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Resume education in progress

Are you unsure about how to list your in-progress education on your resume? Many people are, including current students, students taking online classes, and people taking a break from their degree programs. Is it acceptable to include unfinished degrees on a resume? ZipJob's career experts agree that education in progress should usually be included on a resume. A degree in progress is still important to employers, as well as a degree that was started and holds relevance to a position. However, it needs to be included in an honest way so it's an accurate reflection of your learning and accomplishments. If you're currently pursuing a degree, here is how you can list education in progress on your resume - plus some examples for you to use as templates on your own resume.

KEY TAKEAWAY: Are you working on a degree and want to tell prospective employers about your efforts? These tips can help you to list your in-progress education on your resume. How to list education in progress on a resume

There are two things you need to learn if you want to know how to list education in progress on your resume. The first is how to provide that information in a way that clearly conveys your education status to an employer. The second is where to place that information in the body of your resume. With respect to the how, there are a few different ways to convey these details. There are only a couple of basic rules to follow when you list these education details: Be as clear as possible. You don't want to give the employer the wrong impression, after all. If you have completed one degree and are pursuing advanced education, be sure to clearly state that fact. If your degree is not yet complete, be clear about that as well. Be honest. If you are in the process of withdrawing from school, don't list that educational program. Don't try to enhance your education section in any way. Just state the facts in an honest way. Feel free to include in-progress university degrees, as well as online degrees that you may be pursuing. Both are popular in 2023/2024.

Resume degree in progress examples

When you include details indicating that you're currently pursuing a degree on your resume, it's important to provide clarity. The last thing you want is to inadvertently leave the impression that you're trying to pretend like you've completed the degree. And while it might be tempting to just note that the degree is still a work-in-progress, we believe that you should be even more specific. The best way to do that is to include the anticipated graduation date. Now, if you're like many students, you may not be entirely sure that you'll complete your degree by a set date. However, that shouldn't stop you from providing an anticipated date of completion. In fact, it's essential that you provide this information so that employers know that you're serious about your studies. This is especially true in cases where the job you're seeking requires that degree. Fortunately, it's a relatively easy task to accomplish. We wrote a good post here on how to include an MBA on a resume. For example, check out this listing from a sample resume with a master's degree in progress: Master of Business Administration (MBA), Human Resources Program, Dynamic University, Anytown, AnyState. Expected completion 2025.

If you're closer to graduation and are more certain about the date, you can use something like this: Graduate Studies, Computer Engineering, XYZ University, MyCity, MyState, Graduation Date: Spring, 2024.

What if I don't expect to finish the degree? If you are taking a break from your education (or a permanent hiatus) you need to consider whether or not the coursework you did complete is relevant. Ask yourself: Is this degree related to the job I'm applying for? Is this degree more relevant to the job than my other relevant experience including jobs, volunteer work, or certifications? Is this in-progress degree recent enough? (Can I still remember what I learned? Has a lot changed in the industry since I learned it?) Is having a degree required for this job? While you should never lie about having a degree you don't have, including any progress made toward a required degree may help you reach the interview stage. The trick is you have to be qualified for the job in every other aspect. If you don't have an MBA, but you do have 10+ years in the business field, you may still have a shot at landing the interview. To accurately represent this on your resume, don't include a prospective graduation date. Instead, try including the number of credits and the years you attended.

EDUCATION University of California, Riverside (2019 to 2021) | Riverside, CA

36 units toward a Bachelor of Arts in Media and Cultural Studies

EXPERT TIP: View 200+ more professional resume samples for all industries, along with a guide to writing resumes from our career experts. Should I include other information about my degree? You may want to consider whether you should list relevant coursework and major projects on your resume. In general, work experience is more compelling than education, but either way, adding classes that you've taken or capstone-type projects can elevate your resume with more relevant keywords.

Relevant coursework Adding relevant coursework to the education section of your resume can be a great idea, especially if you lack the professional experience needed to set you apart from other job seekers. The great thing about adding coursework is that you can include it whether you've finished your degree or not. Here's what it would look like: EDUCATION Bachelor of Arts in Media and Cultural Studies | University of Chicago (GPA: 3.89)

Relevant Coursework: Media Technology, Games Culture, Intercultural Communication, Web Design, Advanced Video Production, Multimedia Performance, and Strategic Social Media

Adding coursework isn't a place to dump every class you took pursuing your degree. Rather, it's a place to inject relevant keywords into your resume. So, if the job description calls for someone with experience in video production and you haven't had a job that allowed you access to that but you did take a class in college, then you can add it to your Education section. Related read: Relevant Coursework on a Resume: Good or Bad? Capstone or other major projects

Similar to adding coursework, you can talk about projects you've worked on. Remember that relevancy is critical. You should always be thinking about how your experience and education relate to what the prospective employer is looking for in a new hire. If you need to add something else on your resume that helps you demonstrate skills or knowledge, a project from school can be just the ticket. Write the project details in your Education section in the same way you'd write a job role - meaning, use bullet points to call attention to things you achieved as you worked on the project. Here's what that looks like: EDUCATION Bachelor of Arts in Media and Cultural Studies | University of Chicago (GPA: 3.89)

Notable project: Project title

Describe the project and goals along with how many team members were involved

Talk about what you did - your role - to achieve the project goals

Mention the skills you gained - "Honed skills in [skill 1], [skill 2], and [skill 3]"

If you won an award or earned some recognition for a project well done, write about it

Where to place education in progress on your resume

The second issue you need to address is placement. Where should you place these details when you're trying to figure out how to list education in progress on a resume? There are two main possibilities, depending upon whether the degree is needed for the job you're seeking. If the job requirements include the degree that you're pursuing, then you should try to emphasize that information in your resume. Position it near the beginning of your resume, after the summary section. That way, the employer will see that you're close to completing that requirement before he or she delves any further into the document. This placement helps showcase your interest and suitability right away. On the other hand, you should place this detail later in the resume if the degree isn't needed for the position. In that instance, you can put your work history and skills higher up in the resume and leave your education for the end. Tie it all together in your cover letter. Don't forget about the power of your cover letter. Since your cover letter is meant to complement your resume, a degree in progress could give you another opportunity to sell the point that you are qualified for the role. Talking about education in progress or unfinished education in your cover letter can also allow you to explain any gaps on your resume that are related to pursuing education. Gaps can happen if you decide to go to school, and then change your mind. If you didn't work while you were in school, then you'll have a gap. It's not something to fret about, gaps happen all the time. You just have to be ready to explain why it exists and being able to tell a story about how you were actively working to improve your qualifications and skills can go a long way in showing future employers your dedication to continuous improvement. As always, whether you bring up unfinished education in your cover letter depends on whether it's relevant to the job you're applying to. If it doesn't add value to your job application, then leave it off. Here are some example statements you can use when mentioning a resume degree in progress on your cover letter: I am currently pursuing a degree in [field or industry] to enhance my skills in [skill 1], [skill 2], and [skill 3]. While my education journey is still ongoing, I'm excited to apply the knowledge I've gained to the [position name] role. I am actively working toward completing my [degree name] to meet the educational requirements for this position.

A final note: grade point average

We should also address another common question that we encounter: do you need to include your grade point average? There are different schools of thought on this, so it's really up to you. As a rule, however, most experts agree that it's generally unwise to include anything less than the best GPAs. That typically means leaving it out unless it's at least 3.5. In most instances, however, you won't need to include that detail unless the job description requires a certain grade point average or you're seeking a job at a major firm. For your resume, a degree in progress is one more tool for success! As you can see, it is not difficult to enhance your resume with a degree in progress. Yes, you need to know the right format to use, and where to list that information. Still, it is a relatively simple thing to handle if you stick to the basic principles we've outlined here. So, be sure to include those educational details, to showcase your developing skills and help you stand out from the crowd! Recommended reading: 7 Free Certifications To Enhance Your ResumeHow to List Online Courses on a Resume (Examples and Tips) 200+ Resume Examples for Every Job & Industry