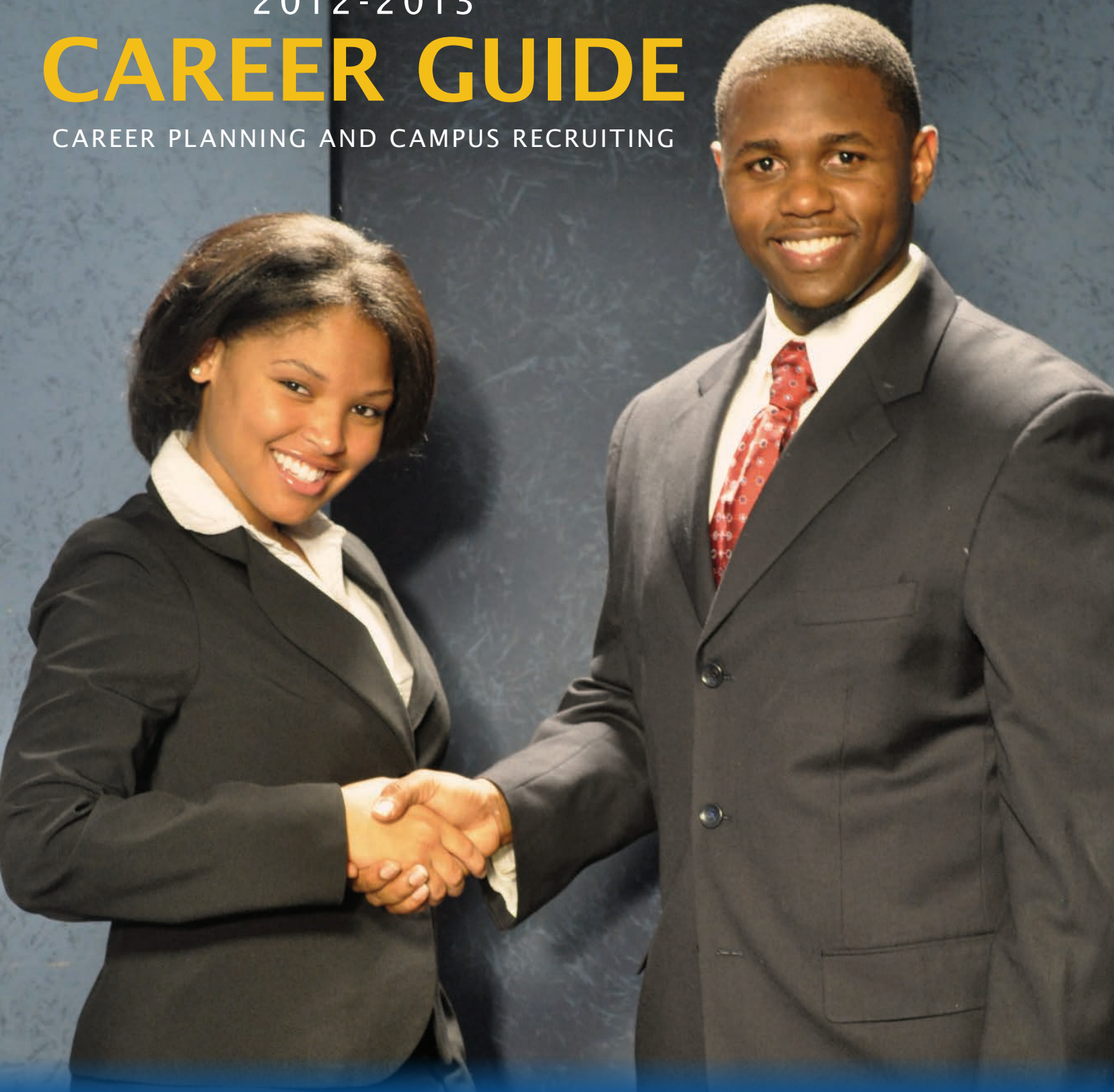


2012-2013

# CAREER GUIDE

CAREER PLANNING AND CAMPUS RECRUITING



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CAREER SERVICES  
P.O. BOX 10980  
BATON ROUGE, LA 70813  
[225] 771-2200  
FAX [225] 771-3272

Dear SU Jaguar:

The Office of Career Services hopes you will find this year's edition of the Southern University ***Career Guide*** a valuable resource. It will serve as your guide to using the Center most effectively in the year ahead. We hope that you will take the time to read it carefully and thoroughly.

The process of seeking employment is a serious one and requires students to register early with the Office of Career Services. (The interviewing season begins in September and ends in April.) Registering with Career Services makes it possible to better align full-time, co-op and summer employment opportunities between you and the many potential employers seeking your academic discipline and abilities. By participating in job fairs, seminars, employer information sessions, campus interviews, or career counseling sessions with our staff, you will begin to see the link between your classroom learning and the world of work.

Our staff is here to assist you in every way we can through a wide range of programs, services and resources, which are tailored to create the job search skills necessary to keep the SU Jags a "cut above the rest" in today's demanding search for rewarding employment.

Visit the Office of Career Services (T.H. Harris Hall, Suite 1100) soon and often. Become familiar with our homepage at [www.subr.edu/careerservices](http://www.subr.edu/careerservices) and register with our office. Remember, your career search can be made simpler and more rewarding if you regularly utilize the services provided by the office. Allow this academic year to launch the beginning of your future success. And above all, remember that we are here to serve you!

Sincerely,

Tamara Foster-Montgomery  
Director

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# CAREER GUIDE

2012-2013

## SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY AND A & M COLLEGE

OFFICE OF CAREER SERVICES

SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY  
T.H. HARRIS HALL, SUITE 1100  
E.C. HARRISON BOULEVARD  
BATON ROUGE, LA 70813

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(225) 771-2200

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(225) 771-3272

**Hours:**  
8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.  
Monday through Friday

**Staff:**  
Tamara Foster-Montgomery  
*Director*

LaTasha Gray  
*Career Counselor*

Karen Gamble  
*Administrative Coordinator*



T.H. HARRIS HALL

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# OFFICE OF CAREER SERVICES

## INTRODUCTION

The employment interview ranks among the most important undertakings in the life of a graduating senior or a student job-seeker. In many instances, the approximately 30 minutes spent with an interviewer can significantly affect the entire course of events in the life of a college student. In view of the above, the interview becomes a matter of increased importance.

There are several responsibilities placed upon the individual who is considering an interview appointment with any agency. One who is sincerely concerned about forming a good initial impression will be interested in ensuring the following: familiarity with the company or agency, promptness in reporting to the interview, proper grooming and poise. These responsibilities will be discussed in more detail later.

Although it is important that one interested in securing employment makes every effort to present a good impression, it is not necessary that he or she becomes so overwhelmed with interview preparation as to cause anxiety, frustration, calculated answers or nervousness. In general, all that is required is for one to learn what is expected of him or her in the job.

## MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Office of Career Services is to coordinate and provide those direct and supportive services required to effect the compatibility between knowledge acquired by our students and the employment needs of the public and private sector. As well as to aid students in developing, evaluating and effectively initiating and implementing career plan.

## PURPOSE OF THE OFFICE OF CAREER SERVICES

The Office of Career Services provides comprehensive career services to students (and alumni, when possible) to enhance their educational development. The Center assists students (and alumni, when possible):

1. In choosing their careers and college majors,
2. In obtaining appropriate work experience prior to graduation to enhance their chosen careers and majors,
3. In obtaining information and skills on how to seek employment and
4. In furthering their chosen careers by obtaining employment or continuing into graduate or professional school.

As a unit of the Division of Student Affairs, the Center's mission is in harmony with the Division's Mission. The Office of Career Services provides support and enhancement of formal educational experiences. As part of the larger community that is Southern University, the Center seeks to provide career services, which are not only comprehensive, but also preeminent in the state and region.

## COURSES OFFERED BY CAREER SERVICES

The Office of Career Services assists students and graduates in identifying their individual capabilities, interests, skills and acquired knowledge for meaningful vocational opportunities beginning with their freshman year. The office provides students, beginning at the sophomore year,

with opportunities for internships, cooperative (co-op) education jobs and summer employment. Students are permitted to work full-time and obtain course credit while on co-op assignments.

## Course Description Cooperative Education (COOP200, COOP300, COOP400)

The Cooperative Education courses (COOP200-01, COOP300-01, COOP400-01) are courses which a student may enroll in upon acceptance of an offer of employment for a co-op position which is directly related to their major. The student will alternate semesters of work with semester of study, or may engage in parallel employment of working a minimum of 20 hours while going to school. An evaluation of the student is done in the areas of (1) judgment (2) relations with others (3) ability to learn (4) attitude and application toward work (5) dependability (6) quality of work (7) punctuality and attendance; course work and the evaluation is graded by the instructor. The course provides for three academic credit hours and may be used to satisfy the elective curriculum requirement. Upon completion of the course the student is expected to have shown competence in time management, workplace communication, and an understanding of their major through reflection and debriefing conducted by the instructor.

## Cooperative Education COOP201—Professional Development

Learn how to chart your career through an investigation of careers, the world of work and the career planning process. Emphasis is placed upon assisting the student to clarify and formulate realistic career goals and an appropriate career plan and strategy to achieve those goals. Interesting professionals provide essential information on career development; writing winning resumes, entrepreneurship, investing, interviewing, developing a portfolio and a host of other career and life planning information.

## THE AIM OF RECRUITMENT

The primary purpose of any agency representative's visit to a college campus is to recruit the best individual possible for the agency he or she represents. All employers, civilian or governmental, are aware of the relationship of manpower to finished product. As such, agencies are willing to expend whatever is necessary, within sound economical boundaries, to attract good potential employees.

A recruiter's presence on a college campus is not a chance occurrence. Students should be aware of the amount of preparation that goes into a recruiter's visit. Some of the necessary preparations for the recruitment visit involve the following: a survey of the agency's manpower requirements, coordination with the various placement offices for recruiting visits and arrangements for transportation and lodging.

Organizations that depend on college campuses to fill their manpower needs are aware of the tremendous responsibilities placed on individual recruiters. The recruiter's objective must be twofold. He/she must select individuals who have the type of training and background that will provide the greatest value to his/her organization. At the same time, the recruiter must also be aware of the needs and interests of the potential employee. Failure to consider either of these objectives, in sufficient depth, may result in a loss to the potential employer and to his/her organization.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

The adjective “responsible” is defined by Webster as: “liable to be called upon to answer as the primary cause, motive, or agent; or able to answer for one’s conduct and obligation.” In view of the first portion of the definition, it is implied that individuals normally have certain motives or causes for their actions. Whether the actions are reflected as appropriate or inappropriate, they do affect the actor and other individuals involved. To ensure that students understand their obligations and conduct themselves in a manner that achieves the best possible results from any interaction, we have outlined some responsibilities required of the student.

### Responsibilities of the Student

1. Students interested in securing employment have the primary responsibility of registering with the Office of Career Services.
2. Students should exercise care in filling out the required information requested in preparation for interviews. All responses to items, e.g., current address, permanent address, e-mail address, telephone number and grade point average, must be accurate.
3. Students who complete user profiles on-line and plan to interview for employment are required to upload a neatly typed resume two days prior to their interview.
4. It is the responsibility of each student utilizing the services of the Center to have the Registrar’s Office provide the Center with a copy of his/her transcript.

5. Education majors should make every effort to ensure that additional forms necessary to complete a “placement packet” (e.g., evaluation sheets, letters of recommendation) are returned to the Center as soon as possible. (Education Majors ONLY.)
6. The absence of any information needed to complete the registration process may result in the suspension of services.
7. Prior to his/her first interview, the student should analyze his/her interests and abilities and carefully consider his/her career objective. He/she should read available literature and consult other sources for information about the employer. He/she should organize thoughts in order that he/she may intelligently ask and answer questions.
8. In his/her interview, the student should recognize that he/she is representing his/her school, as well as him/herself, and should be punctual and thoroughly businesslike in conduct.
9. The student should promptly acknowledge an invitation to visit an employer’s premises. He/she should accept invitations only when he/she is sincerely interested in exploring employment with that employer.
10. As soon as a student decides not to accept an offer, he/she should immediately notify the employer.
11. The student should not continue to present him/herself for interviews after he/she has accepted an employment offer.
12. When the student accepts an employment offer, he/she should do it in good faith and with the sincere intention of honoring his/her commitment.
13. The student should keep the Office of Career Services advised concerning employment negotiations.

Recruiters also have certain responsibilities to the college and its students.

### Responsibilities of the Recruiter

1. The number of interviewers brought on campus by an employer should be adequate to cover the prearranged schedule.
2. Recruiters will be permitted to interview only those students who have officially registered with the Office of Career Services and signed up on their Interview Schedule. All interviews will be scheduled and candidates seen in the Center. No recruiting will be allowed in departments, classrooms, hallways, etc., unless by special permission of the Director.
3. As soon as possible following an interview, the employer should communicate with the student and the Office of Career Services concerning the outcome of the interview.
4. The employer should give the student reasonable time to consider his/her offer.
5. The employer should accept the student’s decline of a job offer as a final decision.
6. Prior to or at the time of employment, the employer should clearly explain to the student all conditions pertaining to employment.

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- » Book Allowance
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- » Career Opportunities

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**QUESTIONS?**  
Contact: [smart@asee.org](mailto:smart@asee.org)

In accordance with Federal statutes and regulations, no person on the grounds of race, color, age, sex, national origin or disability shall be excluded from participating in, denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any program activity receiving financial assistance from the Department of Defense.

# INTERVIEWING

## PREPARATION FOR THE INTERVIEW

An analogy can be made between a prospective graduate and a product ready to be marketed. The student endeavors to prepare him/herself in a discipline, and at the end of four or five years, he/she is ready to put his/her theoretical knowledge to practice. The interview is where the candidate for employment comes to “sell” his/her service to the “market”—i.e., the prospective employer. If this is the case, isn't it conceivable that one would be interested in ensuring that every effort is made to create the impression that one's own potential service to the company is a mutual advantage for the candidate and the company?

The interview is crucial because it provides the candidate with only two alternatives—either to be received or rejected. Here are some suggestions to minimize the number of rejections:

1. Schedule an interview in the Office of Career Services at a time you know is convenient for you.
2. Write down the time and place and keep the information with you. Don't rely on your memory.
3. Get the full name of the company and its address.
4. Do some research on the company or agency whose representative is interviewing you. Find out what kind of agency or company it is. Try to obtain information on the company's line of products, its history, the size of the company and what prospects look like for the future.
5. Prepare to ask well-organized, pertinent questions.
6. Plan to arrive at least 15 minutes early for the interview. A few extra minutes will help take care of unexpected emergencies. Late arrival for a job interview is almost never excusable.
7. The importance of neatness and cleanliness scarcely need mention. It may be noted that young ladies should use cosmetics conservatively. Both men and women should pay careful attention to details such as neat hair styles and fingernails.

## ON-LINE REGISTRATION

To participate in On-campus Interviewing, the Resume Referral Service and the Employment Database, you must register with the Office of Career Services. The Center utilizes a comprehensive on-line system: JOBS4JAGS! It allows students 24-hour on-line access to job descriptions and recruiting information. The system provides an on-line resume submission, interview selection notification, and schedule sign-ups, which eliminates long lines waiting for the “sign-up” book and the need to stop at the career office to drop off your resume. Registered students and alumni have access to on-campus interview opportunities for full-time, co-op, internship, and summer employment as well as information on job opportunities nationwide and worldwide. We strongly recommend attending an orientation to better understand our process.

## HOW TO REGISTER

To register with the Office of Career Services, follow these directions:

1. Go to [www.subr.edu/careerservices](http://www.subr.edu/careerservices).
2. Click “JOBS4JAGS!” (to the right of the page).
3. Create user profile, preview, and submit.
4. Create your own username and password.
5. Upload your word-processed resume.

## *What's important to know about creating a JOBS4JAGS! user profile?*

Employers do not have access to your user profile. Your profile enables the JOBS4JAGS! system to screen whether or not you meet an employer's qualifications pertaining to degree level, graduation date, and visa/citizenship status.

Don't forget to update your profile each semester. The Career Center uses this information to contact you and forward appropriate updates and information to you.

## *How do I create My Resume?*

You will upload your word-processed resume (i.e., one created in Microsoft Word, etc.) into JOBS4JAGS! Follow the steps for uploading under “Resumes” on the JOBS4JAGS! student menu.

## THE SITE VISIT/INTERVIEW

An invitation to visit the plant site usually indicates that the recruiter was very impressed with the student during the 30-minute interview. Generally, the student will receive a letter of invitation asking for a specific date that is convenient to visit the plant's home base. You should ensure that the date you specify is a date that you are reasonably sure will not conflict with your other activities. On the other hand, do not set such an immediate date for the plant interview visit that the company has no time to plan and prepare for your visit. There will be people they specifically want you to see and laboratories, a pilot plant, or production facilities they may want you to visit.

Having acknowledged a plant interview visit and agreed upon a mutual date, you will probably find that the potential employer has already arranged sleeping accommodations and will give instructions for meeting you upon your arrival, or soon thereafter.

One of the purposes of the plant interview is to let other company officials interview you. In some instances, the interviewee may be requested to take a battery of psychological tests. Many companies are discontinuing the emphasis on pre-employment testing. The firms that do administer psychological tests use the results to determine post-employment success; to give you assistance in placement following your training; and for later promotional and advancement counseling.

A second purpose of the plant interview is to let you further evaluate the company and its location.

You should approach the plant interview in the same manner as the campus interview. However, you will have far more time and an opportunity to ask more specific questions concerning conditions of employment, salary, fringe benefits, job duties, housing and opportunities for advancement. Approach these opportunities with honesty, sincerity and enthusiasm.

Any company that invites you for a plant interview expects to pay all of your expenses, and you are expected to go coach class. Your judgment in handling expenses is one of the more objective factors whereby a company can evaluate you. All company officials know the general financial condition of most college students. As such, if you are invited to a plant site and you find that your financial conditions are not such that you would be able to incur the expenses without creating a hardship, do not hesitate to ask for an advance.

In passing, it is suggested that all students who are invited to make plant visits consult with the Career Services Director

prior to making travel arrangements and claiming reimbursement for expenses incurred during the visits. There are certain peculiar problems that arise concerning these matters that need special attention.

### ON-CAMPUS INTERVIEWING RULES AND REGULATIONS

1. All students are expected to report for interviews they have signed up for unless permission to be excused is granted by the Director.
2. Students must cancel their interview before 4:00 p.m. on the business day prior to their scheduled interview. Otherwise, it will be listed as a "no show."
3. Students should come in at least five minutes before the scheduled time for the interview.
4. Any student who comes in five minutes after the scheduled time of the interview risks having the interview canceled.
5. Students must not falsify information on their profile or resume. If false information is discovered, students will be blocked from all Career Center services.
6. Each student must sign up for **him/herself only**. He/she should not sign up for anyone else.
7. Students must update all registration information on-line (including addresses, grade point averages, and telephone numbers) each semester.
8. Students should give zip codes and area codes for both current and permanent addresses and telephone numbers on all registration information.
9. **All students must come appropriately dressed for interviews.** If assistance is needed in this matter, contact a Career Counselor.
10. Students should notify a Career Counselor of plant visits and/ or job acceptance.

### CONSENT TO RELEASE RECORDS

1. I grant the Southern University A&M College Office of Career Services permission to release my resume(s) submitted through the on-line registration process to prospective employers in printed and/or electronic format or via the Internet.
2. I certify that the information furnished to the Office of Career Services on my resume and in my user profile is correct. I understand that furnishing false information is a violation of student standards of conduct. If false information is discovered, I will be blocked from all Career Center services.

Notification of the false information will then be sent to all companies to whom the false information was sent.

3. I understand that demographic data on gender and ethnicity (race) collected in Web Registration is voluntary. I understand that leaving these fields blank will not affect my registration in the Southern University A&M College Office of Career Services.
4. I understand that the Office of Career Services requires my GPA to be included in the educational information data section and on my resume(s) submitted through the on-line registration process for on-campus interviewing, resume referral, and job vacancy database.

### RECOMMENDED RESUME FORMAT FOR GRADUATING SENIORS

**Jonelle C. Wilson**  
jcwilson@subr.edu

#### CURRENT ADDRESS

P.O. Box 10561  
Baton Rouge, LA 70813  
(225) 555-1234

#### PERMANENT ADDRESS

602 California Street  
Riverside, CA 92504  
(951) 555-4321

#### EDUCATION

Southern University and A&M College  
Baton Rouge, Louisiana  
Major: English Minor: Economics  
Anticipated Graduation Date: May 2013  
Cumulative GPA: 3.52

#### WORK EXPERIENCE

##### **Southern University and A&M College, Baton Rouge, LA - June 2012 to Present**

##### *Teaching Assistant*

- Prepare and present lesson plans for honors section of the freshmen business seminar course
- Grade exams and other assignments and provide feedback to students
- Assist students with questions about course assignments and adjustments to college

##### **American Red Cross, Memphis, TN - June 2011 to August 2011**

##### *Marketing & Communications Intern*

- Wrote press releases, designed and composed material for Central TN Chapter website
- Conducted a marketing and communications survey, assisted Director in tabulating and reporting results.
- Archived Red Cross historic materials and created visual display media for presentations and meetings

##### **The Atlantic Monthly, Atlanta, GA - June 2010 to August 2010**

##### *Editorial Intern*

- Read and evaluated all submissions to the magazine's web-fiction site
- Worked on magazine's online division researching back issues to feature "Flashbacks" related to current events

#### ACTIVITIES

- National English Literary Honor Society
- Vice President: Seven-Come-Eleven Investment
- Volunteer, Boys & Girls Club of America
- Debate Club
- Book and Bottle Literary Club

#### HONORS

- Louisiana Interstate Scholarship
- Dean's List 2009-2012
- Hubert H. Humphrey First Prize
- Louisiana Intercollegiate Debate

#### COMPUTER/TECHNICAL SKILLS

- Hardware: PC and Macintosh computers
- Software: Microsoft Office Suite, InDesign, Photoshop, Illustrator

#### INTERESTS

- Habitat for Humanity Volunteer
- Public Speaking and Debate
- Investments
- Writing
- Fitness Training



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF JOB SEARCH ETHICS

1. When I accept a job offer in good faith, I will:
  - a. Stop all other interviewing.
  - b. Notify, on a timely basis, all other employers that are actively recruiting me that I have accepted an employment offer.
  - c. Fulfill my commitments in the job offer I have accepted and not consider other offers of employment.
2. If I need to cancel a scheduled interview, I will do so as soon as possible. If I cancel a Career Center interview after 4:00 p.m. on the business day prior to the interview, the No Show and Late Cancellation Policy will be enforced. I will cancel interviews on-line or by contacting the Office of Career Services by telephone or in person. Cancellations by e-mail are not acceptable.
3. I will request reimbursement for only reasonable and legitimate expenses by employers in the recruiting process.

## NO-SHOW AND LATE CANCELLATION POLICY

When a student fails to keep an appointment for an employment interview, it is professionally unacceptable. It is expensive in terms of lost corporate time and is detrimental to other Southern students' ability to arrange employment interviews. When a student cancels an interview after 4:00 p.m. on the business day prior to the actual interview day or on the morning of a scheduled interview, the same detrimental effects occur. Therefore, **No Shows and Late Cancellations** will not be tolerated in the On-Campus Interview process.

The following procedures deal with **no-shows** and **late cancellations**:

1. Upon notification by a recruiter that a no-show has occurred, the student is immediately blocked from accessing the system. Your name will be blocked and you will be unable to complete future transactions or view past transactions.
2. If you cancel a scheduled interview on the day of the interview, it is treated as a no-show. Your name is blocked and you are unable to complete future transactions or view past transactions.
3. If you cancel an interview after 4:00 p.m. on the business day prior to the scheduled interview, it is considered a late cancellation. Your name is blocked and you are unable to complete future transactions or view past transactions.
4. A Career Center staff member will contact the student, notifying him/her of the block

placed on their name and the actions required to correct the situation. If the student does not respond to the Career Center within three working days, all future interviews scheduled for that student will be blocked until the situation is resolved.

## ACTION

**First Offense**—The student's name is blocked by the Career Center. The student must write a letter of apology to the interviewer with whom he/she has failed to keep an appointment. The student must bring the following items to the Career Center during office hours:

- a. An original letter; be sure to sign the letter.
- b. A stamped, addressed envelope to the employer.
- c. A photocopy of the letter for Career Center records.

## RECOMMENDED RESUME FORMAT FOR CO-OP STUDENT

**Bruce Gregory Robertson**  
bgrobert@subr.edu

### CURRENT ADDRESS

P.O. Box 10561  
Baton Rouge, LA 70813  
(225) 555-1234

### PERMANENT ADDRESS

1573 Bellemont Avenue  
Richardson, TX 75101  
(612) 555-4321

### EDUCATION

Southern University and A&M College  
Baton Rouge, Louisiana  
Major: English

Anticipated Graduation Date: May 2015  
Cumulative GPA: 3.85  
Minor: Economics

### RELEVANT COURSEWORK

Practical Writing and Voc. Building  
Grammar Review  
English Literature I & II  
Applied English Grammar  
American Literature I & II

English Romanticism  
Technical Writing  
Creative Writing  
World Literature  
Advanced Writing

### COMPUTER/TECHNICAL SKILLS

Hardware: PC and Macintosh computers  
Software: Microsoft Office Suite, InDesign, Photoshop, Illustrator

### WORK EXPERIENCE

#### XYZ Computer Corporation, Dallas, TX - June 2012 to August 2012

- Marketing & Communication Association*
- Developed and implemented a unit report database system
  - Assisted in managing quarterly and yearly revenue
  - Assisted and managed product launches
  - Co-managed internal website

#### Junior Achievement, ABC Elementary School, Richardson, TX - June 2011 to August 2011

- Assistant Instructor*
- Taught first and second graders concepts about money and finance
  - Assisted teacher with group activities

### ACTIVITIES

- National English Literary Honor Society
- Club Coach & Tutor, Richardson Boys Club
- Debate Club
- Book and Bottle Literary Club

### HONORS

- Louisiana Interstate Scholarship
- Academic Dean's List 2010-Present
- Louisiana Intercollegiate Debate
- Southern University Honors College, 2010-Present

### INTERESTS

- Habitat for Humanity Volunteer
- Public Speaking and Debate
- Writing
- Marathon Running

A Career Center staff member will approve the content of the letter and then mail it. After approval, the student's name is unblocked and he/she may resume on-campus interviewing activity.

**Subsequent Offense**—The student is barred from further privileges extended by the Career Center during the semester in which the offense occurred. Reinstatement for subsequent semesters is at the discretion of the Career Center staff.

**Appeal**—Any student who feels he/she has been incorrectly identified as a no-show or late cancellation may immediately request an individual review of the circumstances by the Career Center staff. Upon review of the circumstances, the staff reserves the right to modify or dismiss the disciplinary action.

## SOME POINTS TO REMEMBER FOR EFFECTIVE INTERVIEWING

### Analyze Strengths and Weaknesses

In preparing for interviews, start by doing some honest self-assessment. Analyze your strengths and weaknesses, your background, your academic performance, your vocational interests, and your personal aspirations and values. In other words, begin to formulate, in your own mind, not only what you would like to do but also what you feel you are best prepared to do.

### Read Employer Literature

Next, study your prospective employers. It is imperative that you have some knowledge about their policies, philosophies, products and services. Failure to do your homework before an interview can be the kiss of death. Nothing turns off recruiters faster.

### Dress in Good Taste

Although most employers are becoming more liberal in their standards of dress and appearance, let basic good taste be your guide. If a beard or long hair is going to jeopardize your chances for a job, that's your decision. With some employers, appearance could be the deciding factor. The question you have to ask yourself is, "How important is it?"

### Be Yourself

Your attitude is going to influence the interviewer's evaluation. Don't try to be something you aren't . . . just be yourself. Emphasize your strong points and remember that the recruiter is looking for inherent personal energy and enthusiasm. The interview is your opportunity to sell a product and that product is you!

### Dwell on the Positive

Always try to dwell on the positive. While past failures and shortcomings need not be volunteered, don't try to cover them up or sidestep them either. Should recruiters ask about them, try to explain the circumstances rather than give excuses or blame others. Remember, recruiters are human too and have probably made a few mistakes. You'll create a better impression by being honest and candid.

### Ask Questions—When Indicated

If appropriate, ask meaningful questions, particularly if you're not clear about the details of the job, the training program, or other job-related concerns. But, don't ask questions just because you think that's what is expected.

### Follow Up

Finally, follow up on the interviews. Provide whatever credentials, references, or transcripts are requested by the prospective employer as soon as possible. **Be sure to write down the name, title, and address of the recruiter.** You may want to consider a brief typed letter of appreciation for the interviewing opportunity.



Navarro, Foreign Service Officer

## I am advancing U.S. interests abroad.

Growing up in Valdosta, Georgia, my mother and grandfather, who both served in the military, encouraged the idea of public service; it was always a part of my life. I had dreams of becoming a cardiologist but didn't fare well majoring in biology. I decided to take an international relations class which is where I first learned about the U.S. Department of State. This inspired me to apply for an internship and I spent a summer working in the embassy in Fiji. After this experience, I decided to pursue a career as a Foreign Service Officer.

I entered the Foreign Service through the Pickering Fellowship program. Now, after seven months of intensive Spanish language training, I'm ready to work as a Consular Officer in Central America. I'm ready to contribute my skills, and learn new ones, as I represent my country overseas.

For anyone who wants an amazing public service career, where you get to explain U.S. foreign policy and experience other cultures, the Foreign Service is it.

For more information on how to begin your career with the U.S. Department of State, please visit us at [careers.state.gov/HBCU12](http://careers.state.gov/HBCU12)



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[careers.state.gov/HBCU12](http://careers.state.gov/HBCU12)

U.S. citizenship is required. An equal opportunity employer.

# THE TOP TEN PITFALLS IN RESUME WRITING

1. **Too long.** Most new graduates should restrict their resumes to one page. If you have trouble condensing, get help from a technical or business writer or a career center professional.
2. **Typographical, grammatical or spelling errors.** These errors suggest carelessness, poor education and/or lack of intelligence. Have at least two people proofread your resume. Don't rely on your computer's spell-checkers or grammar-checkers.
3. **Hard to read.** A poorly typed or copied resume looks unprofessional. Use a plain typeface, no smaller than a 12-point font. Asterisks, bullets, underlining, boldface type and italics should be used only to make the document easier to read, not fancier. Again, ask a professional's opinion.
4. **Too verbose.** Do not use complete sentences or paragraphs. Say as much as possible with as few words as possible. *A, an* and *the* can almost always be left out. Be careful in your use of jargon and avoid slang.
5. **Too sparse.** Give more than the bare essentials, especially when describing related work experience, skills, accomplishments, activities, interests and club memberships that will give employers important information. Including membership in the Society of Women Engineers, for example, would be helpful to employers who wish to hire more women, yet cannot ask for that information.
6. **Irrelevant information.** Customize each resume to each position you seek (when possible). Of course, include all education and work experience, but emphasize only relevant experience, skills, accomplishments, activities and hobbies. Do not include marital status, age, sex, children, height, weight, health, church membership, etc.
7. **Obviously generic.** Too many resumes scream, "I need a job—*any* job!" The employer needs to feel that you are interested in that particular position with his or her particular company.
8. **Too snazzy.** Of course, use good quality bond paper, but avoid exotic types, colored paper, photographs, binders and graphics. Electronic resumes should include appropriate industry keywords and use a font size between 10 and 14 points. Avoid underlining, italics or graphics.
9. **Boring.** Make your resume as dynamic as possible. Begin every statement with an action verb. Use active verbs to describe what you have accomplished in past jobs. Take advantage of your rich vocabulary and avoid repeating words, especially the first word in a section.
10. **Too modest.** The resume showcases your qualifications in competition with the other applicants. Put your best foot forward without misrepresentation, falsification or arrogance.

## THE THREE RS

The three Rs of resume writing are **Research, Research, Research**. You must know what the prospective company does, what the position involves and whether you will be a fit, before submitting your resume. And that means doing research—about the company, about the position and about the type of employee the company typically hires.

**Research the company.** Read whatever literature the company has placed in the career library. For additional information, call the company. Ask for any literature it may have, find out how the company is structured and ask what qualities the company generally looks for in its employees. Ask if there are openings in your area, and find out the name of the department head and give him or her a call. Explain that you are considering applying to their company, and ask for their recommendation for next steps. Thank that person for the information, and ask to whom your resume should be directed.

The Internet is another key tool to utilize in your research. Most companies have Web sites that include information regarding company background, community involvement, special events, executive bios or even past annual reports. Be sure to take advantage of the World Wide Web during your job search.

**Research the position.** The more you know about the position, the better able you will be to sell yourself and to

target your resume to that position. If possible, interview someone who does that same job. In addition to finding out the duties, ask if there is on-the-job training, whether they value education over experience (or vice versa) and what kind of turnover the department experiences. Ask what they like about the position and the company; more important, ask what they don't like about it.

**Finally, research yourself.** Your goal is not just to get a job. Your goal is to get a job that you will enjoy. After you find out all you can about the company and the position, ask yourself honestly whether this is what you really want to do and where you really want to be. The odds are overwhelming that you will not hold this position for more than two or three years, so it's not a lifetime commitment; however, this first job will be the base of your lifetime career. You must start successfully so that future recommendations will always be positive. Furthermore, three years is a long time to spend doing something you don't like, working in a position that isn't challenging or living somewhere you don't want to live.

One last word of advice: Before you go to the interview, review the version of your resume that you submitted to this employer. The resume can only get you the interview; the interview gets you the job.

# POWER VERBS FOR YOUR RESUME

accelerated	compared	excelled	maintained	repaired
accommodated	compiled	executed	marketed	reported
accomplished	composed	exercised	measured	represented
achieved	computed	expanded	mediated	researched
acquired	conceptualized	expedited	minimized	reserved
acted	concluded	explained	mobilized	resolved (problems)
activated	confirmed	extended	modeled	restored
adapted	consented	extracted	moderated	retrieved
added	consolidated		modernized	revamped
addressed	constructed	fabricated	modified	reviewed
adjusted	contracted	facilitated	monitored	revised
administered	contributed	familiarized	motivated	revitalized
admitted	converted	fashioned	multiplied	revived
advanced	convinced	figured		
advised	cooperated	finalized	negotiated	sanctioned
aided	coordinated	forecasted		satisfied
alleviated	correlated	formulated	officiated	scheduled
allocated	corresponded	fostered	operated	screened
allowed	counseled	founded	orchestrated	scrutinized
altered	created	fulfilled	organized	secured
ameliorated	critiqued		originated	served
amended	customized	generated	overhauled	set goals
analyzed		grew		settled
appointed	debugged	guaranteed	performed	shaped
apportioned	deciphered	guided	persuaded	smoothed
appraised	dedicated		pioneered	solicited
apprised	delegated	hired	planned	solved
approved	deliberated		polished	sought
approximated	demonstrated	identified	prepared	spearheaded
arbitrated	designated	illustrated	prescribed	specified
arranged	designed	implemented	prioritized	spoke
ascertained	determined	improved	processed	stimulated
assembled	devaluated	improvised	procured	streamlined
assessed	developed	increased	produced	strengthened
assigned	devised	indexed	programmed	studied
assisted	diagnosed	indicated	projected	submitted
attained	directed	inferred	promoted	substantiated
attested	disbursed	influenced	publicized	suggested
audited	dispatched	informed	purchased	summarized
augmented	displayed	initiated		supervised
authored	drafted	innovated	queried	supplemented
authorized		inspected	questioned	surveyed
	eased	inspired		sustained
balanced	eclipsed	instituted	raised	synthesized
bolstered	edited	instructed	rated	systematized
boosted	educated	integrated	realized	
brainstormed	elevated	interceded	recommended	tabulated
budgeted	elicited	interpreted	reconciled	tailored
built	employed	interviewed	recorded	traced
	empowered	introduced	recruited	trained
calculated	enabled	invented	rectified	transacted
catalogued	encouraged	investigated	reduced (losses)	transformed
centralized	endorsed	involved	refined	translated
certified	engineered	issued	referred	transmitted
chaired	enhanced		reformed	
charted	enlarged	judged	regarded	updated
clarified	enlisted	justified	regulated	upgraded
classified	enriched		rehabilitated	
coached	enumerated	launched	reinforced	validated
collaborated	envisioned	lectured	rejuvenated	valued
collected	established	led	related	verified
commissioned	estimated	licensed	relieved	visualized
committed	evaluated	lightened	remedied	
communicated	examined	linked	remodeled	wrote

*Adapted with permission from the Career Resource Manual of the University of California, Davis.*

# SUIT UP FOR SUCCESS

## MEN

Dressing properly for a job interview can be the deciding factor in winning the position. When competition is keen, details make the difference.

Dress is the most important factor in the non-verbal communication between the candidate and the employer. Even before a word is spoken, the interviewer is getting a first impression from your clothes and body language. Too often, if this initial impression is negative, it is impossible to overcome.

The image projected to a potential employer should be one of a professional in his field. It is important to invest the time and money necessary to attain the right look. The old adage is true: "If you want to make money, you have to spend money." **Do not skimp** on your interview outfit.

The investment in a good new suit for an interview is one of the best expenditures you can make. Keep in mind, however, that this outfit is not necessarily just for campus interviews. There will probably be follow-up visits to the organization's offices for further interviews as well as leads that you follow up on your own. Also, the clothes and tips described here are the "uniform" of most professional men, so your "interview suit" can become the start of your working wardrobe.

**WHAT TO BUY?** John T. Malloy, in his book *Dress for Success*, has researched this question and found that there is only one answer, a **SUIT**. Sport coats, blazers or a shirt and tie are not appropriate. A suit with matching coat and pants is the standard for all professional men. A matching vest is optional. A vest can add to your look of authority and provide a different look with just one suit.

**STYLE** (or cut) should be single-breasted and traditional. Designer suits that are highly fitted (European cut) are not advisable for interviewing or truly professional settings. (The European style is attractive to women, however, and is good in a non-business, or social setting.) The suit coat can have moderate shaping but nothing severe. Either single center or double side vents in the back are acceptable. (Side vents offer a more tailored look for the large man. But they are very hard to find with a traditional cut.) **Suits should be plain** with no fancy or contrasting buttons, stitching or western trim.



**COLOR AND PATTERNS** should be solid, pinstripe or in some cases, a subtle plaid. The best colors are shades of blue, gray or beige. Browns, blacks and greens are not recommended. Malloy ranks the most effective suits and comments on their psychological impact:

1. **Solid navy (blue)** is liked by almost everyone but should not be worn by extremely tall or extremely short men.
2. **Solid dark gray** is good for dealing with executives but should not be worn by extremely short men.
3. **Dark blue pinstripe** is good for dealing with executives and can be worn by all but very thin men.
4. **Dark gray pinstripe** is good for dealing with executives but should not be worn by very tall or very thin men.
5. **Medium blue solid** is liked by almost everyone and can be worn by most men.
6. **Medium gray solid** is good for dealing with professionals but should not be worn by heavy men.

The **best suit to buy** for interviewing is a vested dark blue solid. By changing shirt colors and ties, different looks can be achieved, and each will be professional.

**FABRICS** for suits should be wool or wool blended with polyester. In this climate, wool is usually too warm, but generally, the higher the wool content, the richer looking the suit. Textured polyester is all right if it looks like wool. Polyester also has the advantage of not wrinkling too badly when worn in hot weather. Some cotton or linen suits are fair but they wrinkle very badly after only a few hours of wear. It is best to avoid nylon, rayon, mohair, silk, denim and corduroy.

**FITTING** a suit correctly is as essential as buying the right suit. Never be afraid to ask to have something altered. You are paying good money, and the store owes you a proper fit. If possible, ask for the person who will be making the alterations to do the fitting.

You should wear a shirt, shoes and belt to the fitting that you would wear with the suit. Also, carry whatever you would normally carry in the pockets and transfer them to the new suit that is being fitted. (It is a good idea to wear a suit or at least a sport coat, tie and slacks when suit shopping.) Tell the tailor to fit the suit with your pockets full since billfolds, cigarettes, etc., can cause bulges that should be eliminated.

The pants should be fitted first, starting at the waist. The waist should be worn just above the navel and horizontal to the ground. The waist should be tight enough to prevent bulges under the belt but loose enough so that you can comfortably slip the flat of your hand in and out.

The seat of the pants should not bag but must allow enough room so that the front pockets do not pull and sitting is comfortable. If the seat is too large, ask the fitter to pin it rather than just chalking it, because it will affect the length. The same guidelines apply to fitting the crotch. The legs of the pants can be left either plain or cuffed.

The vest should be fitted so that there is no pulling or sagging when sitting or standing. (It is important to sit down as well as to stand during the fittings to be sure there are no problems when sitting.) The vest should fit smoothly but not bind during normal movement. It should not balloon when sitting. It should be long enough to overlap the front of the pants so that the shirt does not show between them. The coat should be fitted from the top down, just as the

pants were. The back of the jacket across the shoulders should be absolutely flat. This is a problem to alter, but if it is not flat, have it fixed. If the tailor claims that it cannot be fixed, do not buy the suit. (Again, you should carry everything in your pants and coat pockets that you normally carry. The fitter may ask you to remove them but do not. Alterations must eliminate any bulges that these items may create.) The chest should be smooth when standing and sitting with the coat buttoned. There should be no wrinkles, bulges, gaping, pulling or sagging. The common test for the proper length of the jacket is to let your arms hang straight, palms in and curl your fingers. If the bottom just fits into the curl, it is right. If it does not, do not buy the suit, since this cannot be corrected. The coat sleeves should fall about five inches from the top of the thumb.

Remember to have the fitter save you a sample of the material from the cuffs of the pants. With this you can match and coordinate shirts and ties.

When you go to pick up the suit, try it on again to be absolutely sure that it fits correctly. If there are any problems, have them corrected. After all, you are paying a lot of money for your most important piece of clothing, and any store should make it fit correctly.

**WHAT ABOUT SPORT COATS?** The name tells you all you need to know. Sport coats and blazers are not formal enough for interviewing or, for that matter, most work situations, particularly in business. If they are all your own and you cannot afford a new suit, be sure they are conservative, tailored correctly, worn with good slacks, shirt and appropriate tie.

**SHIRTS** should always be plain and long-sleeved. They can be made of cotton or polyester that looks like cotton. No shiny, slick or see-through weaves are acceptable. The fit should be smooth (not a “body shirt”) but free from pulling or gaping at the buttons. There should be no bagginess or bunching at the waist. The shirt tail should be long enough to stay tucked into your pants during normal activity. The collar fit should be snug but not so tight that it pulls the collar apart when buttoned. The collar should be compatible in width with your suit lapels, not tucked inside the coat or overlap on the outside. Button-down collars are all right for younger men but may not appeal to older executives. The sleeve’s cuff should extend just below the wrist bone and extend about one-half inch below your suit coat sleeve.

**SHIRT COLORS** should complement your suit and always be lighter than your tie. Solid colors are preferred for interviewing with white and light blue being the best color choices. Other pastels are all right as long as they are pale and not bright or gaudy. Avoid prints, plaids, boxes or shirts with stitching in a contrasting color.

**TIES** are your most important status symbol and should be matched to your shirt and suit with great care. The length should be such that when tied, the front point just touches the waist of your pants. The width should be approximately the same as your coat lapels. The best materials for ties are silk or a polyester and silk blend. The tie should be lined with a stiff material to give it body but, before buying, make sure it ties into a good knot.

**TIE PATTERNS** can be almost anything as long as the basic color complements your suit and a secondary color picks up your shirt. Solid colors, polka dots (the smaller the better), Rep (diagonal stripes) or Ivy League are the best patterns. Avoid anything too bright.

**COORDINATING YOUR OUTFIT** involves four elements: colors, lines, textures and styles. Colors should



not clash or be so monotonous that they fade into each other. Some contrast is necessary. The line of your patterns should run in the same directions (no plaid shirts with pinstripe suit). Texture is the look of the materials. All elements of the suit (i.e., coat, tie, shirt) should be made of comfortable materials. For instance, a very shiny silk tie will clash with a wool suit. Styles also should be compatible. A wide tie with narrow lapels looks strange.

**NEVER PUT TWO PATTERNS NEXT TO EACH OTHER**, e.g., plaid tie with a striped shirt, striped shirt with a plaid suit, etc.

**SHOES** should be either black or dark brown leather with little or no decoration (metal, contrasting stitching, etc.). They should be highly polished and in good repair. Extremely thick soles or high heels are not advisable. No boots of any kind.

**SOCKS** should be the same color as your suit. Be sure that they are long enough so that your bare leg does not show when you sit or cross your legs.

**BELTS** should always be worn with a suit. They should be plain leather, an inch to 1 1/2 inches wide with small, clean traditional buckles. Big, heavy or ornate buckles are not a good choice. Ideally, all of your leather accessories should match (shoes, belt, even watchband and wallet, if possible).

**WALLETS** can be carried either in the back pocket or in the inside coat pocket. The wallet should not stick out of the pocket. Watch out for the bulge wallets create when fitting a suit.

**JEWELRY** follows the rule “less is better.” Any jewelry that you do wear should be plain and not draw attention to itself. One ring is enough. A watch should be slim and plain. ID bracelets are borderline in acceptability. In most cases, collar pins, tie clips or tie tacks should not be worn.

**YOUR BEST BET** is a solid dark blue suit with vest, a solid white shirt and a red, white and blue tie.

To recap some of the dos and don’ts of dressing for an interview:

**ALWAYS:**

1. Wear a suit.
2. Select your clothing keeping in mind the job for which you are interviewing.

3. Be sure your colors, styles, lines and textures are complementary.
4. Wear plain, highly polished shoes.
5. If uncertain about what to wear, err on the conservative side.

**NEVER:**

1. Wear highly styled clothes.
2. Wear bright or bold colors.
3. Wear cowboy boots or any other "western" style clothes.
4. Wear clothes with a designer's label or logo visible.

**WOMEN**

The key to dressing for an interview is to give a professional appearance. For this reason, it is a good idea to invest in a proper interview wardrobe. The old adage is true: "If you want to make money, you have to spend money." Do not skimp on your interview outfit.

Keep in mind that the clothes referred to here as an interview outfit are not only for the one on-campus interview. Probably there will be visits to the organization's offices for further interviews, as well as leads that you follow up on your own. Also, the clothes and tips described here are the "uniform" of most professional women, so your interview outfit can become the start of your working wardrobe.

**WHAT TO BUY?** John T. Malloy, in his book *The Women's Dress for Success Book*, has researched this question and found that the skirted suit and blouse make the best impression. His ranking of the impact of apparel on an executive is (1) skirted suit, (2) dress or skirt with a blazer, (3) dress with a matching jacket and (4) simple dress.

**NO PANTS!** Look through any magazine with pictures of professional women and the vast majority will be wearing skirts or dresses with some kind of coat.

**STYLE** should be simple with the skirt falling just below the knee. Jackets and blazers should be cut full enough to cover the contours of the bustline. It should not be pinched in at the waist to accentuate the bust. The sleeves should be long. Wearing a vest with a skirted suit or blazer is not advisable.

**PATTERNS** should be solids, tweeds or no more than medium plaids. Women's professional wear need not be drab, but it is always best to be conservative rather than bold. Avoid pinstripes in suits and blazers. Striped dresses are acceptable; however, **no prints!**

**COLORS** should be grays, blues, camel, dark brown, beige, deep maroon or black. Avoid most pastels, particularly pink, yellow and green. Reds, oranges, or anything considered exotic like salmon or mustard are unsuitable. Usually, it is best to stay away from light summer colors year-round, particularly in dresses.

**MATERIALS** for suits and blazers should be wool, wool and polyester blends or linen. Synthetics that accurately duplicate the look and feel of wool or linen are all right, but natural fibers are best. In any outfit, fabrics that cling, shine or make noise distract from professionalism and therefore do not make a good impression.

**BLOUSES** should be a solid color (white is probably best) and made of cotton or silk. The neckline should be no lower than the equivalent of a man's dress shirt with one button undone. If you are wearing a suit or blazer, the blouse collar can be worn either inside or out. Avoid too much lace, too many ruffles or other frills. Never wear sweaters or other knits.

**SHOES** should be plain dark pumps with closed heels and toes. The heels should be only 1 1/2 inches high at most. Avoid extremes such as platforms, spike heels, bright colors, etc.

**HOSIERY** should always be worn and be a natural skin color. Never wear colored or sparkling hose when interviewing for a professional position.

**UNDERWEAR** is a must. A bra is essential and should firmly hold the breasts and hide the nipples. A slip or half-slip should be worn unless the skirt is fully lined. Color does not matter unless it can be seen through the clothing. Be particularly careful when wearing unlined light-colored clothes because underwear will show through.

**SCARVES** are an excellent accessory to accentuate your clothes. They should not be in bold contrast, however. Silk is the preferred scarf material. Good scarf styles are the ascot and the scout. Avoid designer goods of any kind, particularly anything with the designer's name or logo visible.

**JEWELRY** should accentuate, not be the center of attention. Some jewelry is acceptable, but whenever you have a question about whether or not to wear a piece, remember "less is often best." One ring is usually enough. Never wear any jewelry that makes noise when you move. If you wear earrings, studs are best. Avoid dangling jewelry.

**PURSES** should not be brought to an interview, if possible. If you do carry a purse, it should be high-quality leather in a dark color. (Ideally, leather accessories, shoes, purses, belts, etc., should match.) Avoid contrasts with your clothing. The purse should be organized so that if you need something during the interview, such as a pen, you do not have to fumble and search for it. (A nice touch is to carry a good gold or silver pen, not the plastic or "give-away" variety.)

It may sound silly, but research has found that women who carry a leather attache case, even if it is empty, are generally viewed as the most professional.

To recap some of the dos and don'ts of dressing for an interview:

**ALWAYS:**

1. Dress in upper-middle class clothing.
2. Select clothing appropriate for the job for which you are interviewing.
3. Wear natural colored hose.
4. Wear plain shoes with closed heels and toes.
5. If you are uncertain about what to wear, err on the conservative side.

**NEVER:**

1. Wear anything sexy for an interview.
2. Wear any kind of knitted garment.
3. Dress like you are imitating a man.
4. Wear anything with a designer's name or logo showing.
5. Wear a fad item.
6. Wear anything too bold, bright or sharply contrasting.



# TEN RULES OF INTERVIEWING

**B**efore stepping into an interview, be sure to practice, practice, practice. A job-seeker going to a job interview without preparing is like an actor performing on opening night without rehearsing.

To help with the interview process, keep the following ten rules in mind:

## 1 **Keep your answers brief and concise.**

Unless asked to give more detail, limit your answers to two to three minutes per question. Tape yourself and see how long it takes you to fully answer a question.

## 2 **Include concrete, quantifiable data.**

Interviewees tend to talk in generalities. Unfortunately, generalities often fail to convince interviewers that the applicant has assets. Include measurable information and provide details about specific accomplishments when discussing your strengths.

## 3 **Repeat your key strengths three times.**

It's essential that you comfortably and confidently articulate your strengths. Explain how the strengths relate to the company's or department's goals and how they might benefit the potential employer. If you repeat your strengths then they will be remembered and—if supported with quantifiable accomplishments—they will more likely be believed.

## 4 **Prepare five or more success stories.**

In preparing for interviews, make a list of your skills and key assets. Then reflect on past jobs and pick out one or two instances when you used those skills successfully.

## 5 **Put yourself on their team.**

Ally yourself with the prospective employer by using the employer's name and products or services. For example, "As a member of \_\_\_\_\_, I would carefully analyze the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_." Show that you are thinking like a member of the team and will fit in with the existing environment. Be careful though not to say anything that would offend or be taken negatively. Your research will help you in this area.

## 6 **Image is often as important as content.**

What you look like and how you say something are just as important as what you say. Studies have shown that 65 percent of the conveyed message is nonverbal; gestures, physical appearance and attire are highly influential during job interviews.

## 7 **Ask questions.**

The types of questions you ask and the way you ask them can make a tremendous impression on the interviewer. Good questions require advance preparation. Just as you plan how you would answer an interviewer's questions, write out specific questions you want to ask. Then look for opportunities to ask them during the interview. Don't ask about benefits or salary. The interview process is a two-way street whereby you and the

interviewer assess each other to determine if there is an appropriate match.

## 8 **Maintain a conversational flow.**

By consciously maintaining a conversational flow—a dialogue instead of a monologue—you will be perceived more positively. Use feedback questions at the end of your answers and use body language and voice intonation to create a conversational interchange between you and the interviewer.

## 9 **Research the company, product lines and competitors.**

Research will provide information to help you decide whether you're interested in the company and important data to refer to during the interview.

## 10 **Keep an interview journal.**

As soon as possible, write a brief summary of what happened. Note any follow-up action you should take and put it in your calendar. Review your presentation. Keep a journal of your attitude and the way you answered the questions. Did you ask questions to get the information you needed? What might you do differently next time? Prepare and send a brief thank-you letter. Restate your skills and stress what you can do for the company.

### IN SUMMARY

Because of its importance, interviewing requires advance preparation. Only you will be able to positively affect the outcome. You must be able to compete successfully with the competition for the job you want. In order to do that, be certain you have considered the kind of job you want, why you want it and how you qualify for it. You also must face reality: Is the job attainable?

In addition, recognize what it is employers want in their candidates. They want "can do" and "will do" employees. Recognize and use the following factors to your benefit as you develop your sales presentation. In evaluating candidates, employers consider the following factors:

- Ability
- Loyalty
- Personality
- Acceptance
- Recommendations
- Outside activities while in school
- Impressions made during the interview
- Character
- Initiative
- Communication skills
- Work record

*Written by Roseanne R. Bensley, Career Services, New Mexico State University.*



# INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS

**O**ne of the easiest and most effective ways to meet people in a professional field in which you are interested is to conduct informational interviews. Informational interviewing is a networking approach which allows you to meet key professionals, gather career information, investigate career options, get advice on job search techniques and get referrals to other professionals.

The art of informational interviewing is in knowing how to balance your hidden agenda (to locate a job) with the unique opportunity to learn firsthand about the demands of your field. Thus, never abuse your privilege by asking for a job, but execute your informational interviews skillfully, and a job may follow.

## What motivates professionals to grant informational interviews?

The reasons are varied. Generally, most people enjoy sharing information about themselves and their jobs and, particularly, love giving advice. Some may simply believe in encouraging newcomers to their profession and others may be scoping out prospects for anticipated vacancies. It is common for professionals to exchange favors and information, so don't hesitate to call upon people.

## How do you set up informational interviews?

One possible approach is to send a letter requesting a brief informational interview (clearly indicating the purpose of the meeting, and communicating the fact that there

is no job expectation). Follow this up with a phone call to schedule an appointment. Or, initiate a contact by making cold calls and set up an appointment. The best way to obtain an informational interview is by being referred from one professional to another, a process which becomes easier as your network expands.

## How do you prepare for informational interviews?

Prepare for your informational interviews just as you would for an actual job interview: polish your presentation and listening skills, and conduct preliminary research on the organization. You should outline an agenda that includes well-thought-out questions.

Begin your interview with questions that demonstrate your genuine interest in the other person such as, "Describe a typical day in your department." Then proceed with more general questions such as, "What are the employment prospects in this field?" or "Are you active in any professional organizations in our field and which would you recommend?" If appropriate, venture into a series of questions which place the employer in the advice-giving role, such as, "What should the most important consideration be in my first job?" The whole idea is for you to shine, to make an impression and to get referrals to other professionals.

Always remember to send a thank-you letter to every person who grants you time and to every individual who refers you to someone.

## QUALITIES DESIRED IN NEW COLLEGE GRADUATES BY BUSINESSES, INDUSTRIES AND GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

### ENERGY, DRIVE, ENTHUSIASM AND INITIATIVE

Hard-working, disciplined and dependable

Eager, professional and positive attitude

Strong self-motivation and high self-esteem

Confident and assertive, yet diplomatic and flexible

Sincere and preserves integrity

Ambitious and takes risks

Uses common sense

### ADAPTS TEXTBOOK LEARNING TO THE WORKING WORLD

Quick learner

Asks questions

Analytical; independent thinker

Willing to continue education and growth

Committed to excellence

Open-minded, willing to try new things

### KNOWLEDGE OF COMPUTERS

Established word processing, spreadsheet, database and presentation software skills

Excellent computer literacy

### COMMUNICATIONS SKILLS

Good writing skills

Excellent oral communication skills

Listens well; compassionate and empathetic

Excellent problem-solving and analytical skills

Creative and innovative

### LEADERSHIP SKILLS

Organizational skills and attention to detail

Accepts and handles responsibilities

Action-oriented and results-driven

Loyal to employers

Customer-focused

Team-spirited; understands group dynamics

Always willing to help others

Mature, poised and personable

Diversity aware; treats others with respect and dignity

### ORIENTED TO GROWTH

Acceptance of an entry-level position; doesn't view required tasks as "menial"

Academic excellence in field of study

Views the organization's total picture, not just one area of specialization

Willing to accomplish more than required

Source: Recruiting Trends by L. Patrick Scheetz, Ph.D., Collegiate Employment Research Institute. ©Michigan State University.

# ARE YOU READY FOR A BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEW?

“Tell me about a time when you were on a team, and one of the members wasn’t carrying his or her weight.” If this is one of the leading questions in your job interview, you could be in for a behavioral interview. Based on the premise that the best way to predict future behavior is to determine past behavior, this style of interviewing is popular among recruiters.

Today, more than ever, each hiring decision is critical. Behavioral interviewing is designed to minimize personal impressions that might cloud the hiring decision. By focusing on the applicant’s actions and behaviors, rather than subjective impressions that can sometimes be misleading, interviewers can make more accurate hiring decisions.

A manager of staff planning and college relations for a major chemical company believes, “Although we have not conducted any formal studies to determine whether retention or success on the job has been affected, I feel our move to behavioral interviewing has been successful. It helps concentrate recruiters’ questions on areas important to our candidates’ success within [our company].” The company introduced behavioral interviewing in the mid-1980s at several sites and has since implemented it companywide.

## BEHAVIORAL VS. TRADITIONAL INTERVIEWS

If you have training or experience with traditional interviewing techniques, you may find the behavioral interview quite different in several ways:

- ✓ Instead of asking how you *would* behave in a particular situation, the interviewer will ask you to describe how you *did* behave.
- ✓ Expect the interviewer to question and probe (think of “peeling the layers from an onion”).
- ✓ The interviewer will ask you to provide details and will not allow you to theorize or generalize about events.
- ✓ The interview will be a more structured process that will concentrate on areas that are important to the interviewer, rather than allowing you to concentrate on areas that you may feel are important.
- ✓ You may not get a chance to deliver any prepared stories.
- ✓ Most interviewers will be taking notes throughout the interview.

The behavioral interviewer has been trained to objectively collect and evaluate information and works from a profile of desired behaviors that are needed for success on the job. Because the behaviors a candidate has demonstrated in previous positions are likely to be repeated, you will be asked to share situations in which you may or may not have exhibited these behaviors. Your answers will be tested for accuracy and consistency.

If you are an entry-level candidate with no previous related experience, the interviewer will look for behaviors in situations similar to those of the target position:

*“Describe a major problem you have faced and how you dealt with it.”*

*“Give an example of when you had to work with your hands to accomplish a task or project.”*

*“What class did you like the most? What did you like about it?”*

Follow-up questions will test for consistency and determine if you exhibited the desired behavior in that situation:

*“Can you give me an example?”*

*“What did you do?”*

*“What did you say?”*

*“What were you thinking?”*

*“How did you feel?”*

*“What was your role?”*

*“What was the result?”*

You will notice an absence of such questions as, “Tell me about your strengths and weaknesses.”

## HOW TO PREPARE FOR A BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEW

- ✓ Recall recent situations that show favorable behaviors or actions, especially those involving coursework, work experience, leadership, teamwork, initiative, planning and customer service.
- ✓ Prepare short descriptions of each situation; be ready to give details if asked.
- ✓ Be sure each story has a beginning, a middle and an end; i.e., be ready to describe the situation, your action and the outcome or result.
- ✓ Be sure the outcome or result reflects positively on you (even if the result itself was not favorable).
- ✓ Be honest. Don’t embellish or omit any part of the story. The interviewer will find out if your story is built on a weak foundation.
- ✓ Be specific. Don’t generalize about several events; give a detailed accounting of one event.

A possible response to the question, “Tell me about a time when you were on a team and a member wasn’t pulling his or her weight” might go as follows: “I had been assigned to a team to build a canoe out of concrete. One of our team members wasn’t showing up for our lab sessions or doing his assignments. I finally met with him in private, explained the frustration of the rest of the team and asked if there was anything I could do to help. He told me he was preoccupied with another class that he wasn’t passing, so I found someone to help him with the other course. He not only was able to spend more time on our project, but he was also grateful to me for helping him out. We finished our project on time and got a ‘B’ on it.”

The interviewer might then probe: “How did you feel when you confronted this person?” “Exactly what was the nature of the project?” “What was his responsibility as a team member?” “What was your role?” “At what point did you take it upon yourself to confront him?” You can see it is important that you not make up or “shade” information and why you should have a clear memory of the entire incident.

## DON’T FORGET THE BASICS

Instead of feeling anxious or threatened by the prospect of a behavioral interview, remember the essential difference between the traditional interview and the behavioral interview: The traditional interviewer may allow you to project what you might or should do in a given situation, whereas the behavioral interviewer is looking for past actions only. It will always be important to put your best foot forward and make a good impression on the interviewer with appropriate attire, good grooming, a firm handshake and direct eye contact. There is no substitute for promptness, courtesy, preparation, enthusiasm and a positive attitude.

# QUESTIONS ASKED BY EMPLOYERS

## PERSONAL

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. What are your hobbies?
3. Why did you choose to interview with our organization?
4. Describe your ideal job.
5. What can you offer us?
6. What do you consider to be your greatest strengths?
7. Can you name some weaknesses?
8. Define success. Failure.
9. Have you ever had any failures? What did you learn from them?
10. Of which three accomplishments are you most proud?
11. Who are your role models? Why?
12. How does your college education or work experience relate to this job?
13. What motivates you most in a job?
14. Have you had difficulty getting along with a former professor / supervisor / co-worker and how did you handle it?
15. Have you ever spoken before a group of people? How large?
16. Why should we hire you rather than another candidate?
17. What do you know about our organization (products or services)?
18. Where do you want to be in five years? Ten years?
19. Do you plan to return to school for further education?

## EDUCATION

20. Why did you choose your major?
21. Why did you choose to attend your college or university?
22. Do you think you received a good education? In what ways?
23. In which campus activities did you participate?
24. Which classes in your major did you like best? Least? Why?
25. Which elective classes did you like best? Least? Why?
26. If you were to start over, what would you change about your education?

27. Do your grades accurately reflect your ability? Why or why not?
28. Were you financially responsible for any portion of your college education?

## EXPERIENCE

29. What job-related skills have you developed?
30. Did you work while going to school? In what positions?
31. What did you learn from these work experiences?
32. What did you enjoy most about your last employment? Least?
33. Have you ever quit a job? Why?
34. Give an example of a situation in which you provided a solution to an employer.
35. Give an example of a time in which you worked under deadline pressure.
36. Have you ever done any volunteer work? What kind?
37. How do you think a former supervisor would describe your work?

## CAREER GOALS

38. Do you prefer to work under supervision or on your own?
39. What kind of boss do you prefer?
40. Would you be successful working with a team?
41. Do you prefer large or small organizations? Why?
42. What other types of positions are you considering?
43. How do you feel about working in a structured environment?
44. Are you able to work on several assignments at once?
45. How do you feel about working overtime?
46. How do you feel about travel?
47. How do you feel about the possibility of relocating?
48. Are you willing to work flextime?

Before you begin interviewing, think about these questions and possible responses and discuss them with a career advisor. Conduct mock interviews and be sure you are able to communicate clear, unrehearsed answers to interviewers.

# QUESTIONS TO ASK EMPLOYERS

1. Please describe the duties of the job for me.
2. What kinds of assignments might I expect the first six months on the job?
3. Are salary adjustments geared to the cost of living or job performance?
4. Does your company encourage further education?
5. How often are performance reviews given?
6. What products (or services) are in the development stage now?
7. Do you have plans for expansion?
8. What are your growth projections for next year?
9. Have you cut your staff in the last three years?
10. How do you feel about creativity and individuality?
11. Do you offer flextime?
12. Is your company environmentally conscious? In what ways?
13. In what ways is a career with your company better than one with your competitors?
14. Is this a new position or am I replacing someone?
15. What is the largest single problem facing your staff (department) now?
16. May I talk with the last person who held this position?

17. What is the usual promotional time frame?
18. Does your company offer either single or dual career-track programs?
19. What do you like best about your job/company?
20. Once the probation period is completed, how much authority will I have over decisions?
21. Has there been much turnover in this job area?
22. Do you fill positions from the outside or promote from within first?
23. What qualities are you looking for in the candidate who fills this position?
24. What skills are especially important for someone in this position?
25. What characteristics do the achievers in this company seem to share?
26. Is there a lot of team/project work?
27. Will I have the opportunity to work on special projects?
28. Where does this position fit into the organizational structure?
29. How much travel, if any, is involved in this position?
30. What is the next course of action? When should I expect to hear from you or should I contact you?

# TURNING THE TABLES IN THE INTERVIEW

**Y**ou've sat through most of the interview and have answered all the recruiter's questions. You know you've made a good impression because you prepared for the interview and your answers were articulate and decisive. You've come across as a very bright, capable candidate when the recruiter asks something you didn't anticipate: "Do you have any questions?"

If you don't have any questions prepared and you try to cover your mistake by asking a spur-of-the-moment question, chances are you will damage your chances for a successful interview. Some recruiters refuse to hire people who don't ask intelligent questions. Don't ask questions just for the sake of asking questions—make sure it is information that you need.

## PREPARE QUESTIONS IN ADVANCE

You should have a list of questions prepared for this crucial part of the interview. Every question you ask should demonstrate your interest and confirm your knowledge of the organization.

You should read publications in the field. You can get information about new products or policies by surfing the employer's Web site or by reading general magazines or trade publications. It is appropriate to address some of your questions to what you have read. Ask about new products, how research and development is structured at the company, management strategies at the company, how the company has changed, and potential product growth.

Some of the publications providing a wealth of information are *Fortune*, *Forbes*, *BusinessWeek* and *The Wall Street Journal*.

## QUESTIONS NOT TO ASK

Not only should you know what questions to ask during the interview, but it is important to know what questions not to ask. You don't want to alienate the recruiter by putting him or her on the defensive.

The following areas should generally be avoided:

1. Avoid asking questions that are answered in the company's annual report or employment brochure. Recruiters are familiar enough with their own information to recognize when you haven't done your homework. If some information in the annual report isn't clear to you, by all means ask for clarification.
2. Don't bring up salary or benefits in the initial interview. The majority of companies recruiting are very competitive and will offer approximately similar salaries and benefits. The recruiter may choose to bring up the information, but you should not initiate the topic.
3. Avoid asking any personal questions or questions that will put the recruiter on the defensive. This includes questions such as the interviewer's educational background, marital status, past work experience and so on.
4. Don't ask questions that have already been answered during the interview. If you have prepared a list of questions and some of them have been addressed during the interview, do not repeat them unless you need clarification.

## QUESTIONS YOU SHOULD ASK

Now that you know what you shouldn't ask during the interview, determine what questions you should ask.

1. Ask specific questions about the position. You need to know what duties will be required of the person in the position to see if there is a fit between your interests and qualifications and the job you seek.
2. Try to find out as much as possible about qualities and skills the recruiter is looking for in job candidates. Once you determine the necessary qualities, you can then explain to the recruiter how your background and capabilities relate to those qualities.
3. Ask questions concerning advancement and promotion paths available. Every company is different and most advancement policies are unique. Try to find out what the possible promotion path is to see if it fits your career goals. You may also want to ask about periodic performance evaluations.
4. It is appropriate to ask specific questions about the company's training program if this information is not covered in company literature.
5. Ask questions about location and travel required. If you have limitations, this is the time to find out what is expected in the position.

## SOME FINAL ADVICE

The key to a successful interview is good communication and rapport with the recruiter. One of the fastest ways to damage this kind of relationship is by exhibiting ignorance about the company and asking inappropriate questions.

Listed below are questions you might ask during the interview. (Used with permission from Career Planning Today, C. Randall Powell.)

- How much travel is normally expected?
- Can I progress at my own pace or is it structured?
- How much contact and exposure to management is there?
- Is it possible to move through the training program faster?
- About how many individuals go through your training program each year?
- How much freedom is given and discipline required of new people?
- How often are performance reviews given?
- How much decision-making authority is given after one year?
- How much input does the new person have on geographical location?
- What is the average age of top management?
- What is the average time it takes to get to \_\_\_\_\_ level in the career path?

# PROFESSIONAL ETIQUETTE

**Y**our academic knowledge and skills may be spectacular, but do you have the social skills needed to be successful in the workplace? Good professional etiquette indicates to potential employers that you are a mature, responsible adult who can aptly represent their company. Not knowing proper etiquette could damage your image, prevent you from getting a job and jeopardize personal and business relationships.

## MEETING AND GREETING

Etiquette begins with meeting and greeting. Terry Cobb, human resource director at Wachovia Corporation in South Carolina's Palmetto region, emphasizes the importance of making a good first impression—beginning with the handshake. A firm shake, he says, indicates to employers that you're confident and assertive. A limp handshake, on the other hand, sends the message that you're not interested or qualified for the job. Dave Owenby, human resources manager for North and South Carolina at Sherwin Williams, believes, "Good social skills include having a firm handshake, smiling, making eye contact and closing the meeting with a handshake."

The following basic rules will help you get ahead in the workplace:

- Always rise when introducing or being introduced to someone.
- Provide information in making introductions—you are responsible for keeping the conversation going. "Joe, please meet Ms. Crawford, CEO at American Enterprise, Inc., in Cleveland." "Mr. Jones, this is Kate Smith, a senior majoring in computer information systems at Northwestern University."
- Unless given permission, always address someone by his or her title and last name.
- Practice a firm handshake. Make eye contact while shaking hands.

## DINING

Shirley Willey, owner of Etiquette & Company, reports that roughly 80% of second interviews involve a business meal. Cobb remembers one candidate who had passed his initial interview with flying colors. Because the second interview was scheduled close to noon, Cobb decided to conduct the interview over lunch. Initially, the candidate was still in the "interview" mode and maintained his professionalism. After a while, however, he became more relaxed—and that's when the candidate's real personality began to show. He had terrible table manners, made several off-color remarks and spoke negatively about previous employers. Needless to say, Cobb was unimpressed, and the candidate did not get the job.

Remember that an interview is always an interview, regardless of how relaxed or informal the setting. Anything that is said or done will be considered by the interviewer, cautions Cobb.

In order to make a good impression during a lunch or dinner interview, make sure you:

- Arrive on time.
- Wait to sit until the host/hostess indicates the seating arrangement.

- Place napkin in lap before eating or drinking anything.
- When ordering, keep in mind that this is a *talking* business lunch. Order something easy to eat, such as boneless chicken or fish.
- Do not hold the order up because you cannot make a decision. Feel free to ask for suggestions from others at the table.
- Wait to eat until everyone has been served.
- Keep hands in lap unless you are using them to eat.
- Practice proper posture; sit up straight with your arms close to your body.
- Bring food to your mouth—not your head to the plate.
- Try to eat at the same pace as everyone else.
- Take responsibility for keeping up the conversation.
- Place napkin on chair seat if excusing yourself for any reason.
- Place napkin beside plate at the end of the meal.
- Push chair under table when excusing yourself.

## EATING

Follow these simple rules for eating and drinking:

- Start eating with the implement that is farthest away from your plate. You may have two spoons and two forks. The spoon farthest away from your plate is a soup spoon. The fork farthest away is a salad fork unless you have three forks, one being much smaller, which would be a seafood fork for an appetizer. The dessert fork/spoon is usually above the plate. Remember to work from the outside in.
- Dip soup away from you; sip from the side of the spoon.
- Season food only after you have tasted it.
- Pass salt and pepper together—even if asked for only one.
- Pass all items to the right. If the item has a handle, such as a pitcher, pass with the handle toward the next person. For bowls with spoons, pass with the spoon ready for the next person. If you are the one to reach to the center of the table for an item, pass it before serving yourself.
- While you are speaking during a meal, utensils should be resting on plate (fork and knife crossed on the plate with tines down).
- Don't chew with your mouth open or blow on your food.

The interviewer will usually take care of the bill and the tip. Be prepared, however, if this doesn't happen and have small bills ready to take care of your part, including the tip. Never make an issue of the check.

Social skills can make or break your career. Employees have to exhibit a certain level of professionalism and etiquette in their regular work day, and particularly in positions where they come in contact with clients. Be one step ahead—practice the social skills necessary to help you make a great first impression and stand out in a competitive job market.

*Written by Jennie Hunter, a professor at Western Carolina University.*

# WRITING LETTERS

## APPLICATION LETTER

Even if you have the opportunity to interview with a number of employers on campus, you may still need to approach others through the mail. Written communications have to be to the point and written in a way that combines straight facts with self promotion. The application letter introduces you to the prospective employer. You have to arrest their attention, arouse their interest and persuade them that you are the person to interview and ultimately hire.

Write a rough draft of the application letter. Have another person read and react to your rough draft. Then do your final draft. Make the letter versatile enough so that small changes can be made to tailor it to each employer. **Never write a form letter to be duplicated and sent out.**

Your application may be one of hundreds, even thousands, received by the employer. If you receive some rejection letters, or no responses at all, don't think that you've struck out and the game is over. It's imperative that you keep trying. Because of the numbers involved, it makes sense to contact more than a few prospective employers. The more you contact,

### SUGGESTED GUIDELINES FOR APPLICATION LETTER

Your Street Address  
City, State ZIP Code  
Date

Mr. George L. Jones, Manager  
XYZ Company  
555 Jones Drive  
Missoula, Montana 59801

Dear Mr. Jones:

**First Paragraph.** In your initial paragraph, state the reason for the letter, the specific position or type of work for which you are applying and indicate from which resource (placement center, news media, friend) you learned of the opening.

**Second Paragraph.** Indicate why you are interested in the position, the company, its products or services—above all, what you can do for the employer. If you are a recent graduate, explain how your academic background makes you a qualified candidate for the position. If you had some practical work experience, point out the specific achievements or unique qualifications.

**Third Paragraph.** Refer the reader to the enclosed resume or application blank, which summarizes your qualifications, training, experiences or whatever media you may be utilizing to present yourself.

**Final Paragraph.** In the closing paragraph, indicate your desire for a personal interview and your flexibility as to the time and place. Repeat your phone number in the letter and offer any assistance to help in a speedy response. Finally, close your letter with a statement or question that will encourage a response. For example, ask if the company will be recruiting in your area or if it desires additional information or references.

Sincerely,

Joseph G. Green

the better your odds for success. Many graduates have been hired by organizations they never dreamed of writing to . . . but did. Remember, however, that you have to be willing to meet prospective employers halfway by researching them. There's nothing worse than trying to persuade an employer that you are the right person to hire, only to have the company perceive that it's just one more name on your mailing list. As noted previously, you cannot hope for a high response rate in your letters to prospective employers, so be realistic in your expectations.

## FOLLOW-UP LETTERS

After you have an interview and feel you are interested in an organization, send a brief letter to the interviewer thanking him/her for the opportunity to be interviewed. This basic courtesy is often overlooked by job seekers but is just one more way to keep your name fresh in the interviewer's mind. The same technique can be applied to the plant/office visit. You can also keep the communication ball rolling—and keep your name before potential employers—in letters that ask for more information or that inquire about the status of your application.

Two other kinds of letters are important: the letter of acceptance and the letter of rejection. The letter of rejection informs other employers from whom you received offers that you have reached a decision and accepted another firm's offer. Both kinds of letters should be written promptly upon accepting a job offer.

Your reply to your new employer should be brief, personalized and written in such a way as to reinforce the employer's decision to hire you. Indicate the date you will start work so that there will be no misunderstanding. You'd be surprised how many candidates do not report to work when they're expected.

## THANK YOU FOR INTERVIEW LETTER

Your Address  
Inside Address  
(If possible, use recruiter's name.)  
Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

I appreciated the opportunity to talk with you on (date). The information you shared with me about (company name) was excellent, and I am excited about the possibility of applying my education and experience to the position we discussed.

If I can provide you with any additional information, please let me know. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,  
(Written Signature)  
Your name typed

# WRITING LETTERS CONTINUED

## LETTER OF ACCEPTANCE

Your Address  
Inside Address  
(If possible, use individual's name.)

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

I am very pleased to accept your offer (state offer) as outlined in your letter of (date). (Include all details of offer—location, starting salary, start date.)

Mention enclosures—application, resume, employee forms, or other information—and any related commentary.

I look forward to meeting the challenges of the job, and I shall make every attempt to fulfill your expectations.

Sincerely,  
(Written Signature)  
Your name typed

## LETTER OF REJECTION

Your Address  
Inside Address  
(If possible, use individual's name.)

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

After considerable thought, I have decided not to accept your offer of employment as outlined in your (date) letter. This has been a very difficult decision for me. However, I feel I have made the correct one.

Thank you for your consideration. Your confidence in me is sincerely appreciated.

Sincerely,  
(Written Signature)  
Your name typed

## DEALING WITH REJECTION IN THE JOB SEARCH

**A**fter meticulously preparing your cover letters and resumes, you send them to carefully selected companies that you are sure would like to hire you. You even get a few job interviews. But all of your return correspondence is the same: "Thanks, but no thanks." Your self-confidence melts and you begin to question your value to an employer.

Sometimes, we begin to dread the BIG NO so much that we stop pursuing additional interviews, thereby shutting off our pipeline to the future. We confirm that we couldn't get a job because we stop looking. Remember, fear of rejection doesn't have to paralyze your job search efforts. Let that fear fuel your determination; make it your ally and you'll learn a lot.

### EIGHT GUIDELINES TO WARD OFF REJECTION

#### 1. Depersonalize the interview.

Employers may get as many as 500 resumes for one job opening. How can you, I and the other 498 of us be no good?

#### 2. Don't make it all or nothing.

Don't set yourself up for a letdown: "If I don't get this job, I'm a failure." Tell yourself, "It could be mine. It's a good possibility. It's certainly not an impossibility."

#### 3. Don't blame the interviewer.

Realize interviewers aren't in a hurry to think and behave our way. Blame your turndown on a stone-hearted interviewer who didn't flatter you with beautiful compliments, and you will learn nothing.

#### 4. Don't live in the past.

When you dredge up past failures, your nervous system kicks in and you experience all the feelings that go with failure. Unwittingly, you overestimate the dangers facing you and underestimate yourself.

#### 5. Don't get mad at the system.

Does anything less pleasurable exist than hunting for a job? Still, you must adjust to the world rather than make the world adjust to you. The easiest thing is to conform, to do what 400,000 other people are doing. When you sit down to play bridge or poker or drive a car, do you complain about the rules?

#### 6. Take the spotlight off yourself.

Sell your skills, not yourself. Concentrate on what you're there for: to find out the interviewer's problems and to show how you can work together to solve them.

#### 7. See yourself in the new role.

Form a mental picture of the positive self you'd like to become in job interviews, rather than focusing on what scares you. All therapists agree on this: Before a person can effect changes, he must really "see" himself in the new role. Just for fun, play with the idea.

#### 8. Keep up your sense of humor.

Nobody yet has contracted an incurable disease from a job interview.

*Written by Roseanne R. Bensley, Career Services, New Mexico State University.*

# ADVICE FROM THE EXPERTS

## INTERVIEWING TIPS FROM ON-CAMPUS RECRUITERS

**Research organizations in advance of interviews**—Since most on-campus interviews are relatively short, it is important that you use this time to sell yourself to an employer. Don't waste this opportunity by spending too much time on issues that could have been answered by surfing the company's Web site and /or viewing its DVD or Web video. Displaying your knowledge about a potential employer will greatly enhance your chances of interview success.

**Define your career goals and the opportunities you want**—One of the keys to making a successful sale is product knowledge. In the case of job interviews, that product is *you*. You need to perform a thorough self-evaluation well in advance of your interviews. Know what your strengths, weaknesses, skills and abilities are and be prepared to discuss them in the interview.

**Be enthusiastic and sincere during your interviews**—It is important for you to convey a genuine sense of interest during the interview. You must appear eager and flexible, but not too rehearsed. Don't fixate on being nervous. Even seasoned pros can have the "interview jitters." Above all, *never* be late for an interview appointment.

**Be honest**—Don't claim interest in an employer if you really do not intend to work for that organization. Don't lie on your resume or during the interview. While you should never draw attention to your weaknesses, don't attempt to hide a shortcoming by being untruthful. Learn how to deal with perceived (or real) weaknesses *before* your interviews by talking to a campus career services professional and/or reading books on job interviewing techniques.

**Be realistic**—Carefully evaluate what an employer has to offer you...and what you have to offer the employer. Don't accept a position that isn't suited to you "just because you need a job." Although most entry-level salaries have been on the rise, do not set your starting salary expectations too high. If a starting salary seems inordinately low, but is for a position that you really want, you might be able to arrange for an early salary review.

*Some of this material is adapted from Recruiting Trends by L. Patrick Scheetz, Ph.D., Collegiate Employment Research Institute. ©Michigan State University.*





# COST OF LIVING INDEX

The following is a selection of cities where many graduating students accept offers. The cost of living index is based on the composite price of groceries, housing, utilities, transportation, health care, clothing and entertainment in each city listed.

Use the calculation to compare salaries in different cities. For further information about the data below, please refer to [www.bestplaces.net/cost\\_of\\_living](http://www.bestplaces.net/cost_of_living).

To compare information from other sources, refer to these websites: [www.salary.com](http://www.salary.com) and [www.homefair.com/real-estate/salary-calculator.asp](http://www.homefair.com/real-estate/salary-calculator.asp).

## SALARY COMPARISON EQUATION

$$\frac{\text{City \#1}}{\text{City \#2}} \times \text{Salary} = \$ \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$$

What is the New York City equivalent of a \$50,000 salary in Baton Rouge?

$$\frac{\text{New York City } 159}{\text{Baton Rouge } 90} \times \$50,000 = \$88,333$$

<b>Average City, USA</b>	100	<b>Idaho</b>		<b>Montana</b>		<b>Pennsylvania</b>	
<b>Alabama</b>		Boise	104	Billings	100	Philadelphia	106
Birmingham	82	<b>Illinois</b>		Missoula	114	Pittsburgh	87
Montgomery	89	Chicago	116	<b>Nebraska</b>		<b>South Carolina</b>	
<b>Alaska</b>		Springfield	84	Lincoln	93	Charleston	110
Anchorage	132	<b>Indiana</b>		Omaha	89	Columbia	99
<b>Arizona</b>		Bloomington	93	<b>Nevada</b>		<b>South Dakota</b>	
Flagstaff	122	Indianapolis	91	Las Vegas	109	Sioux Falls	94
Phoenix	102	South Bend	81	<b>New Jersey</b>		<b>Tennessee</b>	
Tucson	94	<b>Iowa</b>		Atlantic City	112	Chattanooga	91
<b>Arkansas</b>		Des Moines	85	Princeton	182	Memphis	82
Little Rock	91	Iowa City	99	Newark	127	Nashville	95
<b>California</b>		<b>Kansas</b>		<b>New Mexico</b>		<b>Texas</b>	
Fresno	109	Kansas City	87	Albuquerque	100	Austin	102
Irvine	173	<b>Kentucky</b>		Santa Fe	118	Dallas	94
Los Angeles	147	Lexington	91	<b>New York</b>		Houston	89
Sacramento	114	Louisville	85	Albany	106	San Antonio	83
San Diego	139	<b>Louisiana</b>		Buffalo	81	<b>Utah</b>	
San Francisco	185	Baton Rouge	90	New York City	159	Salt Lake City	103
San José	172	New Orleans	97	Syracuse	87	<b>Vermont</b>	
<b>Colorado</b>		<b>Maine</b>		<b>North Carolina</b>		Burlington	115
Boulder	139	Portland	110	Chapel Hill	129	<b>Virginia</b>	
Colorado Springs	97	<b>Maryland</b>		Charlotte	98	Richmond	104
Denver	110	Baltimore	97	Raleigh	106	Virginia Beach	115
<b>Connecticut</b>		<b>Massachusetts</b>		<b>North Dakota</b>		<b>Washington</b>	
Hartford	109	Boston	154	Fargo	91	Seattle	149
New Haven	117	<b>Michigan</b>		<b>Ohio</b>		<b>Washington, DC</b>	135
Stamford	171	Ann Arbor	101	Cincinnati	91	<b>West Virginia</b>	
<b>Delaware</b>		Detroit	80	Cleveland	90	Charleston	91
Wilmington	103	Lansing	82	Columbus	89	<b>Wisconsin</b>	
<b>Florida</b>		<b>Minnesota</b>		Dayton	85	Madison	109
Miami Beach	121	Minneapolis	108	<b>Oklahoma</b>		Milwaukee	89
Orlando	105	St. Paul	108	Oklahoma City	84	<b>Wyoming</b>	
<b>Georgia</b>		<b>Missouri</b>		Tulsa	90	Cheyenne	93
Atlanta	105	Kansas City	93	<b>Oregon</b>			
<b>Hawaii</b>		St. Louis	90	Portland	119		
Honolulu	194						

# A COLLEGE TIMELINE— HOW TO PLAN FOR SUCCESS

## FRESHMEN—QUESTION

- Explore your interests and abilities through academic courses.
- Utilize career assessment tools through Career Services.
- Consider volunteer positions to help you build your resume and broaden your experience.
- Collect information on internships, cooperative education, and other paid work experiences.
- Learn about the Cooperative Education/Internship Program offered through Career Services.
- Join university organizations that will offer you leadership roles in the future.
- Attend on-campus career and job fairs to gather information on potential careers and employers.
- Familiarize yourself with the services and resources available at Career Services.
- Visit the Career Services web site.
- Attend a resume workshop and create a first draft of your resume.

## SOPHOMORES—RESEARCH

- Choose a major that you will enjoy studying for the next two years.
- Enroll in the Professional Development Class.
- Obtain an internship/field experience or other experience-based education, such as cooperative education.
- Take on more responsibilities in extracurricular activities.
- Explore at least three career options available to you through your major.
- Attend on-campus job fairs and employer information sessions that relate to your major.
- Identify organizations and associations in your interest areas for shadowing opportunities.

## JUNIORS—MAKING DECISIONS

- Complete at least five information interview in careers you want to explore.
- Shadow several professionals in your field of interest.
- Find out more about career opportunities related to your major.
- Attend career and job fairs and employer information sessions that relate to your interests.
- Narrow your career interest areas.
- Research potential organizations in the Career Resource Center and talk to recent graduates in your major about the job market and potential employers.
- Obtain an internship or other practical career experience.
- Meet with a Career Advisor to have your resume updated.
- Participate in Career Services seminars to learn more about job search strategies such as networking and interviewing skills.

## SENIORS—JOB SEARCH

- Stay up-to-date with the Career Services calendar and participate in on-campus recruiting activities.
- Participate in interviewing skills seminars or the mock interview program.
- Develop a list of prospective employers with contact names and addresses from organizations you are interested in pursuing.
- Determine your career-related strengths and skills; determine what you have to offer an employer.
- Visit Career Services to have your updated resume reviewed.
- Visit job listing web sites.
- Draft a cover letter that can be adapted for a variety of employers and have it reviewed.
- Research information on realistic salary expectations.
- Go on employment interviews, evaluate job offers and accept one!

# WORK

*in Las Vegas, Nevada*

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- Elementary Teachers, Grades K-5
- English Teachers, Grades 7-12
- Foreign Languages, Grades 7-12  
(Chinese, French, German, Japanese, Spanish)
- Mathematics and Science Teachers, Grades 7-12\*
- Music Teachers, Grades K-5
- Music Teachers, Grades 7-12  
(Band, Strings, Choir, Mariachi)
- Occupational Therapists
- Physical Therapists
- School Nurses
- School Psychologists
- School Social Worker
- Social Studies Teachers, Grades 7-12
- Special Education Teachers, Grades K-12\*
- Speech-Language Pathologists
- Teachers of the Deaf, Grades K-12
- Teachers of the Visually Impaired, Grades K-12

**\* Special Qualifications License (SQL)**

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