FOR MSSW STUDENTS - WRITING A WINNING RESUME

*Are you an MSSW student with questions about how to write a resume? This guide contains resume writing tips, 3 sample documents, sample interview questions, and a list of strategic “active” verbs to get you started.*

**ELEMENTS of the RESUME**

**Your resume is your personal marketing tool, the sole purpose of which is to secure the interview.** A well-written resume gives you the opportunity to state your career goals and to describe skills and experience that support these goals. It should be a concise, purposeful, and organized summary of the experience you have as it relates to your target position. None of the following concepts are unnegotiable—consider them a starting point for you to think about how to promote yourself as the best person for the job!

# I. Heading

Place your name at the top of the page: highlighted by slightly larger type-size, bolding, and/or underlining, email address and telephone number to follow. Use the same heading for your resume, cover letter, and references in order to present a uniform package.

## II. Education

Your education section should be clearly stated in reverse chronological order, with most recent degree first. Always spell out the name and type of degree, followed by your major title. If you haven’t finished your degree yet, put “Anticipated,” or “Expected May 2012.”

**III. Experience Highlights**

A “highlights” section allows you to list selected experiences—that is, only experiences that are most relevant to the position you are applying for. Begin with action verbs in your job descriptions and use past tense for concluded positions—present for ongoing positions. Capitalization, punctuation, and date formats should all be consistent for every job description. See “Resume Formats” for more details on this section.

## IV. Suggested ResumE TYPE

***Combination format***

There are 4 types of resumes: chronological, functional, combination, and targeted. The Combination resume combines the chronological resume (which emphasizes work history) and the functional resume (which emphasizes skills) to help your employer get a full picture of where you’ve been and what you have to offer. The combination resume is best used when:

1. You have some relevant work experience that is of short duration
2. Your education is an important part of your overall skills presentation
3. Your overall background reflects a range of unrelated skills
4. Your work history reflects more time in other occupational areas

**V. Capabilities**

If you have special or transferable skills that you think should be highlighted, and that don’t fit into any other category, then this is the place to put them. Some of these skills could include: computer proficiency, foreign languages, communication skills, team-building skills, and many others. You can also use this section to list skills and knowledge areas that are specific to social work. Your “Capabilities” section should be either at the top or the bottom of the resume.

## VI. Leadership EXPERIENCE / Community service

Present these activities in the same format as jobs -- give a heading that includes your title, name of organization, dates served, and location. If your position involved significant responsibilities, feel free to list it alongside your paid jobs.

## VII. Professional Affiliations, Licenses, and Certifications

Always include your licenses, certifications, and affiliations in your resumé. You may also think about joining and including NASW now, as it will be a valuable networking resource for you as a professional (and you are eligible for the student rate!) If you are expecting to receive a license by a certain date, you may include “Expected” or “Anticipated” next to the date.

## VIII. References

Have a separate sheet of references available for employers when they ask for them. Your reference page should be neat, with the same heading as your resumé. It isn’t necessary to include “references available upon request” on the bottom of your resumé since it is understood that you will provide references, if asked.

**Format**

Your resumé should maintain an eye-pleasing balance between text and white space; in other words, the entire sheet should not be filled with words. Here are some things you should look for:

* First, hold your resumé at arm's length and see how it looks;
* Is the page too busy with *different styles* of type, type sizes, lines, or boxes?
* Is the information *spaced well* and not crowded on the page?
* Is there too much “white space”? Do you need to condense what you have and add more?

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| Do* Be direct, well-organized, and professional
* Communicate your strongest points first
* Leave a comfortable margin on all sides (usually 1 inch)
* Always try to fit your resumé onto 1 page, no more than 2. If you do go past 1 page, make it at least 1.5 or 2 full pages.
* Print on one side of the sheet only, using high-quality bond white or off-white paper (i.e. beige or ivory)
* Have several different people check your resumé
* Print at least 2 copies of your resume—one for you, and one for your interviewer (even if they should already have it.)
 | Don’t* Use personal data (birth date, marital status, health etc.)
* Use lengthy sentences and descriptions
* Use first person (“I”)
* List salary requirements or history
* Write “Resumé of Qualifications” at the top or “References Available Upon Request” at the bottom
* Write reasons for leaving a job
* List any negative information about a previous position
* Include unprofessional contact information (like an email address meant for other audiences)
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###### Kendall Andrews

www.linkin.com/in/kendallandrews

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| (512) 555-3465 Andrews@mail.utexas.edu |
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# CAPABILITIES

1. Knowledge of different treatment approaches, including play therapy, brief therapy and solution-focused therapy
2. Excellent communication skills including proficient knowledge of conversational Spanish, and clinical documentation
3. Expertise in identifying group dynamics and resolving ethical issues
4. Strong crisis management skills and comfort in a fast-paced environment
5. Proven experience conducting detailed assessments of clients for drug and alcohol related issues

##### EXPERIENCE HIGHLIGHTS

Workers Assistance Program, Austin, Texas

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| **MSSW Intern** | 6/18 – 9/18 |

1. Counseled individuals, couples, and adolescents using brief therapy in an Employee Assistance Program setting
2. Performed case management and procedural referrals for drug and alcohol cases
3. Counseled clients upon intake, screening and assessment

Salvation Army, Austin, Texas

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| **MSSW Intern** | 8/17 – 5/18 |

1. Performed intake casework, case-managed clients, assisted with employment program (homeless population)
2. Collected baseline research data; published outcome effectiveness assessment report
3. Facilitated a Life Skills group for clients facing homelessness, mental health issues and substance abuse

Free Scale, Austin, Texas

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| **Principal Staff Member** | 7/9 – 1/17 |

1. Interfaced with customers to solve problems and support applications
2. Collaborated within a team environment while supervising over 30 employees

# EDUCATION

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| --- | --- |
| The University of Texas at Austin, Steve Hicks School of Social Work **Master of Science in Social Work**, Concentration: Clinical Social Work |  Anticipated 5/2019 |
| The University of Texas at Austin**Bachelor of Arts in Psychology** | 2009 |

COMMUNITY SERVICE

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| --- | --- |
| Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services – Runaway Hot Line |  9/11 – present |
| Johnston High School, Tutor |  9/13 – 5/14 |
| Alternative Learning Center, Tutor |  9/11 – 9/13 |
| Front Steps, Volunteer |  2005 – 2015 |

AFFILIATIONS, CERTIFICATIONS, AND HONORS

Certified Cognitive Behavioral Therapist (CCBT)

Member, National Association of Social Workers

SAMPLE RESUMES FOR FINAL FIELD – EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

Clinical Sample

**Janet C. Smith**

www.linkin.com/in/justinsmith

5009 Willow Park Drive, Austin, Texas, 78712  (512) 555-7315  janetsmith@yahoo.com

Educational Objectives

* Application of theories and practice techniques of clinical social work with children and families.
* Increase competency in the assessment of the child, family, and environment. As able, utilize standardized screening and assessment instruments.
* Increase ability to integrate assessment findings, theory and academic literature into treatment planning and treatment interventions.
* Learn to apply “play” and “filial” therapy techniques in work with children and their families.
* Increase competency in the practice of individual, group, and family therapy.

##### Administrative and Policy Practice Sample

###### John Andrews

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| 12345 Brooksville Ave. | (512) 555-3465 |
| Austin, TX 78704 | jandrews@mail.utexas.edu |

Educational Objectives

* To increase skills in long range strategic planning through the utilization of community resources and demographics.
* To become familiar with aspects of budgeting and the allocation of funds to various components of human services organizations.
* To explore and consider ethical dilemmas with regard to planning and administering programs to vulnerable and diverse populations.
* To develop professional and interpersonal skills as an agency representative or community agent.
* To attend and participate in agency staff meetings, board meetings, and other opportunities for professional networking

SAMPLE THANK YOU LETTER

 **Thank-You Letter Sample**

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|  | **Shane Baker**[www.linkin.com/in/shanebaker](http://www.linkin.com/in/shanebaker) |  |
| 1006 Candlewood Austin, TX 78712 |  | (512) 555-9845 sbaker@utexas.edu |

August 13, 2014

Tammy Blake

Personnel Director

Texas Agency on Family Violence

83062 N. Mopac Expy

Austin, TX 78759

Dear Ms. Blake:

I would like to thank you for meeting with me on Wednesday to discuss the MSSW internship opportunity at the Texas Agency on Family Violence. It was a pleasure to speak with you about the position, and I greatly appreciate your thoughtful answers to my questions. After learning more about Texas Agency on Family Violence, I am very confident that my background working with children and families and my research on domestic violence issues would be great assets to your organization.

If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me. Once again, thank you for your time and consideration, and I look forward to the possibility of working with you next spring.

Sincerely,

Shane Baker

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

In each and every interview situation, there are common questions that will be asked. Don’t wait until the interview to think about your responses to these questions! Be prepared and think through your answers before you arrive. It may even help to write down your answers and practice with someone. If at all possible, try to keep your answers brief, usually less than 2 minutes. Remember, **listening**, **confidence,** and **quality of presentation** are the keys to successful interviewing.

**Sample Interview Questions**:

1. Tell me about yourself [see our handout all about how to tackle this question].
2. Why are you interested in this agency?
3. What are your experiences with the [target population]?
4. What kind of supervision do you expect?
5. How has your education / work experience prepared you for this position?
6. What do you hope to accomplish at this agency?
7. What would you like to learn here?
8. Have you done this type of work in the past?
9. What schedule will work for you?
10. What are your career goals for the next 5 years? The next 10 years?
11. What are some of your strengths? Some of your weaknesses?
12. How do you define success for yourself?
13. What is your work style?
14. How do you work with others?
15. Are you a leader or a follower?
16. Direct Practice Question: What is your practice framework? What is your clinical style?
17. Administration and Planning: What type of research skills / computer skills do you have? What specific policy issues are you interested in?
18. What is your ideal position and career path?
19. Is there anything you would like to say to close the interview?
20. Do you have any questions? (*YES!* You should always have questions!)

**Sample Questions for you to ask an interviewer:**

1. What do you like best about working at this agency?
2. How often, and by whom will I be supervised?
3. Are there opportunities for professional development within and beyond the agency itself?
4. What do you think would be the most challenging experiences for a social work intern in your agency?
5. What do you think would be the most rewarding experiences for a social work intern in your agency?
6. How are expectations for students different from those for agency staff?
7. What are the agency's service delivery strengths and weaknesses?
8. To what extent do students have opportunity to offer input into administration and planning?
9. What can I count on from the agency to assist me in my professional development?
10. What is the typical career path of social workers within this field/agency?
11. To what extent will I have the opportunity to network with other agencies, or other professionals in the field?
12. How would you describe the organizational culture of this agency?

**A**CTIVE **L**ANGUAGE **V**ERBS

*These verbs can help you craft an empowered, specific resume with a spring in its step.*

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| Accomplished | Achieved | Acted |
| Acquired | Adapted | Adopted |
| Adjusted | Administered | Advertised |
| Advised | Analyzed | Approved |
| Arbitrated | Arranged | Assembled |
| Assisted | Audited | Authorized |
| Balanced | Budgeted | Built |
| Calculated | Changed | Charted |
| Checked | Classified | Coached |
| Collected | Communicated | Compiled |
| Completed | Composed | Computed |
| Conceived | Conducted | Connected |
| Consolidated | Constructed | Conserved |
| Controlled | Coordinated | Counseled |
| Created | Defined | Delivered |
| Designed | Detected | Determined |
| Developed | Devised | Diagnosed |
| Directed | Discovered | Dispensed |
| Displayed | Distributed | Documented |
| Drafted | Edited | Educated |
| Eliminated | Enforced | Engineered |
| Enlarged | Established | Estimated |
| Evaluated | Examined | Expanded |
| Experimented | Extended | Facilitated |
| Financed | Forecasted | Formed |
| Formulated | Founded | Generated |
| Governed | Guided | Headed |
| Helped | Hired | Identified |
| Illustrated | Implemented | Improved |
| Improvised | Increased | Influenced |
| Informed | Initiated | Innovated |
| Inspected | Installed | Instituted |
| Instructed | Integrated | Interpreted |
| Interviewed | Invented | Inventoried |
| Investigated | Issued | Judged |
| Lectured | Led | Maintained |
| Managed | Manufactured | Marketed |
| Mediated | Mentored | Merchandised |
| Modeled | Obtained | Offered |
| Operated | Ordered | Organized |
| Originated | Performed | Persuaded |
| Planned | Presided | Prepared |
| Produced | Projected | Promoted |
| Provided | Publicized | Purchased |
| Realized | Received | Reconciled |
| Recommended | Recorded | Recruited |
| Rectified | Reduced | Referred |
| Regulated | Rehabilitated | Reorganized |
| Reported | Represented | Researched |
| Resolved | Resorted | Restructured |
| Reviewed | Revised | Routed |
| Scheduled | Screened | Secured |
| Selected | Served | Serviced |
| Shaped | Solved | Sorted |
| Structured | Summarized | Supervised |
| Supplied | Synthesized | Systematized |
| Tailored | Taught | Tested |
| Trained | Transcribed | Translated |
| Tutored | Unified | United |
| Upgraded | Utilized | Wrote |