

ATS Resume Checklist

Before You Apply: Is Your Resume ATS-Ready?

Most employers use Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS) to organize and screen applications before a recruiter ever sees them. Use this checklist to make sure your resume is compatible with modern hiring systems and easy for hiring managers to read.

Contact Information

- ☐ Full name is clearly displayed
- ☐ Professional email address
- ☐ Current phone number
- ☐ LinkedIn profile (optional but recommended)
- ☐ City and State listed (full address not required)

Resume Formatting

- ☐ Standard font (Calibri, Aptos, Arial, Cambria, or Times New Roman)
- ☐ Font size between 10–12 pt
- ☐ Clear section headings
- ☐ Consistent spacing and alignment
- ☐ Reverse chronological work history
- ☐ One to two pages (unless a federal resume or CV)
- ☐ Saved in the format requested by the employer (PDF or Word)

ATS Compatibility

- ☐ No tables
- ☐ No text boxes
- ☐ No headers or footers containing important information
- ☐ No graphics or charts
- ☐ No icons or symbols that replace text
- ☐ No excessive colors or decorative formatting

Keywords

- ☐ Resume has been tailored for the specific position
- ☐ Important skills from the posting are naturally incorporated
- ☐ Industry-specific terminology is included
- ☐ Job titles accurately reflect your experience
- ☐ Keywords are used naturally—not stuffed repeatedly

Professional Summary

- ☐ Clearly explains your value
- ☐ Highlights years of experience (when appropriate)
- ☐ Includes your primary expertise
- ☐ Aligns with the target position

Work Experience

- ☐ Every position includes employer, title, and dates
- ☐ Bullet points begin with strong action verbs
- ☐ Accomplishments are emphasized over responsibilities
- ☐ Accomplishments are supported with measurable results whenever possible
- ☐ Experience is relevant to the position you're applying for

Education & Certifications

- ☐ Education is listed consistently
- ☐ Relevant certifications are included
- ☐ Professional licenses are current

Final Review

- ☐ No spelling or grammar errors
- ☐ Consistent punctuation throughout
- ☐ Consistent date formatting
- ☐ Contact information is accurate
- ☐ File name is professional

Quick ATS Myth Check

Myth	Reality
Fancy templates always perform better.	Clean, organized formatting is typically more ATS-friendly and easier for recruiters to review.
You need to include every keyword from the job posting.	Focus on incorporating relevant skills and terminology honestly and naturally.
ATS automatically rejects resumes.	Most ATS platforms organize and rank applications, but hiring decisions are still made by people.

Rockstar Pro Tip

Your resume shouldn't just pass an ATS—it should impress the recruiter who reads it next. The best resumes balance ATS compatibility with compelling, achievement-focused content that clearly demonstrates your value.

Resume Readiness Score

Give yourself 1 point for every completed item.

- 35–40: Excellent! Your resume is likely well prepared for most applications.
 - 28–34: Strong foundation but review the unchecked items before applying.
 - 20–27: Your resume could benefit from additional optimization.
 - Below 20: Consider revising your resume before submitting applications to improve your chances.
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Need personalized guidance?

Every career path is different. If you'd like one-on-one support with your resume, LinkedIn profile, or job search strategy, schedule a consultation and let's build a plan that's tailored to your goals.