**Resume Checklist and Job Searching for SBMI Students**

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# Disclaimer

*The opinions in this document are expressly my own and do not reflect the opinions of the School of Biomedical Informatics, The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston, The University of Texas System, or the State of Texas.*

# Preface

I taught for four years at The University of Texas at Austin Health Information Technology program, which was an ONC-funded workforce development program and for which SBMI Associate Dean of Academic Affairs Dr. Susan Fenton secured the grant funding. In this program, we were tasked with training people in health information technology and then getting them hired. I spoke with dozens of human resource representatives from a variety of companies, and I helped coach hundreds of students on resumes, interview skills, and workplace skills.

***Maxim #1*:** **Employers hire people for one reason: to solve a problem for them. Either the employer has too much work and not enough people, and/or they don’t have the people with the necessary skills.**

***Maxim #2:* People apply for jobs because they need money.**

***Maxim #3:* Most resumes sound as though they are from someone who needs a job for money, not from someone who can solve problems for the employer.**

So, you need to orient your resume and interview responses to the employer’s perspective and **how you can solve problems for the employer.** This will differentiate you from everyone else applying for the same job, whose resumes sound like “I am applying for this job because I need to pay my bills”.

# Your Resume’s Job

Your resume has one job: ***to get you an interview***. The resume should:

1. Demonstrate how you would be an asset and problem-solver to the organization that hires you, and
2. Remove any reason for the organization to not interview you.

# First Page

**Line 1**: Your name, degrees, and credentials, e.g. RN, MS, PMP. You can make this a larger font if you like.

If you have not graduated yet, no, you cannot put your anticipated degree after your name. I have also been asked if it is acceptable to put PhDc – the answer is no. You can only list credentials and degrees that you have actually been awarded. The only exception is for PhD candidates who have successfully defended their dissertation, completed all other requirements, and the dissertation committee and university have signed the relevant paperwork; then “PhD” may be used even though the conferring of the actual PhD degree at a commencement ceremony has not yet occurred.

**Line 2**: In this order: your email address, some space, your telephone number, some space, your LinkedIn profile URL. You do not need to list your mailing address but if you want to, it can go on the third line. The reason for the email address first is because we read from left to right, so the most important items should be on the left, and the primary contact method will be via email.

**Line 3**: Employers might not want to have to sponsor a visa, so consider adding your US Citizenship or visa status. Remember, make it easy for the employer to want to interview you, and not have *any* reason to move your resume to the trash bin!

So it might look like this:

Kimberly A. Smith, PhD, MT(ASCP)

Kimberly.A.Smith@uth.tmc.edu 512-555-3793 https://www.linkedin.com/in/kimberlysmithphd

Citizenship: United States

Figure 1: Example Page 1 Header

*Note: I like to put all this in the header of the first page, so I can have a little more room for content. Use View 🡪 Header and Footer, and then also check “Different First Page”.*

**Footer**: Have Page 1 of 2, Page 2 of 2, etc. This is important because if the resume is printed and on someone’s desk, and a page gets separated, they will know that a page is missing.

**Top of page 2**: In the header of page 2, have one line: Your name, your phone number, and your email address, all in the same size font (usually 10 or 12 point). This is important because if the resume is printed and on someone’s desk, and a page gets separated, they will know who that page belongs to.

## Field labels

Notice that in the Figure 1 above, I don’t include field labels (for example, Email: ) for the email, phone number, etc. Email addresses and telephone numbers are now universally recognized, so the labels are unnecessary clutter.

## Margins and fonts

Margins should be 1” all around.

Fonts should be standard Calibri, Cambria, Arial, or Times New Roman. Do not use anything else because most resumes are scanned by computer.

## Number of pages

The general rule of thumb is no longer than 2 pages unless you have an extraordinary work history. (Most people don’t.)

# Sections of the Resume

## Objective or Summary

Employers seem to be split on this. Most of the ones I have read are poorly written and do nothing to give me any sense of the person behind the resume. Further, the word “passionate” seems to be so overused as to be a cliché. If you really want to include an objective or summary, then do so, but make it good! On the other hand, if you leave it off, it probably won’t be a problem either.

## Experience

Typically, your work experience is listed with the most recent first (reverse chronological order). Remember what I said at the beginning**, Employers hire people for one reason: to solve a problem for them**. So, don’t list your job duties; instead, phrase things in terms of ***accomplishments***. For example, instead of “Counted number of XYZ each day”, try “Ensured quality by developing a process for counting XYZ”. If at all possible, also quantify your work - how much time or money was saved, how much satisfaction increased, etc. This is probably the most difficult thing for most students to do.

One thing I see commonly is a huge list of bullet points under each job. Are these really relevant? Pare down to 3 or 4 of the most important things.

I like to see the employer or company name in bold first, then the job title on the line underneath, like this:

**Great Local Hospital**

Implementation analyst and trainer August 2015 – present

Figure 2: Example employer entry

## Technical Skills

Employers are looking for people **who can do things** for them, **not just know about things**. So, you need to list all software that you know how to use, programming languages, and any other technical skills. And don’t forget to list Microsoft Office, including Word, PowerPoint, and Excel (of course, as long as you do have those skills.) Pay attention to the spelling – don’t abbreviate Microsoft as MS – that is not the proper name. PowerPoint is one word, not two; it’s Photoshop, not PhotoShop. Check each product at that company’s website.

## Education

The proper name of the school is The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston School of Biomedical Informatics. Nothing else is acceptable. Likewise, double-check the formal name of each of your universities.

Generally, I like to see the name of the university in bold first, then the program on the line underneath, with the dates at the right margin, like this

**The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston School of Biomedical Informatics**

Master of Science in Biomedical Informatics, concentration in data analytics Expected 12/16

Figure 3: Example education entry

*Frequently asked question: Should I list my GPA?*

In general, most employers don’t care about your GPA unless it was exceptional. They want to know what skills you have; a GPA may or may not have any correlation to your actual demonstrable skills.

if you received some sort of academic honors, such as being on the dean’s list or graduating cum laude, then include that.

If you have done a practicum project, capstone project, or research, include a short description. Again, think of what would be of interest to an employer and what skills you acquired.

## Publications

Whether or not to include publications should be handled on a case-by-case basis. If you are applying for an academic job, absolutely include publications. However, publications may not be at all relevant for an entry-level position in industry (such as an entry-level programmer at an EHR company.)

## Languages

Include all programming languages as well as human languages (English, Spanish, Urdu, etc.) along with a level of proficiency (fluent, expert, novice, conversational, etc.)

## References

You do not need a References section. It is assumed that you will provide references when asked, so do not include this section.

## Marital status

Do not include whether or not you are married, and it is illegal in the United States for an interviewer to ask if you are married, engaged, have children, and a variety of other questions. See <http://www.gsworkplace.lbl.gov/DocumentArchive/BrownBagLunches/IllegalorInappropriateInterviewQuestions.pdf>

And

<https://www.google.com/search?q=employer%20illegal%20questions%20site%3A.gov>

# PROOFREAD, PROOFREAD, PROOFREAD!

The first thing I do when reading resumes is to discard any resume that has a typographical or spelling error, especially if the person lists “attention to detail” as one of their skills! Remember, the employer may be receiving hundreds -- even thousands -- of resumes for each job opening, and they have to reduce the pile somehow! A Human Resources representative from Epic told me in 2010 that they receive about ***100,000*** resumes per year, and hire ***0.2%*** of those applicants.

Use your spellchecker (set to US English!), read your resume out loud, and have at least two other people review it as well.

# Tailoring Your Resume

Most resumes in larger organizations are not seen by a human first; instead, they are scanned by a computer. The computer then does a comparison of the words in the resume against the key words for the job position that the resume was submitted against. The organization sets a minimum level or threshold for the number or percentage of words or phrases that must match in order for that resume to make it to a human for review.

So, let’s say you’ve seen a job posting that you think would be perfect for you. Print off the job posting and circle the key words, job skills, and requirements. Go through your resume and check if you have those same words. For example, the job posting may say “Microsoft Office” and your resume has “MS Word”. Spell out Microsoft. Of course, do not falsify or misrepresent your skills! But if the job posting lists “conversational Spanish” as a required skill, and you are fluent in Spanish, modify your resume to specifically include “conversational Spanish”.

# LinkedIn and Networking

If you are sending out lots of resumes and not getting an interview, you need someone to look over your resume. That said, in my personal experience and from anecdotal evidence, most people don’t get hired by sending resumes to job postings – they get jobs by someone they know taking the resume to their manager and recommending them for a particular job. Think about it: if ***you*** were a manager with a job opening, and ***you*** had a stack of 300 resumes on your desk and one of your employees (whom you know and trust) comes in with a friend’s resume and says, “I know this person and I think they would be a good fit”), which of the (now 301) resumes will be at the top of ***your*** list?

LinkedIn (<https://www.linkedin.com/)> is a business and professional social network (like a professional Facebook.) Set up a LinkedIn profile, and include the URL on the same line as your email address in the top of the first page.

Here is a Google search that will give you a lot of information on effective LinkedIn profiles.

<https://www.google.com/search?q=linkedin+student+guide&oq=linkedin+student+guide>

Build your professional network by making the effort to meet the people in your classes and joining HIMSS and AMIA (they both have student rates).

# A note about email addresses

Take a good look at your email address and how it might look to an employer. Which do you think would be perceived as more professional?

[HotCookies@hotmail.com](mailto:HotCookies@hotmail.com) or [JanetSmith@Gmail.com](mailto:JanetSmith@Gmail.com)?

If you use Yahoo, Hotmail, or AOL for your personal email, fine; but in my opinion, do not use these for job searches. Set up a Gmail account, or a UT Alumni account (<https://sbmi.uth.edu/academics/forms/2015+UTHealth+Alumni+Email+Login+and+Change+Password+Instructions+%283%29+%282%29.pdf)>

and use it for your job searches.

# Some places to look for informatics jobs

***No endorsement is given or implied for any of the organizations listed.***

AMIA: <http://jobs.amia.org/>

HIMSS: <http://jobmine.himss.org/>

Indeed.com: <http://www.indeed.com/>

Glassdoor: <https://www.glassdoor.com/index.htm>

## Houston area hospitals

Houston Methodist: <https://www.houstonmethodistcareers.org/>

MD Anderson: <https://www.mdanderson.org/about-md-anderson/careers.html>

St. Luke’s: <http://www.chistlukeshealth.org/careers>

Texas Children’s’ Hospital: <http://texaschildrenspeople.org/career_search/>

UTMB Galveston: <https://www.utmb.edu/careers/>

## Software vendors

This is only a very small list. Additions welcome.

KLAS Research: <http://www.klasresearch.com/best-in-klas-winners>

Allscripts: <http://www.allscripts.com/about-allscripts/careers>

Athena: <http://www.athenahealth.com/careers>

Cerner: <http://www.cerner.com/about_cerner/careers/>

Epic: <https://careers.epic.com/>

e-MDs: <http://www.e-mds.com/employment>

Greenway: <https://www.greenwayhealth.com/careers/>

GE Healthcare: <http://www3.gehealthcare.com/en/about_us/ge_healthcare_careers>

Orchard LIS: <http://www.orchardsoft.com/career-opportunities/>

Sunquest: <http://www.sunquestinfo.com/careers/>

Corepoint [Hl7 and interface engines]: <https://corepointhealth.com/company/careers>

Orion Health: <https://ohrecruit.orionhealth.com/careers>

Intelligent Medical Objects: <http://www.e-imo.com/careers>

McKesson: <https://careers.mckesson.com/>

Recruiters

<http://www.belleoaks.com/>