

Preparing a Résumé for Law School



CENTER FOR
Pre-Law Advising
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

What Should I Include?

The primary purpose of a law school résumé is to quantify how you have spent your time outside the college classroom. As with the personal statement and letters of recommendation, the résumé will be important in those instances where an applicant's GPA and LSAT are neither outstanding nor terrible (i.e., the majority of applicants).

You should include the following sections (the titles may vary by applicant):

- **Education**
Include post-high school institutions attended for one or more semesters, expected/actual graduation date and degree, major(s)/certificates, cumulative GPA, thesis/capstone, and academic honors/awards. You may alternatively include separate sections for honors/awards or research.
- **Work Experience**
Include post-high school employment whether paid or unpaid—your titles, dates of employment, hours per week at each job, a brief summary of your employers (if not obvious from name), and detailed information concerning responsibilities and accomplishments at each job.
- **Activities**
Include all involvement with student organizations, athletics, volunteering other than an unpaid internship, and other activities to which you devote significant time. If you have few activities, consider including them in the education section instead.

You may include the following sections if applicable:

- **Honors/Awards**
Include any recognition for academic or non-academic achievement or leadership—honor society membership, merit-based scholarships, etc. If you have only one or two honors and/or awards (e.g., dean's List), then it would be better to include the item(s) in the education section.
- **Research**
If you have one or more items of research to highlight, it may be appropriate to include a separate section for research. Include substantive writings such as a thesis or capstone, significant work product for a directed study, and publications with or without a professor/TA as co-author, etc.
- **Skills/Interests**
This section allows you to highlight language skills, travel, and unique interests that may not fit elsewhere in your resume.

Note: It is okay for your résumé to exceed one page.



What Should I Exclude?

- **DON'T** include an objective section at the top. Your objective is to get into law school. That's obvious.
- **DON'T** include honors or activities from high school even if you were class valedictorian, Eagle Scout, etc. The exception is something truly impressive like professional ballet or the Olympics.
- **DON'T** include detailed technical/scientific skills (e.g., knowledge of scientific antibody tagging technique).
- **DON'T** include word processing skills (e.g., Word, Excel).
- **DON'T** include references. Your letters of recommendation are your references.
- **DON'T** exclude involvement with a fraternity or sorority. Greek organizations often provide significant opportunities for leadership and community service.
- **DON'T** exclude political/religious involvement out of a concern that you may alienate admissions committees. In fact, law schools want student bodies with a diversity of political/religious beliefs and experiences. But focus on the substance of your involvement, not the ideology of it.