

# Resume Writing Guide: Nursing

## What is the Purpose of a Resume?

**A resume is a marketing tool** and is one of the ways to tell your story by presenting your skills, knowledge, and experience to a potential employer in order to demonstrate your fit for a specific position. *The average employer spends only 15 to 20 seconds reviewing a resume. Ensure that yours is targeted, error-free and easy to skim!*

**Remember: Your resume does not get you the job; its purpose is to get you an interview.**

## How to write an outstanding resume:

- **One or two pages in length:** Employers prefer a one- or two-page resume, depending on your level of experience.
- **Margins and Font:** We recommend 0.5 inch margins or greater and 11 point Times New Roman font.
- **Format:** Be consistent with indentation, capitalization, punctuation, font style, font size, spacing, and other formatting parameters. See sample resumes on pages 6-8.
- **Avoid Clutter:** Too much text and not enough white space may discourage someone from reading your resume.
- **Target Your Content:** Highlight experiences & transferable skills most relevant to the industry and the position.
- **Incorporate Keywords from the Job Posting:** Keep in mind that computer filters are often used to search for keywords within resumes. Use language and keywords specific to the industry, job function and job posting.
- **Avoid Pronouns:** Personal or possessive pronouns (I, my, me, we, our) are not appropriate in a resume.
- **Be Clear:** Show clear career and/or skill set progression.
- **Honesty is the Best Policy:** Don't exaggerate or embellish your experience or include false information.
- **Proofread:** Spellcheck does not always catch typos. Have at least 2 other people proofread your resume. *Some employers will not consider a job candidate if they see even one typo on the resume.*

## Resume Sections:

### HEADING

- Include name, mailing address, telephone number (home and/or mobile) and email address (in that order).
- If you have a *complete and updated* LinkedIn profile, include the URL after your email address. Be sure to create a [customized URL under "Edit Profile"](#).

### OBJECTIVE (optional)

- Clearly state what you want and what you can do
- Be concise without being restrictive
- Tailor the statement specifically to the position you are seeking

#### Example of a poorly written objective statement:

Challenging position where I can grow professionally and help others

#### Example of a targeted, well-written objective statement:

A position as a Clinical Coordinator in the Pediatric Special Care Unit at The George Washington University Hospital where I can use my extensive experience in pediatric intensive care to improve the quality of patient care

### EDUCATION

- **List all institutions and degrees:** Include dates of completion in reverse chronological order. Make sure to include study abroad or summer institutes. In general, high school information should be removed during sophomore year of college.
- **GPA:** Including this is optional, unless the employer requires you to do so. We recommend doing so if 3.2+.
- **Include academic accomplishments:** Scholarships, competitions, special projects, and relevant coursework can be included to showcase your academic skills and experience.

### CLINICAL ROTATIONS

- **If you are a new RN graduate:** prioritize your clinical experience by placing Clinical Rotations and any nursing related experience (CAN, Nursing HomeAide, etc.) toward the beginning of the resume.
- **Remember all new RN graduates completed clinical rotations:** find a way to make your rotational experience stand out.
- **Every Healthcare System is different:** try to find out from the recruiter before you apply if they would like you to include all of your clinical rotations/hours on your resume or in a separate document.
- **Applying to positions within the DC Metro Area vs. Other Locations:** as a rule of thumb, if you are applying to a position in the DC Metro Area include your clinical rotations (with location) on your resume. Local recruiters will recognize the locations and have a better frame of reference as they are reviewing your resume. If you are applying to positions outside the DC Metro Area they may not recognize the specific locations and therefore, you may choose to include your rotations in a separate document or only include the relevant rotations per the position you are applying for.

### Example: Clinical Rotations on a Resume.

SETTING	LOCATION	SEMESTER/HOURS
Pediatrics, Intestinal Rehab	National Children's Medical Center	Fall 2013/Hours: 144
Pediatrics	National Children's Medical Center	Summer 2013/Hours: 440
Community Nursing	INOVA Loudoun Free Clinic	Summer 2013/Hours: 40
Obstetrics	INOVA Alexandria	Spring 2013/Hours: 40
Psychiatric Nursing	Virginia Hospital Center	Spring 2013/Hours: 40
Medical-Surgery	INOVA Alexandria	Spring 2013/Hours: 84
Medical-Surgery	Virginia Hospital Center	Fall 2012/Hours: 72
Geriatrics	Fairfax Nursing Center	Fall 2012/Hours: 40

### CLINICAL AND WORK EXPERIENCE

- **Include Clinical Experience and/or Related Experience first:** If you have clinical experience outside or your rotations include it in a "Clinical Experience" section directly after your clinical rotations, if you choose to include them. Following your clinical experience, include a "Work Experience" section including any specific work experiences you would like to highlight. This can certainly include jobs outside of the healthcare field.
- **Reverse Chronological Order:** Within both the Clinical Experience and Work Experience sections each experience should be listed in reverse chronological order (the most recent position first). Include the employer name, city and state, job title, and dates of employment.
- **Bullet points = accomplishments:** Don't just list job responsibilities in your bullet points. Show the results of your work and how it helped the organization. Refer to pages 3-4 for help writing Accomplishment Statements.
- **Use Action Verbs:** Begin each bullet point with a strong action verb. Employers often scan the first few words of each bullet, so catch their attention with strong action verbs that reflect your relevant skills.
  - Do not use any action verb more than once under the same job.
  - Avoid phrases like "Responsible for" and "Selected to," which are more passive.
  - See Action Verbs list on page 5 of this guide for ideas.
- **Quantify and Qualify Results:** Include specifics through numbers and verbal descriptors. Refer to pages 3-4 for help writing Accomplishment Statements.
- **Highlight Transferable Skills:** These are skills that can be utilized in a wide variety of positions and settings. Examples: project management, teamwork, relationship-building, communication and leadership.
- **Be Creative:** Experience doesn't only include paid/professional work. You may also include leadership positions, volunteer work, course projects, independent endeavors, etc. in which you had significant responsibility.

## SKILLS AND ACTIVITIES

- **Technical Skills:** list relevant computer applications, languages, and technical clinical skills from most unique to least unique.
- **Languages:** acceptable proficiency terms: native/bilingual; full professional proficiency/fluent; minimum professional proficiency/conversational, limited working proficiency, elementary/basic.
- **Leadership**
  - Include your most recent leadership roles; avoid using outdated experiences
  - If you have extensive leadership experience, you could create a separate “Leadership Experience” section or you can include leadership positions under the “Work Experience” section.
- **Affiliations**
  - List professional organizations and other community affiliations that support your career goals, including student organizations.
- **Volunteer**
  - List most recent and/or relevant activities first. In general, employers like to see some type of volunteer activity on the resume even if it’s not directly related to the job you’re applying for.
- **Certifications**
  - List most recent and/or relevant certifications first.

## Writing Bullet Points as Accomplishment Statements:

Situation - Action - Result (SAR)

### SITUATION-ACTION-RESULT

**Bullet points under each position should tell a mini-story** and are more effective when written as Accomplishment Statements in the Situation-Action-Result (SAR) format. By using the SAR model, you will ensure that a reader understands *in detail* **what you did, why you did it, and what happened as a result of your actions**. Providing specific quantifiers and qualifiers will make your work and its results even more clear.

- **Bullet point without SAR:** *Provided companionship and communicated well-being to family and other providers.* This describes your job responsibilities only. It doesn't show exactly what it means to "work" with families and providers, what skills you developed, and the results of your work.
- **Bullet point with SAR:** *Provided support, comfort and direction to a laboring mother as she pushed and instructed family members how to participate.*

### QUANTIFY RESULTS

As often as possible, use statistics, percentages, or numbers in your bullet points to demonstrate the scope of your accomplishments. Examples:

- *Delivered direct patient care to 12 patients while also managing the needs and questions of the patients' families.*
- *Collaborated with the Hospital Innovation Team to strategize an effective marketing plan to promote Rent The Runway to Hospital staff, resulting in a 55% increase in sales for the Annual Benefit Ball with over 60 dress rentals in January 2013.*

### QUALIFY RESULTS

Sometimes results aren't quantifiable, but can be illustrated with a qualitative outcome. Examples:

- *Worked with multidisciplinary clinical team to develop education and practical tool to improve correct screening for intimate partner violence on Labor and Delivery Unit. Tool recognized by top Hospital Administrators during monthly meeting.*
- *Conducted qualitative interviews with key stakeholders at Rex Medical Center involved in clinical aspects of patient engagement. Developed SBAR and Bib list to summarize best practice communication techniques that empower providers to communicate more effectively with patients and families.*

## Questions to ask yourself when creating S-A-R Accomplishment Statements:

Use the following questions to reflect on your past positions & what you achieved in each one.

- Did the work you performed positively impact the organization as a whole? If so, how?
- Did you make any significant clinical accomplishments that made an impact on your unit or organization?
- Who, or how many people, will ultimately benefit from your work?
- Did you identify any problems or challenges?
- Did you resolve or minimize any problems?
- Did you discover and take advantage of any opportunities?
- Did you target a need for a product, service, plan, program, system, method, procedure, technique?
- Did you reduce costs, waste, time, or effort?
- Did you produce reports whose recommendations were well received by senior management, and whose suggestions were incorporated into their strategic planning?
- Did you reduce the liability for the organization by suggesting safety improvement?
- Did you create any original works: reports, guides, manuals, proposals?
- Did you develop or design a new program, plan, service, product, process, project, system method, strategy?
- Did you improve (*redesign, streamline or reorganize*), administer, or implement any projects, plans, programs, processes, services, products?
- Did you make any recommendations that saved money, made money, increased efficiency or productivity?
- Did you improve employee morale?
- Did you make a technical or clinical contribution?
- Did you facilitate or improve communication among employees, with patients, or with the community?
- Did you improve customer satisfaction or service?
- Did you train, coach, or mentor team members, patients or families?
- Did you complete deadlines ahead of time?

# ACTION VERBS by category (in CAPS)

ANALYZED	Consulted	Experimented	Promoted	Shared	Motivated	Cared	Exercised
Abstracted	Cooperated	Facilitated	Provided	Spoke	Negotiated	Catered	Expedited
Anticipated	Enlisted	Fashioned	Reduced	Stimulated	Persuaded	Delivered	Explained
Assessed	Ensured	Financed	Restored	Strengthened	Promoted	Dispensed	Facilitated
Ascertained	Facilitated	Fixed	Saved	Substituted	Reconciled	Entertained	Fostered
Audited	Fostered	Formulated	Stimulated	Supported	Resolved	Facilitated	Governed
Briefed	Handled	Founded	Strengthened	Sustained	Solved	Furnished	Guided
Calculated	Helped	Generated	Upgraded	Taught	ORGANIZED	Helped	Handled
Clarified	Located	Improved	COUNSELED/ INSTRUCTED/	Trained	Accumulated	Led	Headed
Compared	Participated	Increased	LEARNED	Tutored	Arranged	Listened	Hired
Computed	Preserved	Influenced	OPERATED/ MAINTAINED	Validated	Assembled	Maintained	Implemented
Concluded	Protected	Initiated	Adapted	Activated	Balanced	Motivated	Instructed
Conceptualized	Referred	Innovated	Advised	Built	Budgeted	Performed	Maintained
Correlated	Represented	Instituted	Advocated	Adjusted	Catalogued	Prepared	Met
Criticized	Served	Integrated	Aided	Clarified	Procured	Procured	Mentored
Debated	Strengthened	Introduced	Applied	Adapted	Classified	Provided	Monitored
Defined	Summarized	Invented	Assessed	Changed	Collated	Raised	Motivated
Detected	Supported	Launched	Briefed	Clarified	Collected	Recommended	Navigated
Determined	Sustained	Marketed	Cared	Corrected	Completed	Represented	Ordered
Diagnosed	COMMUNICATED	Modeled	Clarified	Continued	Completed	Responded	Organized
Discriminated	Addressed	Modified	Coached	Edited	Compiled	Satisfied	Oversaw
Dissected	Advertised	Navigated	Comforted	Eliminated	Composed	Served	Planned
Estimated	Answered	Originated	Communicated	Executed	Coordinated	Stimulated	Prepared
Evaluated	Briefed	Perceived	Conducted	Expedited	Copied	Supplied	Presided
Examined	Corresponded	Performed	Consulted	Facilitated	Correlated	Supervised	Prioritized
Figured	Debated	Pioneered	Coordinated	Fixed	Detailed	SOLD	Promoted
Graded	Explained	Planned	Demonstrated	Implemented	Developed	Advertised	Regulated
Identified	Expressed	Prioritized	Educated	Installed	Displayed	Auctioned	Reinforced
Indexed	Facilitated	Produced	Emphasized	Modified	Edited	Bartered	Resolved
Inspected	Interpreted	Promoted	Enabled	Navigated	Facilitated	Enlisted	Retained
Integrated	Interviewed	Proposed	Encouraged	Ordered	Filed	Facilitated	Reviewed
Interpreted	Lectured	Recommended	Enlightened	Oversaw	Gathered	Generated	Scheduled
Interviewed	Listened	Restored	Established	Performed	Graphed	Improved	Selected
Inventoried	Marketed	Refined	Exercised	Prepared	Identified	Led	Set
Investigated	Prepared	Revamped	Explained	Piloted	Indexed	Maintained	Solved
Judged	Presented	Set	Facilitated	Preserved	Inspected	Marketed	Strengthened
Maintained	Printed	Shaped	Familiarized	Prioritized	Inventoried	Motivated	Supervised
Mapped	Programmed	Simplified	Fostered	Produced	Kept	Negotiated	Taught
Monitored	Publicized	Solved	Guided	Programmed	Located	Persuaded	Trained
Observed	Quoted	Styled	Helped	Promoted	Maintained	Promoted	Updated
Perceived	Recorded	Streamlined	Implemented	Protected	Mapped	Raised	COLLABORATE
Predicted	Reported	Substituted	Improved	Ran	Met	Recommended	Coproduced
Projected	Responded	Visualized	Influenced	Reduced	Obtained	Recruited	Cooperated
Qualified	Rewrote	IMPROVED/ INCREASED	Informed	Regulated	Organized	Stimulated	Engaged
Ranked	Spoke	Achieved	Inspired	Replaced	Planned	LED/MANAGED	Organized
Read	Taught	Interpreted	Interpreted	Saved	Prepared	Allocated	Partnered
Reasoned	Wrote	Accomplished	Investigated	Screened	Prioritized	Approved	Met
Related	CREATED/ DEVELOPED	Acquired	Lectured	Serviced	Processed	Arranged	Participated
Researched	Acted	Assured	Led	Set	Programmed	Assigned	Shared
Reviewed	Activated	Assured	Listened	Sustained	Ranked	Authorized	Strategized
Screened	Adapted	Attained	Maintained	Transported	Recorded	Chaired	Synchronized
Scanned	Adapted	Completed	Manipulated	Upheld	Reorganized	Clarified	Worked
Solved	Assembled	Conserved	Mastered	Utilized	Reproduced	Coached	
Studied	Authored	Continued	Monitored	NEGOTIATED	Retrieved	Conducted	
Summarized	Built	Eliminated	Modified	Advised	Revamped	Consulted	
Surveyed	Clarified	Encouraged	Motivated	Advocated	Reviewed	Contracted	
Symbolized	Composed	Enlarged	Observed	Arbitrated	Revised	Controlled	
Synthesized	Conceived	Expanded	Perceived	Bargained	Scheduled	Coordinated	
Tabulated	Constructed	Facilitated	Persuaded	Closed	Set	Decided	
Verified	Corrected	Fostered	Prescribed	Concluded	Simplified	Delegated	
Visualized	Designed	Guaranteed	Programmed	Consolidated	Solved	Directed	
ASSISTED	Devised	Inspired	Promoted	Dealt	Streamlined	Dispatched	
Advised	Discovered	Maximized	Read	Expedited	Structured	Distributed	
Brought	Drafted	Minimized	Reduced	Facilitated	Synthesized	Educated	
Chartered	Eliminated	Motivated	Reflected	Handled	Systemized	Encouraged	
Collaborated	Established	Obtained	Reinforced	Lobbied	Tabulated	Enforced	
Contributed	Expanded	Overcame	Related	Mediated	SERVED/ AIDED	Evaluated	
Consolidated	Expedited	Perfected	Restored	Merged	Attended	Executed	

# IMA Student - Resume: Jobs in DC Metro Area

1000 GW Court, Arlington, VA 22201  
gwgrad@gmail.com | 111-222-3333

## EDUCATION

**The George Washington University**, Washington, DC  
Accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing, May 2015  
GPA: 3.94, Dean's List four semesters

**University of Virginia**, Charlottesville, VA  
Bachelor of Science in Health Sciences,  
Minor in Spanish, May 2010  
GPA: 3.4

## CLINICAL EXPERIENCE

**Medical Surgical Intensive Care Unit-INOVA Fairfax Hospital**, Fairfax, VA

*Clinical Preceptorship- 184 hours*, September 2014-2015

- Collaborated with preceptor to determine an update on patient status and any interventions that required as a result of changes in patient status
- Utilized the Epic electronic health record system to access and document patient data
- Applied critical thinking to a patient's status and determined the effects of the disease process and how to alter care based on these effects

## CLINICAL ROTATIONS

Pediatrics	National Children's Medical Center	Summer 2013/Hours: 40
Community Nursing	INOVA Loudoun Free Clinic	Summer 2013/Hours: 40
Obstetrics	INOVA Alexandria	Spring 2013/Hours: 40
Psychiatric Nursing	Virginia Hospital Center	Spring 2013/Hours: 40
Medical-Surgery	INOVA Alexandria	Spring 2013/Hours: 84
Medical-Surgery	Virginia Hospital Center	Fall 2012/Hours: 72
Geriatrics	Fairfax Nursing Center	Fall 2012/Hours: 40

## WORK EXPERIENCE

**GW Global Health Institute**, Washington, DC

*Research Assistant*, May 2012-May 2013

- Collaborated on research study that examined the relationship between self-compassion, coping strategies and emotional well-being with adherence to anti-retroviral therapy in 150 patients living with HIV.
- Managed the survey process with medically complex patients to ensure that needs were met to successfully complete survey.
- Assisted in conducting data entry using SPSS and analyzed results.

**Founding Farmers**, Washington, DC

*Waitress*, May 2011-June 2012

- Excelled in providing excellent customer services in a fast-paced ever-changing environment
- Consistently received highest tips

## LEADERSHIP & INVOLVEMENT

- Sigma Theta Tau International – June 2014
- GWU Student Nurse Association, American Nurses Association – 2013-2014
- GWU BSN Mentor – 2013-2014

## SKILLS & CERTIFICATIONS

- Certifications: American Heart Association CPR, BLS (current-2016)
- Electronic Health Records: EPIC, Cerner
- Conversational in Spanish



# IMA Student - Resume: Jobs outside DC Metro Area

1000 GW Court, Arlington, VA 22201  
gwgrad@gmail.com | 111-222-3333

## EDUCATION

**The George Washington University**, Washington, DC  
Accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing, May 2015  
GPA: 3.94, Dean's List four semesters

**University of Virginia**, Charlottesville, VA  
Bachelor of Science in Health Sciences,  
Minor in Spanish, May 2001

## CLINICAL EXPERIENCE

**Medical Surgical Intensive Care Unit-INOVA Fairfax Hospital**, Fairfax, VA

*Clinical Preceptorship -184 hours*, September – November 2015

- Collaborated with preceptor to determine an update on patient status and any interventions that required as a result of changes in patient status
- Utilized the Epic electronic health record system to access and document patient data
- Applied critical thinking to a patient's status and determined the effects of the disease process and how to alter care based on these effects

*\*See attachment for summary of additional ABSN clinical hours*

## WORK EXPERIENCE

**REI**, McLean, VA

*Sales Associate*, March 2000-August 2004

- Provided superior customer service in a competitive retail market environment
- Excelled at resolving customer complaints
- Recognized for having the highest sales and best customer service skills in the department

## VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

**The Lung Foundation**, Washington, DC

*Young Professionals Group*, December 2011-Present

- Develops and implements fundraisers within the community to raise money for Lung Cancer research
- Engages the community through outreach efforts to promote awareness of the variety of lung-related illnesses

## HONORS & ASSOCIATIONS

- American Nurses' Association, Active Member
- Chair Student Nurses Association 2014
- Outstanding Clinical Scholar Award 2014
- Recipient Capital Area Nursing Scholarship 2013

## LICENSURE & CERTIFICATIONS

- BLS for Healthcare Provides, American Heart Association (AHA) Renewal: May 2014
- Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS), AHA Renewal: May 2014
- Certified Nursing Assistant # 36511 Renewal: March 2015

# IMA Student - Resume: Tailored to Specific Setting

1000 GW Court, Arlington, VA 22201  
gwgrad@gmail.com | 111-222-3333

## EDUCATION

**The George Washington University**, Washington, DC  
Accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing, May 2015  
GPA: 3.94, Dean's List four semesters

**New York University**, New York City, NY  
Bachelor of Arts in International Business, Minor in Spanish, May 2001

## MATERNAL & FAMILY HEALTH EXPERIENCE

**Labor & Delivery Unit-MedStar Washington Hospital Center**, Washington, DC

*Clinical Preceptorship*, 184 hours

- Provided support, comfort and direction to laboring mother as she pushed and instructed family members how to participate.
- Honed technical skills including interpreting and analyzing electronic fetal monitoring, administering medication such as Pitocin and assisting during cesarean sections and epidural placement
- Educated laboring mothers on non-pharmacological pain management techniques including rhythmic breathing and positioning
- Enhanced familiarity with hospital protocols and procedures, including the Cerner medical record system

*\*See attachment for summary of ABSN clinical rotations*

## WORK EXPERIENCE

**The Advisory Board**, Arlington, VA

*Market Research Specialist*, May 2005-August 2012

- Conducted research interviews with clients, interpreted feedback and made recommendations for corporate improvement and management
- Maintained client relationships to achieve maximum value for their membership
- Selected as a Service Volunteer to identify and organize volunteer opportunities for the company to pursue possible corporate initiatives
- Designated as a mentor for a newly-hired intern as a trusted counselor throughout her time with the company

## VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

DC Public Health Department, Washington, DC

*Women, Infant & Children (WIC) Services Volunteer*, December 2011-Present

- Visited mothers in Ward 7 & 8 to provide educational support in choosing health food options for their children
- Developed manual for future volunteers in order to streamline workflow and outreach efforts to underserved populations in the DC Metro Area.

## LEADERSHIP & INVOLVEMENT

- Sigma Theta Tau International – June 2014
- GWU Student Nurse Association, American Nurses Association- 2013-2014
- UNICEF Student Organization, Active Member – 2012-2014

## SKILLS & CERTIFICATIONS

- Certifications: American Heart Association CPR, BLS (current-2016)
- Electronic Health Records: EPIC, Cerner