

What is an Applicant Tracking System?

An **Application Tracking System (ATS)** is an all-in-one human resources software used by employers to automate the hiring process by filtering hundreds of applicants by collecting, organizing, and sorting applicants. In fact, 98.2% (491) of Fortune 500 companies use ATS according to Jobscan. Overall, approximately 66% of large companies and 35% of small organizations utilize ATS software when hiring.

What does an ATS system do?

- Stores job candidate information like resumes, cover letters, references, and other recruitment and hiring data that HR teams can easily access and organize.
- Tracks job candidates and their application status throughout the hiring pipeline.
- Weeds out unqualified candidates and recommends the best fit for a position based on the parameters set by HR. Only those on the shortlist are moved to the next stage of the hiring process.
- Automates time-consuming administrative tasks such as manually screening applicants, reading resumes, scheduling interviews, and sending notifications and emails to job candidates and employees.

Why Do Employers Utilize ATS?

With the current job market and the majority of applications submitted online, especially through websites like Indeed, **ATS IS USED TO FILTER CANDIDATES**. Then, employers and recruiters spend time reviewing resumes from candidates who are fully qualified.

- ATS helps hiring professionals narrow their applicant pool.
- It helps eliminate unqualified candidates who may have submitted their resume using a “click to apply” tool without researching the position.

How Does ATS Impact My Application?

Once you submit your resume, the ATS is the gatekeeper that will either get your application to the hiring manager or eliminate you. Even if you are perfectly qualified for a job, your resume may be rejected if ATS cannot accurately parse your resume.

- For your resume to be seen by an employer **AND** to be ranked highly in the ATS, you need to make sure that your resume is ATS friendly.

Use this guide to maximize your chances of being interviewed by making your resume to ATS friendly.

Studies suggest up to 75% of resumes were never seen by employers due to automatic system (ATS) rejection.



Maximizing Your Resume for ATS:

Keywords

ATS rates a job applicant's resume based on how well their resume content matches the job description. **Take note of what keywords from the description you can use in your resume and adjust your impact statements when possible.** In addition, if a keyword has both long-form and acronym written in the job description, ensure both are mentioned in your resume. For example, "Search Engine Organization (SEO)."

Tables and Columns

Most ATS are programed to read top-to-bottom, left-to-right. Tables, shapes, and columns in a Word document are often difficult for ATS to parse, resulting in your resume being scanned out of order. Sometimes, a section could be completely skipped over by ATS if the system cannot parse the table. We recommend the following to ensure ATS can read your resume:

- Avoid columns, tables, and images/shapes in your document.
- Do not use any photos, images, shapes, icons, etc.
- Do not use Word's header and footer section. If you need more space at the top or bottom of the document, make margins narrower (make margins 0.5 in or larger).
- Avoid Word's built-in resume templates. Colors and images on these make them difficult for ATS to accurately scan.

Font

Some ATS automatically change non-traditional/unfamiliar fonts on your resume to standard fonts. To be safe, it's recommended to use standard fonts already available on your computer. Do not use any fonts you have downloaded.

ATS approved fonts: Arial, Calibri, Cambria, Georgia, Garamond, Helvetica, Palatino, Times New Roman, Tahoma, Verdana.

Bullet Points

You can use bullet points, but make sure to use the standard bullet points! In other words, avoid using the unusual bullet point shapes such as diamonds or checkboxes as those bullet points might get parsed incorrectly.

Date Formatting

Dates are mostly read in the format of 03/2022 or written out as March 2022. Ensure to include both month and year. Make sure dates are formatted consistently throughout the document.

File Formatting

PDF and .docx are well suited formats for most ATS. **However, many recruiters have reported a .docx is easier for ATS to parse.** Consider using a docx for submission if you know the company will use ATS.

No Extra Space Between Words

Ensure to triple check your spacing. ATS will have issues parsing words and potentially not recognize keywords if there is abnormal spacing.



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Images

Do not use any images on your resume, as ATS will be unable to parse them even if they are text-based. For example, if you were struggling with a formatting task and paste text in from another program, *do NOT* select the “paste as an image” option in Microsoft Word.

Do not include any emoticons, icons, or other images in your resume for electronic submission. This includes things such as the LinkedIn logo next to your LinkedIn URL. Do not include a photo of yourself.

Section Headings

Section headers like “Where I’ve Been” in place of “Work Experience” will confuse applicant tracking systems, causing them to organize information incorrectly. Use headers such as: “Work Experience”, “Professional Experience,” “Project Experience,” “Leadership Experience,” “Volunteer Experience,” “Education,” “Technical Skills,” etc.

Checking ATS compatibility:

Tools like Jobscan allow you to paste the text of your resume and a job description and see how well ATS can read your resume and how well it matches the job description. With the free version of Jobscan, you can still get a great deal of useful information and 5 resume scans. Go to [Jobscan.co](https://www.jobscan.co) and create an account to continue.

See Jobscan report examples on the following pages.

Additional Resources:

- [ATS-Friendly Professional Resume Templates](#)
- [The Muse Guide “Beat the Robots: How to Get Your Resume Past the System and Into Human Hands.”](#)

Check if your resume is ATS friendly with the following free ATS scanning programs:

- [TopResume](#)
- [JobScan](#)
- [ZipJob](#)
- [Resume Worded](#)

Sources used for this guide:

- <https://www.jobscan.co/blog/20-ats-friendly-resume-templates/>
- <https://www.jobscan.co/blog/ats-formatting-mistakes/>
- <https://www.jobscan.co/blog/taleo-popular-ats-ranks-job-applications/>
- <https://www.jobscan.co/blog/8-things-you-need-to-know-about-applicant-tracking-systems/>



Example: Accounting Student Resume for a potential accounting internship.

Resume scanned:

Your Name

Kent, Ohio 44242 • 330-555-5555 • sresume@kent.edu • www.linkedin.com/in/name

OBJECTIVE

Seeking an accounting internship with ABC Company in Spring 2020 to utilize my analytical and attention to detail skills.

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Business Administration
Kent State University
Major: Accounting
150 hours will be completed by May 2022

Expected Graduation: **May 2022**
Kent, Ohio
GPA: 3.6

International Experience in Accounting, England, France, Scotland Summer 2020

Kent State Study Abroad Student

- Enhanced ability to adapt quickly to diverse environments while traveling to 10 different cities, evaluating differences in cultural norms and business practices on a global scale.
- Analyzed the impact of technology and trade on international markets through experiences at the US Embassy and the Chamber of Commerce.

RELEVANT COURSEWORK

Intro to Financial Accounting, Intermediate Accounting 1, Intro to Managerial Accounting, Cost Accounting

TECHNICAL SKILLS

Microsoft Office: Word, PowerPoint, and basic Excel

ACCOUNTING EXPERIENCE

Accounting Firm, Cleveland, Ohio
Tax Intern

January 2020 – May 2020

- Exhibited attention to detail while preparing approximately 40 tax returns per week, including, 1040, 1041, and 1120 documents assigned by the manager and senior accountant.
- Provided support to 3 partners by analyzing financial documents and creating Excel spreadsheets.
- Integrated strength in problem solving skills to resolve issues in a quick and efficient manner.

WORK EXPERIENCE

Kent State University, Kent, Ohio
Resident Advisor

August 2018 – Present

- Demonstrate effective time management skills by creating and implementing 6 programs and activities each semester for 30 residents, while balancing full-time course load and extracurricular commitments.

LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

Harding Middle School, Columbus, Ohio
Baseball Assistant Coach

April 2018 – August 2019

- Incorporated patience when teaching team of 20 eighth grade athletes about teamwork, respect, and conflict-resolution.

CAMPUS INVOLVEMENT

Member, Beta Alpha Psi
Member, Financial Management Association

August 2019 – Present
August 2019 – Present

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

Relay for Life, Kent State University
Donation Processor, Greater Cleveland Food Bank

July 2020
December 2019 – February 2020

HONORS

Summit County Alumni Association Scholarship
Dean's List

Spring 2018 – Present
Spring 2018 – Spring 2021



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Job Description:

We are looking for a driven Accounting Intern with a basic understanding of GAAP and financial principles and terms who is ready for an immersive, real-world experience. Under the supervision of our staff, the Accounting Intern can expect to participate in the preparation of journal entries and financial reports, analyze actual financial data, learn more about bookkeeping software, and assist with other accounting activities. You should be a motivated team player who can maintain efficiency and accuracy when multitasking.

To be a strong candidate for an Accounting Internship, you should possess an understanding of accounting and financial principles and a positive attitude. You should be collaborative, trustworthy, receptive to feedback, and eager to learn.

Accounting Intern Responsibilities:

- Shadowing members of the Accounting department as they perform their duties.
- Assisting with research, filing, data entry, and recording and maintaining accurate and complete financial records.
- Preparing financial reports, such as balance sheets and income statements, invoices, and other documents.
- Working with bookkeeping software.
- Handling sensitive or confidential information with honesty and integrity.
- Learning how to work as part of the Accounting team to compile and analyze data, track information, and support the company or clients.
- Taking on additional tasks or projects to learn more about accounting and office operations.
- Accounting Intern Requirements:
- Must be a recent graduate or actively working towards a Bachelor's or Masters in Accounting.
- Satisfactory completion of introductory accounting courses and a basic understanding of accounting and financial principles.
- Some companies may require a GPA of 3.0 or higher.
- Aptitude for math, proficiency with computers.
- Strong verbal and written communication skills.
- High level of efficiency, accuracy, and responsibility.
- Motivation and strong desire to take on new challenges and learn as much as possible.

Please submit a resume, cover letter, and contact information for three references. Applications are accepted on a continuous basis, but preference will be given to those who apply prior to October 30th.



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Jobscan report:

ATS tip	1	✗	Adding this job's company name and web address can help us provide you ATS-specific tips. Add missing scan information
Contact info	2	✓	You provided your phone number.
		✓	You provided your email.
		✓	You provided your physical address.
Job title match	2	✓	The job title Accounting Internship, from the job description is also found in your resume. We recommend this to be the case to ensure you're found when recruiters search by job title. Incorrect job title in the job description?
Education match	2	✓	This job requires or prefers a Bachelor's degree. A Bachelor's degree was found in your resume. Update required education level
Section headings	2	✓	We found the work experience section in your resume.
		✗	Objectives are not necessary in today's job market. Use a brief summary instead.
		✓	We found the education section in your resume.
Date formatting	2	✗	ATS and recruiters prefer specific date formatting for your work experience. Please use the following formats: "MM/YY or MM/YYYY or Month YYYY" (e.g. 03/19, 03/2019, Mar 2019 or March 2019). We suggest updating these dates: View Dates

Skill	Variations	Resume	Job Description
financial principles		✗	3
bookkeeping software		✗	2
preparing financial reports		✗	1

Recruiter tips

IMPORTANT

Word count	1	✓	There are 290 words in your resume, which is under the suggested 1000 word count for relevance and ease of reading reasons.
Measurable results	1	✓	There are five or more mentions of measurable results in your resume. Keep it up - employers like to see the impact and results that you had on the job. View Measurable Results
Job level match	1	✓	You are applying to a(n) junior level role. Given your 13 years of experience, this role is a great fit for your experience.
Words to avoid	1	✓	The tone of your resume is generally positive and no common cliches and buzzwords were found. Good job!

From this report, we know it would be helpful to consider reframing the objective statement into a professional summary. We also know how to reformat dates and increase the number of keywords from the job description. But we can see that the resume is easily readable, so we're on the right track!



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