

# Creating a Career Objective

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## Objectives

1. To learn the purpose of a career objective.
2. To understand the parts of a career objective.
3. To write a career objective that is not too broad or too narrow.

## Introduction

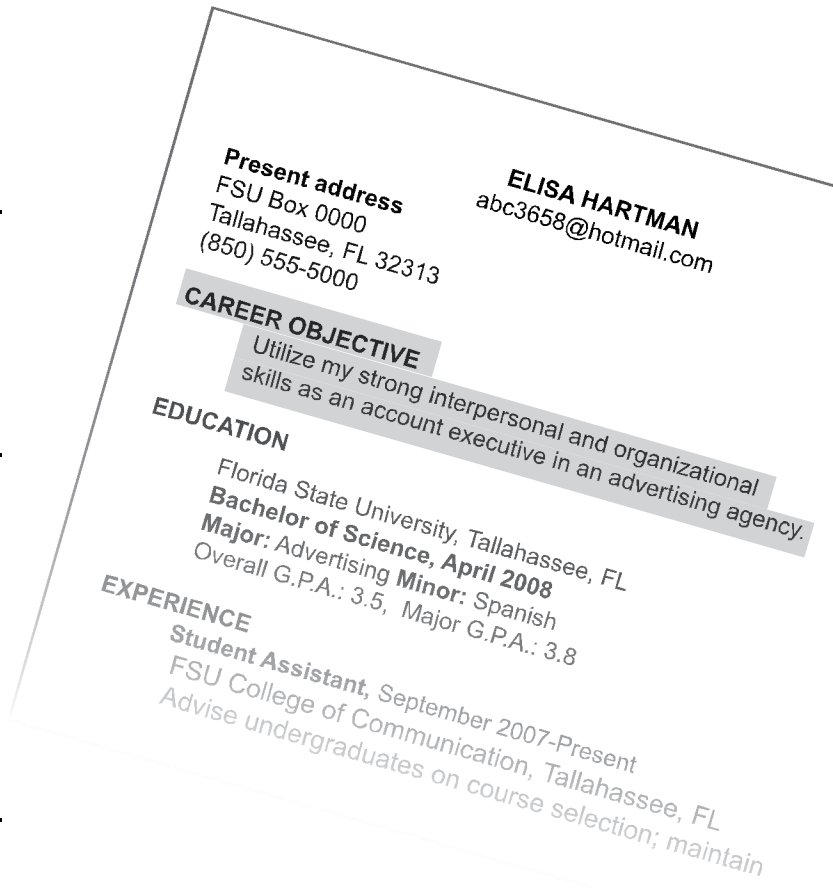
A job campaign consists of many tasks: writing a resume, finding potential employers, reviewing job openings, creating application letters, networking, interviewing, receiving rejections, negotiating job offers, and making many decisions. The best place to start is with a goal or an objective. It may be helpful to ask "What do I want to do?" and "Where do I want to be?"

## What is a Career Objective?

Your career objective is a personal statement defining the specifics you wish to attain through work.

1. It's **personal**: Others may share similar goals, but your objective should state your goals in terms that you are comfortable with.
2. It's a **commitment**: Stating a goal identifies who you are and what you want to achieve.
3. It's **action-oriented**: You take control of your life and communicate to an employer what you can do in action terms.
4. It's **directional**: Focus on your future to identify steps to take and information to seek. Your focus can be short- or long-term. You will be better equipped to evaluate potential work situations after examining your future goals.
5. It's **specific**: Clearly identify facts about a work situation. Broad terms like "successful" or "challenging" may mean something to you, but convey no facts to an employer.

You may also choose to include your objective as part of your cover letter instead of on your resume. Regardless, a clear and focused objective helps you target your job search and communicate more effectively with potential employers.



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## What Do I Include in a Career Objective?

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Deciding what to include in a career objective can be difficult. The following pages specify ten elements you can include in your objective. Remember, the elements you choose should align with your personal situation.

### 1. Career Field

Career fields are general areas of work which include many different job titles that require similar kinds of work activities.

You may be considering several different job titles within a career field. Identifying the career field category allows you to specify a broad area you are interested in without limiting yourself to specific titles. While you may be interested in more than one career field, for purposes of the career objective, it is better to limit yourself to one.

Examples:

**"To work in the *health field* as an administrator in a service delivery unit."**

**"To do research within the *field of law*."**

### 2. Position Title

Position title, occupational title, or job title is the name of a specific position one holds. While some organizations may have their own reference names, most position titles are generic and generalizable to many organizations.

Listing a position title on your career objective is appropriate if you know you will be applying for a specific position either in many different organizations or one targeted organization.

Examples:

**"To obtain a position of *accountant* with a public accounting firm and eventually become a partner."**

**"To act as a *community organizer* where I can use my human relations, administrative, and research skills."**

### 3. Organizational Category

Organizational category refers to settings in which you might like to work. In the broadest sense, organizations are categorized as either service-producing or goods-producing. More specifically, organizations are categorized by industry groups. One or more of these groups may appeal to you.

Identifying a category or industry group helps you identify specific employers within that group. In your objective, you narrow your focus and demonstrate interest in a specific setting without naming individual employers.

Examples:

**"To work within the *telecommunications industry* as a technical advisor."**

**"To secure a position as an editor for a mid-size *publishing firm*."**

### 4. Functional Area

Functional area refers to the structure of an organization. Most organizations are differentiated into various departments, each responsible for completion of specific tasks or functions. The larger the organization, the more differentiated it usually is, that is, the more specific the functions. Smaller organizations may have the same department handling several functions.

Identifying a functional area in a career objective specifies which part of the organization would be of interest to you without narrowing yourself to a specific industry group or organizational category.

Examples:

**"To work in the *government relations function* within a Fortune 500 organization."**

**"To obtain a management trainee position within the *quality control unit* of a production department."**

## 5. Skills

Skills are special talents, functions, (General Skills) or tasks (Specific Skills) that you have learned to do well. They are behaviors you exhibit and are most likely developed through academic, work, and leisure experiences. Some of these same skills might be used in one occupation or transferred to several different occupations (i.e., transferable skills).

Skills involve knowledge and physical behaviors allowing you to not be limited to a specific career field or organizational category. Most jobs require a combination of skills. Identifying your combination lets the employer know where you might fit into the organization.

### 5a. General skills

General skills are broad areas which encompass related specific skills. Identifying general skills in an objective identifies the combination of skill areas you prefer to use in your work.

Examples:

***“To use my scientific and human relations skills as a Nursing Supervisor.***

***“To work for a government agency using my management and communication skills.”***

General skill areas you may want to use include:

<b>administrative</b>	<b>communications</b>	<b>mathematical</b>
<b>artistic</b>	<b>creative</b>	<b>mechanical</b>
<b>athletic</b>	<b>human relations</b>	<b>scientific</b>
<b>clerical</b>	<b>management</b>	<b>technical</b>

### 5b. Specific Skills

Specific skills are specific actions or behaviors used to perform tasks. Identifying specific skills in your career objective allows you to highlight your strengths or specializations within a general skill area.

Examples:

***“To use my artistic skills especially doing layout, graphic design, and lettering for an advertising firm.”***

***“To work for a rehabilitation agency and use my group and individual counseling skills.”***

View the included list to find skills that are commonly used in career objectives. You may also want to consider your own specific skills in order to identify skills you wish to use in your objective.

## What Skills are Commonly Used in Creating Career Objectives?

account	draw	persuade
act	edit	photograph
administer	engineer	plan
advertise	entertain	play
advise	establish	predict
analyze	evaluate	prepare
appraise	exercise	present
arrange	exhibit	produce
assemble	experiment	program
assist	facilitate	promote
audit	formulate	propose
budget	furnish	provide
build	guide	publish
calculate	hire	purchase
catalogue	implement	qualify
chart	improve	raise
clarify	initiate	read
collect	influence	recommend
communicate	inspect	recruit
compete	install	repair
complete	instruct	report
compile	interpret	research
compose	interview	schedule
conduct	investigate	select
control	judge	sell
coordinate	landscape	serve
correct	lead	solve
counsel	make	staff
create	manage	start
dance	market	supervise
delegate	meet	synthesize
demonstrate	mobilize	teach
decide	model	test
design	motivate	train
determine	negotiate	translate
develop	operate	travel
diagnose	order	tutor
direct	organize	type
document	originate	verify
draft	perform	write

## 6. Other Factors

There are other factors you can place in your career objective. These include any limits, conditions, or personal criteria which would affect your work situation and are important to identify.

By identifying other factors, you can further focus your goals and communicate them to employers. However, you may wish to limit the extent you focus on these types of factors in your career objective. Being too narrowly focused may cause you to overlook potentially satisfying employment options.

Examples:

**“To work outdoors in a supervisory capacity for the United States Forest Service.”**

**“To obtain a secondary teaching position in the south-east United States.”**

**“To work in law enforcement and pursue additional specialized training in forensics.”**

Other factors regarding your own limits, conditions, or personal criteria for employment might include:

### 6a. Populations

Populations are the people you work with as you do your work. They could be your peer group at work (i.e., your colleagues). However, in a career objective, population usually refers to the clients or customers of your services or products.

Examples:

**“To work with elderly individuals in the field of recreational therapy.”**

**“To design programs for children with disabilities.”**

### 6b. Goals

*Short-term goals* are those goals you wish to achieve immediately. Identifying short-term goals helps you focus where to begin your professional career. Also, they help you identify next steps in your job search.

Examples:

**“To obtain an entry level position of Weather Observer.”**

*Long-term goals* are those goals you wish to achieve in 5 to 10 years. Having long-term goals can be beneficial to you in two main ways:

1. Many organizations have staffing plans regarding where they want their employees to be in the organization in the future. By having your plan, you and the employer can evaluate if there is a match with respect to where you may start, advance, and finish in a given time period.
2. Our society is constantly changing and likewise, jobs change. No doubt, as you're working, opportunities and problems will occur. Long-term goals give you a yardstick to evaluate the situation and make decisions.

Example:

**“To begin employment in a beverage management position which provides opportunities for advancement to a top, policy-making position in the organization.”**

## How Do I Choose Among the Elements?

As you review the information included in the *Career Objective Guide*, think about which elements you wish to include in your own career objective. Keep in mind, elements that may be useful in other job search activities such as interviewing or negotiating offers.

For your written career objective, choose at least one element but no more than three or your objective may be too lengthy. You may want to have different career objectives for different work situations or environments that you are considering.

## How Good is My Career Objective?

Career objectives can be:

- Personal
- Commitment-oriented
- Action-oriented
- Directional
- Specific

Brainstorm possible elements of your career objective. If you have difficulty writing your objective, drop-in to the Career Center and ask a career advisor for help getting your future career goals on paper.

