

Applicant Tracking Systems

Quick Tips

Applicant Tracking System

- An applicant tracking system (ATS) is a human resources software that allows employers to organize large numbers of resumes.
- The tracking system will automatically compare your resume to the job description and rank it.
- Recruiters can focus squarely on candidates the ATS has identified as a great match.

Content:

- Tailor your resume for each position for which you are applying.
- Pull keywords/exact phrases from the job description and include them in your resume and online application.
- Uploading the skills section of a job description/job posting to a word cloud generator, such as EdWordle (edwordle.net) may help you identify important words/skills that the ATS is looking for in your resume.
- Concentrate on matching your hard skills with those found in the job description and include in your resume.
- Only abbreviate terms (i.e. B.S. degree) if it is also abbreviated in a job description.
- Use common names for your section headers (Education, Work Experience, Skills).
- If using a Summary Statement/Objective, include keywords from job description.

Formatting:

- Use simple and chronological formatting.
- Avoid headers, footers, tables, templates, borders, lines, and symbols (bullet points are fine).
- Use a universally basic font (size 10 to 12) throughout your resume, such as Arial, Times New Roman or Helvetica in black print only.
- Use .5" - 1" margins, left aligned.
- Write out acronyms.
- Do not include a photo.
- Use spelling, numbers, and abbreviations correctly. Make sure you match the spelling of a word to how it is spelled in the job description.
- Write out months and years so it's readable by ATS systems. Always use a 4 digit year (2022) and either a 2 digit month (01), or write out the month, do not abbreviate (January).
- Submit your resume as a Word document or PDF.

Extra Tips

Complete all fields in an online application, even those that are not required. Recruiters may use those fields as filters and if left blank, your application might not make it through the system.

ATS are starting to sync with a candidate's social media presence, so build yours and make sure it's professional. It's easy to get caught up in the technical aspects of writing your resume, but don't forget your human readers! Even if your resume sails through the ATS without a hitch, you still need to impress the human readers waiting on the other side. So make sure your text flows well, and don't cut corners.

