

# BEYOND BARNARD RÉSUMÉ GUIDE

The résumé is the cornerstone of most job applications. It is a **curated** document highlighting the best—and most applicable—of a candidate’s experience for a position. It is **tailored** to each job and written in sections. Unlike the CV, a résumé is limited to **one page** (though there are some exceptions for some roles). Professionals with more years of experience may consider using a longer résumé. **Beyond Barnard** provides résumé review in one-on-one advising sessions. Meetings are most efficient when students first consider the advice in this guide and visit with a Peer Career Advisor

**PLEASE NOTE:** there are no “hard and fast” rules to writing a résumé. This document includes best practices for Barnard College students and alumnae. There are exceptions to every rule. It is always best to have someone review your résumé before submitting it anywhere.

## 5 THINGS TO GET STARTED:

Having trouble getting a résumé started? Here are some things to check off to get going:

- Collect** information: take notes on dates, awards, previous jobs and internships, test scores, certificates, lab skills, GPA’s, etc.
- What did you achieve?:** think not only about a “day in the life” at each of your student jobs, internships, civic engagement, and volunteer activities (remember: lab research, thesis writing, and team projects can be helpful in describing your work). But moreover: ask what you **achieved** in your role. Emphasize **outcomes**. Think about “**big days**” that went beyond the typical, and how your work made them stand out.
- Describe in terms of quantities: résumés argue more effectively when each bullet point includes quantifiable info (see below).
- Write everything down: in your first résumé draft, it’s more important to get everything on the page before cutting.

## TAILORING YOUR RÉSUMÉ:

A strong résumé is always responding to a specific job ad or position:

**READ** job descriptions with a pen and highlighter. Make note of repeated desired competencies and qualifications.

**RESEARCH** the hiring organization’s mission statement. Who do they serve? What is their mission? Can you mirror this language in your résumé to show similar commitments?

**TRANSLATE** your experience into the language of the job ad. The best résumés highlight skills and experience in the language of the given job ad. (It’s OK to be overt about this: use similar language in the résumé as appears in the ad.)

## CONTACT INFORMATION

Don’t waste space! Your name and contact information should only take two lines at the top of the document!

## EDUCATION SECTION

The education section of your résumé should go immediately beneath your contact information. After graduation and some time in jobs or graduate school, alumnae should consider putting education beneath relevant professional experience. In the earlier years of your undergraduate career, you might consider including your high school name and/or GPA, but *very soon* after you start accumulating experiences at Barnard, you can leave off high school.

### ALWAYS INCLUDE:

- Barnard College (don’t bury the name!)
- Degree and major
- (Expected) degree completion date

### SOMETIMES INCLUDE:

- College-wide and “name brand” awards
- Study Abroad institutions and programs
- Thesis title
- GPA/GREs (can vary depending on field)

# EXPERIENCE SECTIONS & BULLETS

## WHAT IS THE BEST KIND OF EXPERIENCE TO HIGHLIGHT?

Each heading on your résumé is a chance to demonstrate a particular set of competencies or experiences. Rather than stick to headings like “Work Experience,” “Volunteer Experience,” or “Professional Experience,” Beyond Barnard recommends using headings as an opportunity to tell the reader something that addresses a **particular set of requirements** in the job description.

Example headings include: Leadership & Management Experience; Communications Experience; Consulting Experience; Technical Experience; Analytical Experience; Research Experience; Writing Experience; Teaching & Mentoring Experience; Laboratory Experience; International Work Experience; Curatorial Experience; Museum Experience; Nonprofit Work Experience etc.

## PROJECT, PURPOSE, IMPACT: WRITING EFFECTIVE BULLETS

Bullet points should be written in the **first-person singular** (in the **present** tense for current work, and the **past** tense for completed work. These one-line statements should lead with strong verbs (see below), and ideally should articulate for the reader the *kind of project* you were engaged in; the *purpose* of the project; and the *impact* that resulted from your participation in the project.

- **PROJECT:** what was the nature of the work?
- **PURPOSE:** what did the work aim to achieve?
- **IMPACT:** in quantifiable terms, what did you contribute that made the work successful?

**Note:** not every bullet will have all three elements! But it’s helpful to think of each bullet as an opportunity to describe at least one or two of these elements.

### STRONG VERBS:

**Leadership:** managed, led, oversaw, trained, taught, tutored, mentored, drove

**Outcomes:** produced, developed, created, innovated, completed, published

**Analytical:** analyzed, researched, investigated

**Communication:** wrote, edited, presented, communicated, taught, tutored, mentored

**Planning/Logistics:** planned, coordinated, executed, facilitated

**Details:** maintained, tracked, budgeted

**Technical:** coded, built, programmed, hacked

**Avoid** (less descriptive): helped, assisted, did, worked on, went to, responsible for, etc.

## HOW TO LEVERAGE YOUR RESEARCH:

Your coursework and thesis research – regardless of the discipline in which you’re conducting this research – is valuable and can translate to effective résumé material:

- Managed year-long thesis project
- Led lecture and seminar-size class sessions (15-30 students)
- Conducted archival research on 1500-year old primary sources
- Developed novel procedure to [x]

## QUANTIFICATION ON A RÉSUMÉ

Quantification of experience helps present a more complete picture of the experience that you have, and of the size/shape/scope of your projects. This can mean the size of budgets, classes taught, and grant money raised (for example).

But it can also mean *frequency*. Tell the reader how often you had to teach, attend meetings, write blog posts, conduct analyses, etc. Use of quantification gives the reader a concrete sense of the work.

# Formatting Best Practices:

## Contact Info.

Fit contact info on two lines to save valuable space

## Fonts

Fonts matter! Beyond Barnard endorses Garamond, Palatino Linotype, Georgia, Century Gothic, Gotham light or bold, and a few others (see below)

## Bolds, Etc.

Limit use of italics, bold, and all-caps. Make sure that when using emphasis, the information being emphasized actually matters!

## Bullets

Beyond Barnard suggests using square bullets (they take up less space than the circles!)

## Spacing

Use consistent and simple spacing throughout. Beyond Barnard suggests one blank line between sections and ½ line between each entry.

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### EDUCATION

**Barnard College, Columbia University** | New York, NY | *B.A. Comparative Literature* | Expected May 2019  
Minor in Chemistry; Dean's List (Spring and Fall, 2017) | GPA: 3.65

**Universidad de Sevilla** | Seville, Spain | January – May 2018  
Completed coursework on contemporary Spanish literature (all coursework in Spanish)

### RESEARCH & ANALYSIS EXPERIENCE

**Books for Young Readers** | New York, NY | *Program Evaluation Intern* | May – August 2018

- Led 3-month organizational review of 5 literacy programs serving 250 secondary public school students
- Collaborated on 5-member team to conduct 50 client interviews
- Created and managed deployment of satisfaction survey (1,000 recipients); analyzed response data (Excel)
- Contributed to weekly all-staff meetings, providing regular project updates to Senior Leadership
- Delivered 30-minute Board presentation, incl. program recommendations; answered leadership questions

**Chemistry Department, Barnard College** | New York, NY | *Research Assistant* | January – August 2017

- Conducted research on nutrition and memory; presented at 2017 Barnard Summer Research Institute
- Managed logistics and processes for 6-month experiments evaluating sugar's effects on brain activity
- Developed facility with statistical packages (R and Python) to analyze more than 1k data points
- Communicated regularly with 4 lab teammates to share best practices
- Delivered poster of research findings to audience of ~100 peers, faculty, and visiting Barnard guests
- Secured \$4.5k funding to support ten-weeks of full-time summer work
- Hired and trained 2 undergraduate research assistants

## ORGANIZING INFORMATION ON THE PAGE

- Each section should be arranged in reverse chronological order
- Within each individual job or experience, place the most important tasks toward the top of the entry. Read the job description and make note of what qualifications and experiences seem most important. If you have experiences similar to those required by the job description, move these higher in each section.
- The most important information on each line should be as far left as possible. Beyond Barnard recommends moving dates to the right-hand side of the page. Typically, dates are less important than the content of each experience and skill.
- It's great to be able to include items in a Skills section, but it's better to show the employer *how you developed a skill* or *where you employed a skill*. That is, use your work experience sections as an opportunity to talk about software, web, language, and database skills.

## TRANSFERABLE SKILLS

Because academic training is focused on product and contribution rather than process and procedural detail, it's often difficult for students and alumnae to identify and articulate the generalizable skill sets they cultivated at Barnard, or perhaps in the context of changing careers. Here are examples of skills sets and some plain language in which to describe the value of skills we think of as "academic."

**Research, Analysis & Problem-Solving Skills:** Managing long-term research projects; project planning, international grant experience, coordinating access to archives, etc.

**Written & Oral Communication:** writing in many genres, presenting research, writing blog posts, writing for multiple audiences, communicating in multiple languages

**Leadership and Interactive Skills:** managing research assistants, coordinating workshops, planning conferences and events, project management (lab, research, etc)

**Entrepreneurial Skills:** winning research funding, running a lab, designing a conference or event

## OTHER SECTIONS:

- **Volunteer Experience:** to volunteer shows a commitment to service that can be beneficial, especially at mission-driven organizations. Don't rule out inclusion of volunteer experience in other sections.
- **Languages:** be sure not to exaggerate language abilities. It's preferable to include only *fluent* language skills (conversational ability can work, as long as you are confident enough to conduct an interview in the language!).
- **(Technical) Skills:** it can seem silly to put down that you know how to use MS Word or social media, but these skills are valued in the workplace! Others, like Python, R, STATA, C/C++, C# can be invaluable for highly technical jobs (which will typically spell out preferred qualifications).
- **Interests and Hobbies:** keep this section very brief. Avoid general interests like "cooking" or "reading." These will not contribute to your profile as a candidate. Interests or hobbies should most often only be listed if they help you stand out, or if they are backed by certifications, awards, or recognition (ie: black belt in karate; award-winning horseback rider, etc.)

## WRITING AT GOOD SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

Several industries (specifically tech, finance, some consulting firms, and others) have begun to value a "Summary of Qualifications." Unlike an "Objective," which is **entirely out of fashion**, this section states *very briefly* (no more than 2-3 lines) the main skills and competencies that make a candidate a good fit for a job. Use a Summary of Qualifications to highlight your core strengths—or to make a kind of main claim about the reason you are a strong candidate for a job, given the description.

## HONORS & AWARDS

Typically, honors and awards are less important on a résumé than professional experience. Tailor the awards you include the same way you are tailoring experiences!

### Graduate Awards:

Include nationally and internationally recognized awards; explain any university awards.

### Undergraduate Awards:

Include university wide awards. Exclude minor awards, dean's list recognition (in most cases), and high school awards (unless they were for nat'l/int'l competitions)

## LINKEDIN VS. RÉSUMÉ?

LinkedIn can be a great supplement to a résumé. A strong LinkedIn profile—and really, a strong social "brand," including Instagram, Twitter, etc.—can be an asset to your professional identity.

But moreover, LinkedIn has become the single most important social network for professional connections. It's important to have a LinkedIn profile that is as updated as your résumé.

Other social networks like academia.edu can be useful as a repository of academic publications and presentations.

## BEFORE YOU SUBMIT:

Don't forget these important steps before submitting your résumé:

- Save as a PDF and check for formatting errors (things sometimes change in the conversion!)
- Proofread / Copy-Edit (be sure to give to a friend outside of your program)
- Read the job description one more time and check for submissions guidelines.
- Run it by staff at Beyond Barnard

## GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR BEYOND BARNARD MEETING:

Staff at Beyond Barnard are here to help you get your résumé written!

- Follow the advice in this guide to start
- Print out or share job descriptions prior to any appointments
- Come to any appointment with a first draft (it doesn't have to be pretty!)