

Law School Resume

Pre-Law Society at VCU

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The resume is an opportunity to elaborate on yourself, to show that you are more than a transcript and an LSAT score - so you want to make sure you do it right.



How to Create a Law School Resume

Crafting a good resume for applying to law school is important, but crafting a unique one is even more so. Mike Spivey, co-founder of a consulting group that helps law school applicants navigate the admissions process, was quoted in a [US News Article](#) as saying “one hundred percent of admissions is differentiation”. Anthony Ervin, Director of Admissions at the North Carolina Central University School of Law said in a [US News article](#) that he looks for “evidence of communication skills, familiarity with the legal profession, and an applicant’s commitment to public service,” and that the goal of a resume crafted for law school admissions should be to demonstrate your preparedness to make it in law school and “thrive” as a law student. The resume is an opportunity to elaborate on yourself, to show that you are more than a transcript and an LSAT score - so you want to make sure you do it right.



What to Include

The Essentials

- Your resume's heading should include your name, current mailing address, phone number, and email address. Some experts also suggest adding a link to your LinkedIn profile (Need help setting one up? Check out [this article!](#)), as it gives readers the opportunity to read more about your accomplishments that maybe wouldn't fit on your resume otherwise. Your name can be bolded to draw attention to it, and/or can be the largest font on the page, but experts say it still should not exceed 14-point font.
- An example may look like this:

Jane Doe

123 Sesame Street, Richmond, VA 23220 | (123) 456-7890 | janedoe@gmail.com
<https://www.linkedin.com/in/jane-doe/123456789>

Your Educational Experience

- This is most likely going to be the first section of your resume because, remember, this is an academic resume. You should list the college(s) you attended, including their location, the degree / certificate you earned from them (as well as your graduation date), and your major(s), minor(s), and/or concentration(s). If you did not earn a certificate / degree, you should still list the dates in attendance! You can also include any study abroad experiences you had. Whether or not to include your GPA (as well as whether to include your cumulative GPA and/or your GPA within your major) is up to you, as these are points of contention between experts, with the arguments made that it's unnecessary because it will appear on your transcript and that it is necessary exactly for that reason.
- Underneath your educational experience, you can and should list any merit scholarships, honors (such as Dean's List), academic distinctions (such as Summa Cum Laude) and/or awards that you have received during your time in attendance, and the years that you earned them. You should make sure to explain any uncommon or school-specific awards / distinctions in parentheses after the award is listed. You may also list extracurricular activities you participated in or organizations you were a part of, as well as details about your academic performance such as the title of your thesis or any significant research projects you completed.
- You may also include a "Relevant Coursework" section, that can inform law schools of any law-related courses you may have taken during your undergraduate experience (for a list of all the law-related courses VCU offers, check out [this helpful link!](#)). This helps demonstrate your commitment to law as a field of study and shows law schools something they're looking for: that you really want to go to law school.



Structure

- Your resume should include professional headings denoting each section - readers shouldn't have to hunt for key information. The items in each section should be listed with bullet points and include dates and locations for each item. The list should be in reverse chronological order, meaning the most recent activities should be at the top and the oldest activities should be at the bottom.

Formatting

- Use a font and size that are easy to read - typically something like Arial, Calibri, Times New Roman, or Helvetica, between 10-12 points. There should be standard one-inch margins all around.

- Make sure your format remains consistent throughout your resume - for example, if you bold one job title, make sure you bold them all.

Length

- While there is often debate about the appropriate length of a resume, almost all sources can agree that it should not exceed two pages, with most experts contending that one is ideal. With that being said, there are some law schools that allow, or even prefer students to submit longer resumes, so ensure that you always check with the law school(s) you're applying to see if there is a preference.
- Keep it simple. Jargon can be appropriate at times if necessary to discuss industry matters, but try to use simple explanations or even include a short definition if you need to use special acronyms or terminology.
- Very rarely will a position require more than three bullet points to explain. Each bullet should be approximately a sentence in length, although the final period is optional (but remember: be consistent with your formatting. If you put a period on one, put a period on all).
- An example may look like this:



EDUCATION

Virginia Commonwealth University, College of Arts and Sciences (VCU)

Richmond, VA

Bachelor of Arts in Political Science

Graduated: May 2022

Concentration in Public Policy and Administration

GPA (Cumulative): 3.5

Minor: Philosophy of Law

GPA (Major): 4.0 (18 courses)

- Honors and Awards: Dean's List Fall 2020 (Awarded to students who have earned a GPA of 3.5 or higher for every semester at VCU so far), Graduated Summa Cum Laude
- Activities: Member of VCU Mock Trial Team 2021-2022, Member of Pre-Law Society at VCU
- Research Projects & Presentations: "No, Mr. Majority Leader, We Cannot: An Assessment of the Commerce Clause Power in the Modern Political Environment"

RELEVANT COURSES

U.S. Constitutional Law: Structure of Government

- Developed knowledge of the U.S. Constitution and how it relates to the U.S. Government, as well as wrote an 11-page term paper assessing the Commerce Clause power in the modern political environment.

Your Employment and Internship Experiences

- Your resume should list any jobs and internships you have held. You should include the title of your position, the name of your employer, the location of the position, and the dates you were employed. You can include bullets that list the specific duties you were assigned for each job
- be sure to use action words (led, organized, mentored) and quantifiable results as much as possible, such as "Increased turnout 15% in my first year." These quantifiable results can also pertain to how many times or how often you did something, as well as how you compared to others in your position. Focus on concrete tasks / responsibilities that will highlight the importance of your role. Past tense should be used for positions you are no longer serving in, and present tense should be used for current positions. Once again, your experiences should be listed in reverse chronological order, with the most recent experiences at the top.
- An example may look like this:



PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Intern

Joe Schmoe for Governor, Richmond, VA

February 2021 - May 2021

- Organized campaign activities such as canvassing, phone-banking, and public speaking events
- Increased volunteer participation by 10% via text-banking

Your Volunteer Work and Leadership Organizations

- You should make sure to list any volunteer positions you may have held during college, or, some sources say, the past five years. The same is true for any leadership positions you held during college. Just like your employment and intern experiences, you should include dates you served and duties you performed, and list them in reverse chronological order ([check out our top 10 volunteering opportunity list here](#)).
- An example may look like this:

Volunteer

Human Rights Campaign, Richmond, VA

December 2020-Present

- Led efforts to garner support for various human rights-centered causes via text-banking, cold calling, and canvassing



An “Interests” Section

- While not required by any means, many experts recommend including a brief “Interests” section at the bottom of your resume - one or two lines maximum. This helps humanize candidates and maybe even makes you memorable to someone on the admissions committee who shares your interest.
- An example may look like this:



Interests and Hobbies

Hiking (have hiked ¼ of the Appalachian Trail), baking (especially breads), and hand-sewing

What Not to Include

- A “Summary” or “Objectives” section - what those would add to a resume should be self-evident in this case.
 - Anything from high school. Now that you are aspiring to attend professional school, it is too outdated and no longer relevant.
 - A “Skills” section, or at least any job skills irrelevant to law school, such as computer software.
 - Dishonesty, exaggerations, or contradictions. Be truthful and complete. Make sure your resume won’t be contradicted by other application materials (such as transcripts that show your GPA/coursework or recommendation letters from previous employers). Make sure you include every position of significance and try not to leave gaps in the chronology that are longer than a few months.
 - Too much modesty. Now isn’t the time to be humble. You should describe exactly what you did and how well you did it, and you should be proud of what you’ve accomplished!
 - Your LSAT score - they already know it, and there’s no place for it here!
- Colors and pictures - as expert consultant Laura Hosid said in [this](#) helpful workshop - you’re applying to law school, not graphic design school!

Support Your Personal Statement

- Whatever you wrote about in your personal statement (need help writing one? [Try this helpful article!](#)), there should be evidence of it on your resume. Care about giving back? The volunteer section better be packed. Wrote about your love of corporate law? Let’s see some internships in the field!

Proofread and Check with Your School

- Make sure you proofread your resume multiple times - and try to do so with fresh eyes every so often. Better yet - see if a trusted friend, family member, professor, or mentor will proofread it for you.
- Check with the school(s) to which you’re applying to see if they have any specific requirements for your resume and ensure that you comply with them.

Need more help? Check out [these awesome sample resumes!](#)

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