delivering treats, flowers, and gifts to more than 50 patients in a day; served two hospital floors with up to 100 patients each
- Maintained inventory of designated gift-shop items to support efficient ordering of stock items

*(June 2011 - May 2014)*

## ACTIVITIES/AWARDS

**Emergency Medicine Interest Group**, Florida State University

**National Society of Collegiate Scholars**, Florida State University

**National Honor Society**, *President*, Central High School

**Emergency Management & Fire Club**, *Member*, Central High School

**August 2015 - Present**

**June 2015**

**July 2014 - May 2015**

**August 2013 - May 2015**

## SKILLS

**Language:** Intermediate Spanish (spoken and written)

**Technical:** Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint), Adobe InDesign



## General Undergraduate Résumé Example

### STEVEN SEMINOLE

1234 Park Ave. Apt. 15, Tallahassee, FL 32303  
Home: (850) 555-7000 · Cell: (407) 555-6000  
stevensemimole@gmail.com

#### OBJECTIVE

To obtain a summer internship focused on research and conservation efforts to utilize my knowledge of marine life, animal rehabilitation, and environmental studies

#### EDUCATION

**Florida State University**, Tallahassee, FL August 2016  
**Bachelor of Science, Biological Science**  
*Concentration in Marine Biology & Minor in Environmental Studies*

#### Study Abroad Experience

FSU International Program, London Summer 2013  
FSU International Program, Valencia Summer 2012

#### EXPERIENCE

**Tallahassee Aquarium**, Tallahassee, FL August 2014 - Present  
*Aquarist Intern*

- Present daily educational programs about marine life to groups of 10 to 200 patrons
- Maintain water chemistry and life support systems for salt and freshwater exhibits
- Prepare food for a variety of saltwater animals and present feeding demonstrations to guests

**Atlanta Aquarium**, Atlanta, GA May 2014 - July 2014  
*Animal Husbandry Intern*

- Sustained and nurtured marine aquarium systems and 15 tanks with a team of aquarists
- Conducted field research on the rescue and rehabilitation of loggerhead sea turtles

**Center for Marine Life**, Tallahassee, FL August 2013 - May 2014  
*Administrative Assistant*

- Tested, analyzed, and diagnosed water samples to ensure the care of saltwater animals
- Managed the appearance of 25 saltwater coral tanks within the aquatics specialty store

#### VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

- **Tallahassee Animal Service Center:** Instructed new volunteers on animal handling
- **International Marine-Eco Center:** Marine environment outreach and education venture
- **Panama City Beach Clean Up:** Beach project to protect marine life and beautify the area

#### INVOLVEMENT

Garnet and Gold Scholar Society, Florida State University Expected Induction August 2016  
Florida State Alternative Breaks, Coral Reef Ecosystems March 2015  
ServScript Program, Florida State University (200 hours) August 2014



## Specialized Industry (IT) Example

### Renata Renegade

850-555-2000

123 Park Avenue North, Tallahassee, FL 32301

renegade@yahoo.com

#### Education

##### **Bachelor of Science in Computer Science**

04/16

*Florida State University (FSU), Tallahassee, FL*

Major GPA: 3.5, with Honors, Dean's List

#### Technical Skills

**Languages:** C, C++, Java, HTML, XML, MySQL, PHP, JavaScript, .NET, Perl

**Databases:** Oracle 10 g, MS Access, Relational Database

**Platforms:** Windows XP/Vista, Unix, Linux, MacOS

#### Projects

##### **Web Design & Development, Florida State University** 01/15-Present

- Utilize HTML to create a dummy site for a hypothetical tech consulting company.
- Develop website maps, image templates, and page templates to meet user needs.
- Translate "client" needs description into a functioning mock-up complete with landing page, online registration form, and embedded video content; presented to classmates.

##### **Application Development, Florida State University** 08/14-12/14

- Collaborated in a team environment to design and develop a series of applications using PHP and MySQL to increase information management and business functions.

#### Professional Experience

##### **Computer Consultant** 01/13-Present

*FSU Computer Science Department, Tallahassee, FL*

- Resolve issues regarding wireless network and email performance for a staff of 30.
- Deliver basic troubleshooting services via email, telephone, and face-to-face meetings.
- Assess systematic problems and provide recommended solutions to management.

##### **Front Desk Clerk** 06/12-12/12

*State Attorney's Office, Tallahassee, FL*

- Exercised strong customer services skills by responding promptly and accurately to over 50 customers while collecting and processing fees, receipts, and electronic files.
- Applied analytical skills to anticipate and solve problems; proposed new technology solutions that improved business operations and customer response times by 40%.

#### Activities

**Member,** WISE (Women in IT) Student Organization, Florida State University

**Member,** Association for Computing Machinery, Tallahassee, FL

**Volunteer,** Laptop & Computer Solutions (100 service hours), Tallahassee, FL

# Tina Tallahassee

123 Ocala Rd  
Tallahassee, FL 32304  
(850) 555-4000; tah14@my.fsu.edu  
www.linkedin.com/in/ttallahassee

### Professional Profile

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Experienced financial services professional with special interest in public operations. Competencies include taxation, asset management, and profit & loss assessment. Proven ability to produce positive results with a record of academic and professional success.

### Education

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*Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL* Expected: 4/2015

#### **Master of Accounting in Taxation**

Overall GPA: 3.92

*The University of Georgia, Athens, GA* 4/2012

#### **Bachelor of Science in Accounting**

Overall GPA: 4.00, Summa Cum Laude

### Professional Experience

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*FSU College of Business, Tallahassee, FL, Teaching Assistant (ACG 2021)* 8/2014 - Present

- Review course assignments and provide feedback to approximately 50 students
- Present course material by explaining concepts and staying after class as needed
- Administer and grade course exams including multiple choice and written responses

*Leon Co. Commission, District 5, Tallahassee, FL, Campaign Treasurer* 6/2014 - 11/2014

- Supported fundraising efforts, achieving \$87,000 in campaign contributions
- Managed the campaign account utilizing BackOffice and VoterManager software
- Produced financial reports in accordance with Florida election law

*State of Georgia DEP, Tallahassee, FL, Accountant I* 8/2011 - 4/2012

- Reconciled work order accounts, processed checks, and prepared financial statements
- Assembled vouchers to pay project invoices while remaining within budget constraints

### Leadership Experience

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*Accounting Society, Florida State University, Vice President* 8/2014 - Present

- Coordinate monthly member meetings in collaboration with other society officers
- Plan social events allowing members to network with local and national professionals

### Honors/Activities

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Member of National Society of Collegiate Scholars 2009 - Present

FSU College of Business Achievement Scholarship 2014

The University of Georgia Accounting Department – Outstanding Senior 2012

# Laurence Legacy

*123 Call Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32306  
(850) 555-5555  
llegacy@gmail.com*

## **REFERENCES:**

### **Ida Teacher, Ph.D.**

Assistant Professor  
Florida State University, College of Motion Picture Arts  
282 Champions Way  
Tallahassee, FL 32306  
Relationship: Professor  
Email: iteacher@fsu.edu  
Phone: (850) 644-5555

### **Seymour Nolewins**

Coordinator  
Financial Services, Inc.  
456 Anystreet  
Tallahassee, FL 32308  
Relationship: Internship Supervisor  
Email: snolewins@fsu.com  
Phone: (850) 556-5555

### **Ivanna Getajob**

General Manager  
Florida State University Campus Dining  
200 Champions Way  
Tallahassee, FL 32306  
Relationship: Supervisor  
Email: igetajob@fsu.edu  
Phone: (850) 645-5555

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UNIVERSITY

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*linking futures*

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Alternative Format Available  
Revised 3/16