



The Well-Rounded Résumé

Extracurricular activities and what they tell employers about you

Extra credit for your résumé

Internships and work experience are valuable assets to any résumé. However, unpaid, extracurricular activities can be just as vital when validating your job candidacy. Volunteering and other “non-work” pursuits not only demonstrate your abilities and interests, they also highlight qualities and develop transferable skills employers value. As you explore careers and build knowledge in your fields of interest, consider these five types of college experiences and the skills they add to your résumé.

Volunteer experiences: Enthusiasm

Volunteering shows your enthusiasm for an organization or your interests. It’s an excellent addition to a résumé, especially for someone with little to no work experience. Volunteer opportunities related to your major can be a great precursor to interning: if you’re studying medicine, volunteer for the Red Cross; if you’re an art student, volunteer to be a tour guide at a museum. Volunteering shows employers your passions outside of your studies or work, as well as your core values and commitment.

School clubs/groups: Time management and engagement

Getting involved in on-campus activities indicates that you’re engaged in your education and that you possess time management skills. Take part in campus clubs and groups and demonstrate to employers that you’re likely to be both invested in your work and involved in employee events and company culture. Prove that you can handle commitments outside of the classroom and that you’ll go above and beyond the status quo.

Professional organizations: Maturity and industry knowledge

Many career fields (e.g., design, finance, healthcare) have an organization that runs local events for professionals to meet and discuss industry news and trends. Joining a professional group allows you to network with those already working in your field; establish real world relationships; demonstrate your maturity, and show that you’re current with what’s happening in the industry.

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Sports: Teamwork and commitment

Whether on the division 1, club, or intramural level, participating in team sports shows commitment to an organization. Employers will value your ability to handle academic demands and other responsibilities, as well as your capacity for teamwork, a key element of any organization.

Leadership positions: Accountability and influence

If relevant, include instances when you have assumed a leadership position in school clubs, volunteer roles, sports, and other activities. List group classroom assignments where you have taken a lead. However, focus on more substantial projects. Also, highlight your leadership capabilities by identifying exactly what you did for that group.

Rounding off your résumé

Visit your school’s career center for information on local volunteer, club, and professional organizations:

- non-work activities can be listed on résumés under “Extra- or Co-curricular Activities,” “Interests,” or “Professional Involvement”;
- activity titles can include “Member,” “Secretary,” “President,” or “Group Leader,” depending on your role;
- include responsibilities if you assumed a leadership position or took on any additional tasks;
- while including potentially sensitive “non-work” activities related to religion, politics, and race should never influence the interviewer, it’s still best to omit these topics from your résumé, unless relevant; and
- focus on including college-level activities; exclude high school activities unless you are just beginning to build out your résumé.



i n a nutshell:

Extracurricular activities and volunteer experience can help tip the hiring scales in your favor. They:

- **Demonstrate your interests, enthusiasm, and values**
- **Attest to your ability to work alongside others**
- **Showcase your interpersonal, soft, and transferable skills**
- **Affirm your leadership abilities, commitment, and confidence**
- **Prove that you bring more to a position than just grades**

Joining activities not only enhances your résumé, it can broaden your skills, horizons, and connections and make you a more desirable job candidate and fit for the company.

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