



CAREER SERVICES CENTER  
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2026 - 2028

# CAREER GUIDE

CAREER PLANNING AND  
CAMPUS RECRUITING



**SOUTHERN  
UNIVERSITY**  
AND AGRICULTURAL & MECHANICAL COLLEGE

**Career Services Center**

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# CAREER GUIDE

2026-2028

**Southern University and A & M College**

**Career Services Center**

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**Career Services**

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Dear SU Jaguar:

The Career Services Center 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. (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 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

# 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 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 Career Services

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

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. 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

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. Career Services 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.

## 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 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, email address, telephone number and grade point average, must be accurate.

3. Students who complete user profiles online 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 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 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 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.

## Handshake



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# Making Career Services Work for You

**M**any students go through all four years of college without ever setting foot in their school's career services office. Yet, outside of the academic realm, job seekers will pay hundreds, even thousands, of dollars for the very same services that are included free with the cost of tuition.

The mission of career center practitioners is to teach skills and provide services that will facilitate the career development and job search process, ranging from assessing your abilities to negotiating employment offers. Don't overlook this opportunity; it could mean passing up the job of a lifetime.

## Develop Relationships

Find a career center counselor/advisor and get to know him or her. Try to meet with your counselor at least several times throughout your career development process. Appointments are a great way to stay motivated and to accomplish career-related tasks.

A counselor will listen to your concerns and provide objective advice. You can bounce ideas off him or her, which will help you think through your options. Furthermore, when unique job opportunities come in, counselors often alert students who they know well and think might be a good fit with the position. Remember, the more you share about your skills and your goals with the staff, the better they will be able to assist you.

## Attend Programs

Many career center practitioners spend the bulk of their time planning events for students. From mock interview days and networking nights to resume workshops and career fairs, at any given time there may be a number of programs going on that can assist you. Make sure you are aware of what's taking place. Find the event calendar, whether it is online, in the paper, or through an email. As you attend programs, ask thoughtful questions to make the most of what you are learning.

## Don't Be a Stranger

Your relationship with the career center doesn't have to end the day you don't wear your cap and gown. Many centers offer services for alumni similar to those for students. If you haven't found a job or even formed a plan by graduation, you still might be able to meet with counselors/advisors, use job listings and/or computers and attend programs. Check with the career center to see what is available and what time limits apply.

## Programs and Services

In addition to these tips, it's helpful to understand more about a career center's numerous services. These programs and offerings may include:

### Job Listings and Recruiting Programs

Virtually all career centers have job listings maintained in-house or by professional online services. Employers can post positions specifically for your individual college. Furthermore, many students will be able to take advantage of on-campus recruiting programs, where employers collect student resumes and conduct on-campus interviews for various job openings.

### Career Fairs

The beauty of career fairs is that they bring employers to you. Often held in a large venue, you can browse their available positions, talk with them informally, and drop off resumes. Fairs may be held up to several times a year, focusing on different types of positions, such as internships or nonprofit jobs.



### Internship Programs

Internships are the most valuable way to try out different career fields and gain hands-on experience while you are still a student. You can build your resume, learn the ropes, and maybe even get academic credit. You might also pave the way to a full-time position after graduation.

### Workshops

Career center workshops cover skills ranging from writing an effective cover letter to honing your interview performance. Not only can you get pertinent advice from career center staff and other workshop presenters, but you will also benefit greatly from being in a group environment with your peers.

### Alumni Networks

Many schools offer students access to alumni contacts in various career fields. These graduates have volunteered to serve as a resource for information and advice. This can be one of the most helpful ways to learn about different industries, and can help you get your foot in the door.

### Mock Interviews

When it comes to interviewing, practice makes perfect. The experience of having a simulated interview with a staff member can calm nerves, enhance performance, teach you how to answer tough questions, and prevent you from making big mistakes.

### Resume and Cover Letter Critiques

In addition to the assistance offered during individual appointments, many offices hold specific drop-in hours where a staff member can provide a quick resume or cover letter critique.

*Written by Jennifer Bobrow Burns, MBA Recruiter/Business School Relationship Manager at MetLife, Global Leadership Development Program.*

# A College Timeline— How to Plan for Success

## Freshmen—Explore

- 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 website.
- 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 websites.
- 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!

# 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 websites 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.



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# Developing a Winning Resume

A resume is a written document that is used to highlight the skills, contributions and experiences that represent the personal brand you want to portray to potential employers to secure an interview.

## Resume Types

Decide the resume style you prefer to use, based on the message you want to convey to employers:

- o *Chronological* – Highlight information starting with the most recent. Prioritize your sections so you start with the most important first!
- o *Functional* – Highlight information in categories based on commonly grouped skills. This type is useful for those with gaps in experience or a wide variety in work history, but can demonstrate similar skills.

## Format

Keep the following rules of thumb in mind when preparing the resume:

- o *Margins* – Top: 0.8" - 1"; Sides and Bottom: 0.5" - 1"
- o *Font Size and Style* – 10-12; simple, readable fonts (e.g., Calibri, Arial, Times New Roman); single spaced
- o *Balance* – white space and text space
- o *Length* – Undergraduate level - 1 page; Graduate and Ph.D. - 2 pages; Education, Nursing and Medicine can have more than 1 page
- o *Templates* – Refrain from using them! Use resume samples as a guide to create your own document, unique to your skills and qualifications
- o *Order* – Heading, Objective (if included) and Education are listed first, in that order

## Content

The makeup of your document should be deliberate and powerful:

- o *Prioritize* – Top two-thirds of the page receive priority when highlighting key categories and skills
- o *Own the Order* – Highlight the most relevant categories first; Experience does not always have to follow Education

## Heading

Highlight your personal contact information in a way that makes sense for your spacing needs. Include:

- o Name, which should be bold and in larger print (14-20 font size)
- o Permanent and/or current addresses (listing both signals a transition, e.g., graduation)
- o One professional email address without the hyperlink
- o One reliable telephone number
- o You do not need to label contact information e.g., Email: somebody@gmail.com, just indicate: somebody@gmail.com

## Objective

This optional statement should focus on your desired job title, if you choose to have one:

- o Use phrases such as "To obtain an internship in accounting or finance" or "Seeking full-time employment in engineering design, research or development"
- o You can also include specialized interests/areas of focus to help distinguish yourself
- o It is not necessary or expected that you highlight your skills or to extensively express what you want to gain from the experience in this section

## Education

- o Name of institution and location, e.g., Southern University and A&M College, Baton Rouge, LA
- o Official name of degree and major, e.g., Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering
- o Concentrations, Minors- separate line, e.g., Minor: Organizational Leadership
- o Month and year of graduation (future or past); you *do not* need to indicate expected/anticipated graduation, just indicate month and year, e.g., May 2014
- o Optional overall and/or major GPA and scale, e.g., 3.59/4.0
- o Omit high school information, unless 1) freshman or 2) significant or related to field

## Experience

Highlight employment, volunteer and school experiences that relate to your desired objective:

- o Potential titles for this section: Experience, Professional Experience, Related or Relevant Experience
- o Use the core four- company name, position held, month/year of start and finish, city and state. Country, if not in U.S.
- o Emphasize relevant skills, specific accomplishments and/or contributions
- o Bullet formula= Power Verb (Skill) + Identifiable Task + [Method/Purpose/Result]
- o Use important keywords and hot topics relevant to your field
- o **Do not** mention names of previous supervisors or advisors (Reference Page Only)

## Related or Relevant Courses

- o List atypical courses to emphasize exposure to related subjects/skills
- o Consider courses taken as part of concentration, minor and/or specialized electives
- o **Do not** include required courses for your degree as they do not distinguish you from other candidates

## Skills

- o Potential titles to consider: Technical/Computer Skills, Language Skills
- o Acceptable to categorize or list together if they are all in the same category; just list them, e.g., Adobe Illustrator
- o Microsoft Word and PowerPoint are considered universal skills so you don't need to list them. Only mention Microsoft if you have extensive knowledge of additional Microsoft Office programs.
- o Indicate your level of proficiency and be sure you can use them "on the job"
- o Skills like communication and teamwork should be highlighted within the context of your experiences; use your bullet statements to provide evidence of these skills

## Additional Sections

Depending on your background, you may want to add additional sections to your resume:

Most commonly listed after Education:

- o Study Abroad
- o Certifications or Licensure

Experience sections:

- o Leadership (very impressive to employers!)
- o Activities or Extracurricular Involvement or Student Organizations
- o Honors or Awards
- o Community Service or Volunteer

o Professional Affiliations

o Notable Projects or Class Projects or Projects

Most commonly used for a CV, but could be used for a resume if they are relevant to your career objective:

- o Research
- o Teaching
- o Publications
- o Presentations

## Do Not Include

- o Photographs, marital status, salary requirements, age, race, national origin, visa status or references

## References Available Upon Request

- o References *should not* be listed on a resume. An employer typically only asks for them during or after an interview
- o On a separate page, list 3-5 references, centered—name, position, company, address, phone and email
- o Copy and paste the same heading from your resume to the top of the references page

# Developing a Winning CV

**A** Curriculum Vitae or CV is a professional document that is used for marketing your background for a variety of purposes, mostly within academia or research. It can be multiple pages, but should be focused. Use the following tips to help you get started on your CV. Note: CV format and content may vary between disciplines. Therefore, consult with scholars within your discipline for current protocol.

## Resume Sample

**John R. Smith**  
901 F Street NW • Washington, D.C. 20004  
(212) 573-8888 • Johnrsmith@gmail.com

---

**EDUCATION**

**University of Thurgood Marshall** Houston, TX  
Expected Graduation Date: May 2018  
Bachelor of Science in Mathematics and Chemical Engineering; 4.0/4.0 GPA

**Relevant Coursework:** Biochemical Engineering I & II, Chemical Process Engineering, Atmospheric Chemistry & Physics, Biostatistics, Calculus I & II, Abstract Geometry

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**SKILLS AND SOFTWARE PROFICIENCIES**

Microsoft Office • C++ • Java Script • MS InfoPath • Conflict Resolution Skills • GIS • MathCAD • ASPEN • 10-Key • 75 WPM • Fluent in English and Spanish

---

**WORK & LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE**

Summer 2016 **Shell Oil Company** Houston, TX  
**Intern**

Worked with Chemical Engineers in various departments on several expansion projects.

- Recommended and implemented renovations program for out-of-date facilities, saving \$20 million in new building projected costs
- Managed and completed more than forty (40) projects in less than three (3) months
- Designed presentations for supervisor to present to potential clients based upon results and analysis of research

Summer 2015 **Conoco-Phillips, Inc.** Phoenix, AZ  
**Intern**

Assisted Chemical Technology Group with a focus on the different programmatic needs.

- Recommended and implemented new switching center design, which resulted in improved equipment maintenance and switching operations
- Achieved one hundred forty (140) percent growth in productivity for the department
- Designed and plan the layout of equipment

Spring 2014 **University of Thurgood Marshall** Houston, TX  
**Research Assistant**

A volunteered position with Big Brother/Big Sister Program; assisting program coordination, distribution of materials, event planning, general office needs and field projects.

- Trained staff on use of new programs and developed voice-automation system that increased productivity, which allowed fifteen (15) percent reduction in staffing needs
- Recruited and trained over twenty-five (25) volunteers, which saved \$500,000 dollars in operating and administrative costs
- Increased the mentoring program participant numbers by seventy-three (73) percent in three (3) months

---

**ACTIVITIES & HONORS**

National Dean's List; 2016, 2015, 2014 • University of Thurgood Marshall, SGA President • Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE), Recording Secretary • National Society of Black Engineers • Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. • National Honors Society • National Merit Scholar • Thurgood Marshall College Fund (TMC) Scholarship Recipient • TMCF 2013 Leadership Institute

## References Page Sample

**John R. Smith**  
901 F Street NW • Washington, D.C. 20004  
(212) 573-8888 • Johnrsmith@gmail.com

---

**References:**

Name of Reference, Position  
Company or Organization of Reference  
Company or Organization Address  
Phone Number  
Email Address

Comment: (1) The format of this heading should reflect that of your resume.

---

Name of Reference, Position  
Company or Organization of Reference  
Company or Organization Address  
Phone Number  
Email Address

Comment: (2) You can opt to list this information under the name.

---

Name of Reference, Position  
Company or Organization of Reference  
Company or Organization Address  
Phone Number  
Email Address

Comment: (3) Repeat as necessary depending on number of references requested

### Common Uses

- o Graduate school admission, graduate assistantship, or scholarship application
- o Teaching, research and upper-level administrative positions in higher education
- o School administration positions (superintendent, principal, department head)
- o Research and consulting in a variety of settings
- o Academic departmental and tenure reviews
- o College or university service appointments
- o Professional association leadership positions
- o Publishing and editorial board reviews
- o Speaking engagements
- o Grant proposal
- o Post Doc Application

### Foundational Standards

Use the following information from the Developing a Winning Resume on pages 12 and 13:

- o Heading
- o Objective
- o Format
- o Content
- o Experience
- o Skills

### Education

Include the following information:

- o Name of institution(s) where obtained or working toward a degree, listed in reverse chronological order
- o Official name of degree(s) and/or certification(s) obtained or currently working toward
- o Add Master's Thesis, Project and/or Dissertation title(s)
- o Name of Advisor

### Additional Sections

Depending on your background, you may want to add additional sections to your resume:

- o Teaching Experience and Interests
- o Research Experience and Interests
- o Related Experience: Internships, Practicum and/or Fieldwork
- o Grants Received and Academic Awards
- o Special Training
- o Scholarships and Fellowships

Reprinted with permission from the Career Planning Handbook of Purdue University.

# 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.

# Email Correspondence

For most of us, sending and receiving email is simple and fun. We use it to communicate with friends and family and to converse with our contemporaries in an informal manner. But while we may be unguarded in our tone when we email friends, a professional tone should be maintained when communicating with prospective employers.

Email is a powerful tool in the hands of a knowledgeable job-seeker. Use it wisely and you will shine. Use it improperly, however, and you'll brand yourself as immature and unprofessional. It's irritating when a professional email doesn't stay on topic, or the writer just rambles. Try to succinctly get your point across—then end the email.

Be aware that email is often the preferred method of communication between job-seeker and employer. There are general guidelines that should be followed when emailing cover letters, thank-you notes and replies to various requests for information. Apply the following advice to every email you write:

- Use a meaningful subject header for your email—one that is appropriate to the topic.
- Always be professional and businesslike in your correspondence. Address the recipient as Mr., Ms. or Mrs., and always verify the correct spelling of the recipient's name.
- Be brief in your communications. Don't overload the employer with lots of questions in your email.
- Ditch the emoticons. While a ☺ or an LOL (laughing out loud) may go over well with friends and family, do not use such symbols in your email communications with business people.
- Do not use strange fonts, wallpapers or multicolored backgrounds.
- Sign your email with your full name.
- Avoid using slang.
- Be sure to proofread and spell-check your email before sending it.

Neal Murray, former Director of the Career Services Center at the University of California, San Diego, sees a lot of email from job-seekers. "You'd be amazed at the number of emails I receive that have spelling errors, grammatical errors, formatting errors—emails that are too informal in tone or just poorly written," says Murray. Such emails can send the message that you are unprofessional or unqualified.

When you're dealing with employers, there is no such thing as an inconsequential communication. Your emails say far more about you than you might realize, and it is important to always present a polished, professional image—even if you are just emailing your phone number and a time when you can be contacted. If you are sloppy and careless, a seemingly trivial communication will stick out like a sore thumb.

## Thank-You Notes

If you've had an interview with a prospective employer, a thank-you note is a good way to express your appreciation. The note can be emailed a day or two after your interview and only needs to be a few sentences long, as in the following:

Dear Ms. Jones:

I just wanted to send a quick note to thank you for yesterday's interview. The position we discussed is exactly what I've been looking for, and I feel that I will be able to make a positive contribution to your organization. I appreciate the opportunity to be considered for employment at XYZ Corporation. Please don't hesitate to contact me if you need further information.

Sincerely,

John Doe

Remember, a thank-you note is just that—a simple way to say thank you. In the business world, even these brief notes need to be handled with care.

## Cover Letters

A well-crafted cover letter can help "sell" you to an employer. It should accomplish three main things:

1. **Introduce yourself to the employer.** If you are a recent college graduate, mention your major and how it would apply to the job you are seeking. Discuss the organizations/extracurricular activities you were involved in and the part-time jobs you held while a student, even if they might seem trivial to you. Chances are, you probably picked up some transferable skills that you will be able to use in the work world.
2. **Sell yourself.** Briefly state your education and the skills that will benefit the employer. Don't go into a lot of detail here—that's what your resume is for—but give the employer a sense of your strengths and talents.
3. **Request further action.** This is where you request the next step, such as an appointment or a phone conversation. Be polite but sincere in your desire for further action.

## Tips

In addition to the guidelines stated above, here are a few tips to keep in mind:

- Make sure you spell the recipient's name correctly. If the person uses initials such as J.A. Smith and you are not certain of the individual's gender, then begin the email: "Dear J.A. Smith."
- Stick to a standard font like Times New Roman, 12-point.
- Keep your email brief and businesslike.
- Proofread everything you write before sending it.

While a well-crafted email may not be solely responsible for getting you your dream job, rest assured that an email full of errors will result in your being overlooked. Use these email guidelines and you will give yourself an advantage over other job-seekers who are unaware of how to professionally converse through email.

Written by John Martalo, a freelance writer based in San Diego.

# Work Your Network

## Developing a Noticeable LinkedIn Profile

Technology has revolutionized the hiring process. In 2003, LinkedIn introduced an online business-networking platform that gave candidates and recruiters unprecedented access to over 332 million users across the globe, making the search for the right job and the right candidate a more efficient process. As a current or recent graduate, you may be unsure about how to best use LinkedIn. Is it like Facebook? What information should be in my profile? How do I use it to network or find a job?

### Is LinkedIn Like Facebook?

Nope, LinkedIn isn't like Facebook. LinkedIn isn't about personal details, like what you did last weekend. While you have a profile and a profile picture, the focus is business. This platform is where you showcase your educational background, relevant experience, volunteer experience, your skills, knowledge of your desired industry, interaction with other business professionals, and communicate your "value proposition" to employers.

### What Should Be Included In My Profile?

A polished LinkedIn profile is the crux of successful online networking. Consider your profile your first impression to a global online business community. While that can feel a bit intimidating, don't overthink it. It's easy to create a profile you can be proud to share with other professionals. To help you get started, use the following tips for constructing a professional profile beyond just your work experience.

#### 1. Headshot

LinkedIn profiles that have a headshot are more likely to be viewed by recruiters. Unlike your Facebook picture, your LinkedIn picture should be business-oriented. Your profile picture should be a preview of what it would be like to see you come in for an interview. Look professional and smile. Keep in mind that selfies are strictly prohibited if you want to land the job!

#### 2. Keyword Rich Headline

The second most important piece of your profile is the headline. This is an opportunity to announce to the global business community who you are or who you seek to become. Use this prime real estate to your advantage by incorporating keywords from your desired job or industry.

#### 3. Summary

The summary section is your 30-second elevator pitch. Use this section to introduce yourself and highlight significant skills, qualifications, and interests in your desired field. Be sure to communicate passion and enthusiasm for the industry and the work.

#### 4. Education

The education section is the place to list your full degree, indicate your institution, and graduation or anticipated graduation date. Be sure to include any minors, study abroad experiences and certificate programs related to the degree.

#### 5. Language

Share that you have the ability to speak a second language; include the language and proficiency level. Sharing this information can give you a competitive advantage over other candidates.

#### 6. Samples of Your Work

LinkedIn offers a great feature for users to upload samples of their work. Showcasing samples of presentations, research projects, senior capstone assignments, and portfolios add value and credibility to your profile.

#### 7. Volunteer Experience

Employers take note of volunteer experience. Be sure to include the name of the organization, your role within the organization and length of involvement. Also include details such as fundraising results, event coordination, management experience and more. Your volunteerism, in many cases, can be as valuable as work experience, especially if it is related to your desired industry.

#### 8. Awards and Honors

Highlight any awards and honors received during your collegiate academic career including nonacademic awards received for community or civic engagement. List the full name of the award (avoid acronyms), awarding organization or department, and the year the award was received.

#### 9. Select Your Skills

Identify your top industry-specific, technical and general skills. Adding this information to your profile will allow others to endorse your skill set, giving you instant credibility. A solid list of at least 8-10 skills demonstrates value and capability.

#### 10. Share Your Interests

Disclosing your personal interests and hobbies can help demonstrate your work-life balance. Personal interests can sometimes score a few extra "top candidate" points, but be sure to avoid sharing too much personal information. Remember, the LinkedIn profile is a platform for professionals.

### How Do I Network To Land The Job?

Now that you have completed your profile, land the job by using these top features to start connecting with other professionals:

#### Customize the Invitation to Connect

Every time you send a message to connect with someone on LinkedIn, make sure that you customize the text. Share who you are, why you want to connect, and how you found or know the individual. For example, if you met them in-person, tell them where you met and when.

#### Alumni Connections Feature

LinkedIn offers users a dynamic tool that connect individuals who share the same alma mater. Search for alumni who are practicing in your desired field, have the same degree, attended your institution during a specific time period, and more. Many individuals are happy to assist their fellow alumni with career advice and even hire alums. Don't forget to showcase your school pride in that customized invitation to connect!

#### Follow Companies, Join Groups, and Connect with Recruiters

Start following your dream companies on LinkedIn and join industry specific groups. Be the first to know about company news and job postings. As you start following companies, make note of who is posting updates and job announcements. Use those clues to connect with recruiters and company leaders.

#### Share Content

Position yourself as a knowledgeable resource. Share interesting industry or work productivity articles. Comment on posts shared by others in your network. Reinforce your professional brand by sharing your knowledge and perspectives.

*Gala Jackson, M.Ed. is a Millennial Expert & Career Management Consultant with InterviewSnob, a career consulting boutique for millennials. Connect with Gala @interviewsnob and check out her website at [www.interviewsnob.com](http://www.interviewsnob.com)*

# Social Networking Websites

Career professionals—and parents—are warning young job seekers that using social networking sites, such as Facebook and Twitter, may be hazardous to your career. After all, do you want your potential employer to see photos of you at last weekend's party? Certainly, those photos could diminish your prospects of landing a job. However, more job seekers are using social networking to enhance their preparation for interviews, garner an advantage over less-wired peers, and even gain an edge with recruiters.

One example of a constructive use of social networking websites is gathering background information about the recruiters with whom you will interview. By finding out about topics that will interest the recruiter, you may gain an upper hand in the interview process. In addition, stronger connections with a potential employer can be made by talking about the clubs he or she belongs to and even friends you have in common—information that can be discovered on Facebook.

Research on professional sites like LinkedIn can also be used to prepare for site visits. By using the alumni connections available through LinkedIn, you can gain added insight into potential employers. If you are interviewing with a company, search for alumni who are working there. You can have conversations with alumni via LinkedIn that you wouldn't have in an interview, such as, "do you like it at the company" or "can you negotiate salary?"

### Networking Rules

When you seek and maintain professional connections via social networking sites, follow the same etiquette you would if you were networking by phone and in person. Remember that every contact is creating an impression. Online, you might tend to be less formal because you are communicating in a space that you typically share with friends. Just as you would not let your guard down if you were having dinner with a potential employer, you must maintain a positive and professional approach when conversing with networking contacts online. Ask good questions, pay attention to the answers, and be polite—this includes sending at least a brief thank-you note anytime someone gives you advice or assistance.

### If It's OK for Mom, It's OK for Facebook

The more controversial aspect of the interplay between social networking and job searching is the privacy debate. Some observers, including career counselors, deans, and parents, worry that students put themselves at a disadvantage in the job search by making personal information available on Facebook and Twitter pages. More and more companies are using such websites as a screening tool.

Concern about privacy focuses on two areas: social life and identity/affiliations. Parents and career counselors argue that job-seekers would never show photos of themselves at a party in the middle of an interview, so why would they allow employers to see party photos on a Facebook page? Students often respond that most employers do not even use social networking sites and that employers already know that college students drink.

While it may be true that senior managers are less likely to be on Facebook, young recruiters may be active, and in many cases, employers ask younger employees to conduct online searches of candidates. Why risk losing a career opportunity because of a photo with two drinks in your hand?

It's easy to deduce that if an employer is comparing two candidates who are closely matched in terms of GPA and

experience, and one has questionable photos and text on his or her online profile and the second does not, that the second student will get the job offer.

### Identity—Public or Private?

Identity and affiliations are the second area where social networking and privacy issues may affect your job search and employment prospects. Historically, job-seekers have fought for increased protection from being asked questions about their identity, including religious affiliation and sexual orientation, because this information could be used by biased employers to discriminate. Via social networking sites, employers can now find information that they are not allowed to ask you.

Employers can no longer legally ask these questions in most states, however, some students make matters like religion, political involvement, and sexual orientation public on their web pages.

You would never include religious and political affiliations as well as sexual orientation or transgender identity (LGBTQ) on your resume, so do you want this information to be available via social networking sites? There are two strategies to consider. One approach is that if you wish to only work for an employer with whom you can be openly religious, political, or LGBTQ then making that information available on your web page will screen out discriminating employers and make it more likely that you will land with an employer open to your identity and expression.

A second approach though, is to maintain your privacy and keep more options open. Investigate potential employers thoroughly and pay special attention at site visits to evaluate whether the company would be welcoming. This strategy is based on two perspectives shared by many career professionals. First, as a job-seeker, you want to present only your relevant skills and experience throughout the job search; all other information is irrelevant. Second, if you provide information about your identity and affiliations, you may be discriminated against by one person in the process even though the company overall is a good match.

### Strategies for Safe and Strategic Social Networking

1. Be aware of what other people can see on your page. Recruiters use these sites or ask their colleagues to do searches on candidates.
2. Determine access intentionally. Some career counselors advocate deactivating your Facebook or Twitter accounts while job searching.
3. Set a standard. If anything appears on your page that you wouldn't want an interviewer to see, remove the offending content.
4. Use social networking to your advantage. Use these sites to find alumni in the companies that interest you and contact them before you interview in your career center or before a site visit. In addition, use social networking sites and internet searches to learn more about the recruiters who will interview you before the interview.

Written by Harriet L. Schwartz.

# Clean Up Your Social Media Identity

The social media profiles of job candidates are an area of scrutiny for recruiters. In fact, there are now even online research analysts who will comb the internet for damaging information on a firm's applicants. (On the flip side, there are "scrub services" that will clean up a job hunter's digital footprint.) Here are some simple ways to take a DIY approach to scrubbing your online presence.

## Google Your Name

Search for your name online occasionally to see what comes up, or set up automatic name alerts at [Google.com/alerts](https://www.google.com/alerts). You may discover results for many people with your same name, possibly with embarrassing or outrageous content. To find the real "you," try tweaking your name (e.g., Sam versus Samuel) or add some additional identifying modifiers (perhaps your city or school).

Search for your name on all the networks to which you've ever belonged, including Facebook and YouTube. (Recruiters check everywhere.) After a thorough review, ask yourself: *Will this social media profile foster callbacks, interviews and job offers?* If not, keep reading.

## Keep Some Mystery

"Most new grads grew up texting, Skyping, Tweeting, Facebooking and reading or creating blogs," says Jenny Foss, who operates Ladder Recruiting Group in Portland, Ore. "Older, more experienced competitors aren't 'native social media people.'" That's the plus; the minus is you have to shift your mindset from "impressing the guys" to "promoting myself as a polished professional."

Foss recommends you adjust the privacy settings on your accounts. But you're not safe even then since companies can change privacy policies. When possible, it is better to remove negative or overly private content than hide it.

## There's No Swimsuit Competition

Recruiters will judge you by your profile photos. Do they tell the right story? "Don't post sexy photographs of yourself online. Don't even be too glamorous. That's a really big turnoff to employers," says Vicky Oliver, author of *201 Smart Answers to Business Etiquette Questions*. "Dress in photos as you would in an interview."

Remove unflattering pictures, videos, and unfavorable comments you've posted on social networks. Post a high-quality headshot, the same one across all platforms. **Important:** Don't forget to check out photos where friends have tagged you on Facebook. If you're pictured at a party with a drink in hand, delete the tag. Adjust privacy settings to prevent that from happening again.

## Blot Out the Bitter

Have you ever gone online while under the influence or in a foul mood? Bad idea. "Whatever you wouldn't do at the networking event, don't do online," says Oliver. Some examples of social media gaffes: Posting about parties, dates, getting into posting wars with your friends, or using obscenities, faulty grammar, typos, or cryptic texting shortcuts.

"I personally would never put a thumbs-down sign on someone's comment," Oliver says. "I would not write anything negative, no snippy commentary at all."

## Get LinkedIn

This is the single best social media platform for job seekers because of its professional focus. Some savvy employers are now even requesting LinkedIn profile info as part of the job application

## Content You Should NEVER Share

*These may seem really obvious, but people lose jobs (and job offers) every day because of them:*

- Don't refer to a company by name; they may get alerts when mentioned online.
- Don't complain about your job or boss.
- Refrain from making snarky comments about co-workers or customers.
- Don't reveal your drug/drink habits.
- Never make discriminatory or inflammatory remarks.
- Don't share intimate relationship details.
- Don't brag about skipping work, playing games or sleeping on the job.
- Do not broadcast an employer's confidential information.

process. One of the most powerful aspects of this profile is the recommendations from previous bosses and co-workers. Testimony from others is proof positive of your professionalism.

Make good use of keywords and set up links between all your social media profiles. LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, and Blogspot all rank high in Google searches.

## Witness Protection Program

Some job seekers are so concerned about privacy they've gone into lockdown mode and blocked all of their profiles. Unfortunately, that makes recruiters wonder what they're trying to hide. Plus, many of them seek employees with social media skills, so cleaning up what's out there is usually better than shutting it down.

## What Would Your Mother Say?

Many career coaches and recruiters say that the rule of thumb for social media content is: Would you want your mother or employer to see it? No? Then don't post it.

"Self-censorship is the main key," says Alexandra Levit, author of *Blind Spots: The 10 Business Myths You Can't Afford to Believe on Your New Path to Success*. "Always think before you post, because if there is a single person out there who you don't want to see your content, I guarantee it will get back to them."

You may be too close to the situation to judge what's appropriate or not, so it can be helpful to have a second pair of eyes to look over your profiles. Select someone who's about the same age as your target employers, experienced in your field, or at least in the hiring process.

## Netiquette Tips

Dan Schwabel, a personal branding expert and author of *Me 2.0*, offers these tips to keep your digital reputation clean:

- Don't over-promote yourself or people will get turned off.
- Do share industry insights, useful resources, quotes and facts with your audience.
- Don't send your resume to employers on Facebook.
- Do build a relationship through tweeting before you email blindly.
- Don't come to an interview without researching the company and the hiring manager online, using LinkedIn first.

*Written by Jebra Turner, a former human resources manager, who writes about career issues, and other business topics. She lives in Portland, Ore., and can be reached at [www.jebra.com](http://www.jebra.com).*

# Getting the Most Out of a Career Fair

Many employers use career fairs—both on and off campus—to promote their opportunities and to pre-screen applicants. Career fairs come in all shapes and sizes, from small community-sponsored events to giant regional career expositions held at major convention centers.

Most career fairs consist of booths and/or tables manned by recruiters and other representatives from each organization. For on-campus events, some employers also send alumni representatives. Large corporations and some government agencies have staffs who work the career fair "circuit" nationwide.

An employer's display area is also subject to wide variance. It could be a simple table with a stack of brochures and business cards and a lone representative or an elaborate multimedia extravaganza with interactive displays, videos, posters and a team of recruiters.

## Fashions and Accessories

Generally, the appropriate attire for career fair attendees is more relaxed than what you'd wear to an actual job interview. In most cases, "business casual" is the norm. If you're unsure of the dress code (particularly for off-campus events), it would be wise to err on the overdressed side—you'll make a better impression if you appear professional. Think of it as a dress rehearsal for your real interviews!

Remember to bring copies of your resume (or resumes, if you have several versions tailored to different career choices), a few pens and pencils (have backups—they have a way of disappearing), a folder or portfolio and some sort of note-taking device (paper or electronic pad). Keep track of the recruiters with whom you speak and send follow-up notes to the ones who interest you. Don't bring your backpack; it's cumbersome for you, it gets in the way of others and it screams "student!" instead of "candidate!"

## Stop, Look and Listen

Keep your eyes and ears open—there's nothing wrong with subtly eavesdropping on the questions asked and answers

received by your fellow career fair attendees. You might pick up some valuable information, in addition to witnessing some real-life career search "do's and don'ts."

In order to maximize your career fair experience, you must be an active participant and not just a browser. If all you do is stroll around, take company literature and load up on the ubiquitous freebies, you really haven't accomplished anything worthwhile (unless you're a collector of key chains, mousepads and pocket flashlights). It is essential to chat with the company representatives and ask meaningful questions.

Here's a great bit of career fair advice from Stanford University's *Career Fair guide*:

"Create a one-minute 'commercial' as a way to sell yourself to an employer. This is a great way to introduce yourself. The goal is to connect your background to the organization's need. In one minute or less, you need to introduce yourself, demonstrate your knowledge of the company, express enthusiasm and interest and relate your background to the company's need."

## You're a Prospector—Start Digging

The questions you ask at a career fair depend upon your goals. Are you interested in finding out about a particular career field? Then ask generalized questions about working within the industry. If you're seeking career opportunities with a specific employer, focus your questions on the application and interview process, and ask for specific information about that employer.

## Fair Thee Well

By all means, try to attend at least one career fair before beginning your formal job interviewing process. For new entrants into the professional career marketplace, this is a good way to make the transition into "self-marketing mode" without the formality and possible intimidation of a one-on-one job interview. It's an opportunity that's too valuable to miss.





## Intelligent Path to Landing the Best Jobs

Quinnicia uses AI to enhance student engagement and embeds career readiness in both, the classroom and student life, with an ultimate goal of elevating academic programs and student outcomes.



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Scan the QR Code to Log In Using Your 'sus.edu' Email to Get Started Today!



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### A Few Words About Career Fair Etiquette

1. Don't interrupt the employer reps or your fellow job-seekers. If someone else is monopolizing the employer's time, try to make eye contact with the rep to let him or her know that you're interested in speaking. You may be doing a favor by giving the recruiter an out. If all else fails, move to the next exhibit and plan to come back later.
2. If you have a real interest in an employer, find out the procedures required to secure an interview. At some career fairs, initial screening interviews may be done on the spot. Other times, the career fair is used to pre-screen applicants for interviews to be conducted later (either on campus or at the employer's site).
3. Sincerity always wins. Don't lay it on too thick, but don't be too blasé either. Virtually all employers are looking for candidates with good communication skills.
4. Don't just drop your resume on employers' display tables. Try to get it into a person's hands and at least say a few words. If the scene is too busy and you can't get a word in edgewise, jot a note on your resume to the effect of, "You were so busy that we didn't get a chance to meet. I'm very interested in talking to you." Look around the display for the recruiter's business card (or at the very least, write down his or her name and get some literature with the company's address) and send a follow-up note and another copy of your resume.
5. If you know ahead of time that one of your "dream companies" is a career fair participant, do some prior research (at minimum, visit their website. A little advance preparation goes a long way and can make you stand out among the masses of other attendees.



### What Is an "Elevator Pitch"?

An "Elevator Pitch" is a concise, carefully planned, and well-practiced marketing message about your professional self that anyone should be able to understand in the time it would take to ride up an elevator. It should contain a "hook" or "theme" and go no longer than 60 seconds; resonate with your unique personality and interests and contain a follow up request for a business card, a referral, or future meeting.

### Why Do You Need It?

It helps get your foot in the door with potential employers whether on the phone, email or in person at a conference, chance social networking event, or through an informal face-to-face chance encounter through a friend or relative. You will have a "ready-made" two sentence to answer the "Tell Me About Yourself" or "What are you hoping to do when you graduate?"

- It forces you to figure out what your primary skill sets are and what makes you valuable.
- It helps you do the hard work needed to deliver an effective "cover letter" that entices an employer to read your resume and grant the interview.

### Common Mistakes By Recent College Graduates

- Lack of confidence in what you have to offer. —*"I don't have a lot of experience yet."*
- Lack of focus or goals. —*"I have a lot of interests and don't want to limit myself."*
- Inability to articulate the learning and skills gained from one's academic major. —*"I know my major has nothing to do with my interest in starting my own business, but..."*

### Using Career Labels to Get Started

- Begin with your education or areas of career experience and follow up with your primary "soft" skill your strongest area of expertise. Examples:
- International Trade and Immigration; strong writer
- MA International Relations; aptitude for policy analysis
- BA Finance; supply chain, logistics
- Human Resources; strong customer service skills

### Developing Your Elevator Pitch

- Write down your "Hard Skills" (your academic, volunteer, internship and work experiences).
- Write down your "Soft Skills" (describe who you are and how you operate).

### The Purpose of Your Elevator Pitch

- This short 15-30 second sound bite concisely and memorably introduces you. It allows you to succinctly and positively position yourself in the mind of the listener.
- Your first objective during an elevator pitch is to get them to like you—because if they don't like you, they might just take the stairs next time.

### Content

- **Profession**—what you do—your professional identity. Consider stating your true profession rather than your job title Ex: Trainer or Learning and Development Professional; HR Generalist or Human Resources Business Partner (students-aspiring HR professional after graduation). "I teach, create, develop." People who do are just seen as doers; people who inspire, teach and create are seen as experts. State this in the present tense ("I am", not "I was").
- **Expertise**—the competencies or skills you use to perform your work. "Competency" is a set of behaviors that describe excellent performance in a particular work context; a bundle of skills. A "skill" is something you can do well.
- **Types of businesses**—name the environments in which you have worked or want to work in. Ex: nonprofit, startup companies, Fortune 500 companies, government agencies, etc.
- **Special strengths**—the things that make you different from others who perform the same work (your competition). Do you have a special certification, unique approach to a problem, or exceptional technical knowledge? Connection to groups such as SHRM?

### Delivery

An elevator pitch isn't much good if first you don't come across as a credible, likeable individual. To achieve that, remember your business etiquette. The first thing you have to do is introduce or re-introduce yourself. Stick out your hand, and put your face and name back in context for them. Only then should you explain how they can help you. And after you deliver a pitch, try to give a really brief review of your talents, education, or skill set.

- 30-60 seconds in length
- Practice so that the delivery is natural, conversational, and effortless.
- Sound the part—show confidence and let your passion show through.
- Look the person you're speaking to in the eyes.

### Basic structure to begin with:

Hi, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I \_\_\_\_\_ (this can be your hook). I will be graduating from the College of Business at Southern University and A & M College with a degree in \_\_\_\_\_. I'm looking to \_\_\_\_\_.

### Examples

#### Example 1

*Hi, my name is John Smith, and I am a senior Environmental Sciences major. I am looking for a position that will allow me to demonstrate my research and analysis skills. Over the past few years, I have been strengthening these skills through my work with a local watershed council on conservation strategies to support water quality and habitats. Eventually, I would like to develop education programs on water conservation awareness. I am aware that your organization is*

involved in water quality projects. Can you tell me how someone with my experience may fit into your organization?

### Example 2

Hello, my name is Carol Smith. I am a Computer Science major and I hope to become a computer programmer when I graduate. I have had a

couple of internships where I worked on several program applications with a project team. I enjoy developing computer applications for simple business solutions. The position you have listed in Jobs4jags seems like it would be a perfect fit for someone with my skills. I would like to hear more about the organizations and the opportunities that are available.

# Develop Your Elevator Pitch

## Step 1: Research the Employer

1. Preview the list of organizations participating in the event and plan a strategy for the day. Put together an “A” list and a “B” list of employers you want to target. Contact your career services office to see what employers may be recruiting on campus.
2. Research all the employers on your “A” list. Look for current facts about each employer, including new products, services or acquisitions.
3. Write down some key facts about the employer:
  - (a) \_\_\_\_\_
  - (b) \_\_\_\_\_
4. Review job descriptions pertinent to your major for employer requirements. Note specific knowledge, skills, and abilities they seek. List academic or employment experiences and activities where you demonstrated these skills.

### The employer is seeking:

- (a) \_\_\_\_\_
- (b) \_\_\_\_\_
- (c) \_\_\_\_\_
- (d) \_\_\_\_\_

### My qualifications and selling points:

- (a) \_\_\_\_\_
- (b) \_\_\_\_\_
- (c) \_\_\_\_\_
- (d) \_\_\_\_\_

5. Review the employer’s mission statement and look for key words that indicate the personal qualities the organization values in its employees. List 2 or 3 of your personal qualities that closely match.

### My personal qualities:

- (a) \_\_\_\_\_
- (b) \_\_\_\_\_
- (c) \_\_\_\_\_

## Step 2: Develop Your Introduction

Review the examples. Using the information above, prepare and practice an elevator pitch to use when meeting employer representatives.

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### Notes:

Practice your introduction with a friend or career counselor so it sounds conversational rather than rehearsed. You may want to break your opening remarks into two or three segments rather than delivering it all at once.

Adapted with permission from the University Career Services department at Rutgers University, New Brunswick Campus.

# Business Etiquette Blunders and How to Fix Them

Getting a handle on business etiquette is even more important in this digital age, when the HR process is in flux and the “rules” aren’t always clear. Here are some of the top etiquette complaints from recruiters, and ways you can avoid those mistakes so that even old-school interviewers will be impressed with your good manners and social graces.

## No Show = No Job

This should go without saying, but actually showing up to an interview is necessary to lock down a job offer. Yet, too many candidates casually blow off interviews. One of the easiest ways to make a good impression is to arrive for interviews 10-15 minutes early, so you have plenty of time to get settled and perhaps check your appearance one last time.

If something pressing does come up, immediately call to cancel or reschedule. Decided you don’t want the job after all? Don’t just disappear. It’s not only rude, but every industry has a grapevine, and word of flakiness gets around. Failing to show for an on-campus interview can have even more severe consequences, so make sure you know the cancelation and no-show policy.

## Too Negative

“Keep your emotional baggage outside the interview door,” says Peggy Klaus, author of *BRAG! The Art of Tooting Your Own Horn Without Blowing It*. We all have days when the alarm doesn’t go off, the weather is a mess, and there’s no parking spot. Don’t whine. Be enthusiastic, eager, flexible, and most of all—likeable. “Do not expect the interviewer to entertain you, or do your job for you by drawing you out,” she adds.

## Thankless

Sending a thank-you note is an important way to demonstrate good manners. It doesn’t have to be handwritten, but it should be considered and specific. “An email is fine, but make sure it shows thought and effort,” says Klaus. “Don’t do it in the elevator on the way down. Do it with forethought, so you can translate what you got out of the interview.”

If you do a round of interviews with three people, say, then send three slightly different thank-you notes that day, or the next. (Get business cards so you have everyone’s contact information close at hand.)

## Too Familiar

When emailing someone you don’t know well, be a bit formal: Capitalize words, don’t use texting shorthand, and start with a salutation. “You don’t send an email to a *New York Times* bestselling writer and say ‘Hey, I need to know...,’” complains Martin Yate, author of [NYT bestseller] *Knock ‘em Dead, the Ultimate Job Search Guide*. “No, you start with ‘Dear Martin...’ and finish with ‘Thank you for your time. Sincerely, your name.’”

“Similarly, if everyone in the office calls your interviewer ‘Sam,’ adjust that to ‘Ms. or Mr. Jones,’” says Yate. “Be respectful of the people who can put food on your table.”

## What Dress Code?

Dressing appropriately for an interview is a balancing act. One level in formality above what people normally wear on the job is just right. For men, if you’d wear khakis and a polo shirt on the job, wear dress slacks and a blazer to the interview. Women should follow a similar “step up” plan. (Scope out company dress codes during informational interviews.)

“On an interview, you’re dressing to get hired, not dated,” says Yate. “Your dress must be conservative and clean cut. It shows respect for the occasion, job, company, interviewer, and most of all—for yourself.”

## Dining Disaster

You may have an opportunity to interview at lunch or dinner. It can be doubly nerve wracking to think about what you’ll say, as well as how to keep the spaghetti on your fork. “If you eat like a caveman with a mastodon on your plate, you won’t be invited to dine with the chairman of the board, or important clients,” Yate says. Don’t drink, even if your interviewer does, so that you can keep your wits about you, and be courteous to the wait staff. Consider ordering an easy-to-manage entrée.

## Clueless About the Employer

It’s so easy to do online research, that there’s no reason for you not to know about a prospective employer—the company and the individual. How much will employers care if you don’t do your due diligence? One applicant at IBM was asked if he knew what those three letters stood for. He did not. Next! (In case you ever interview at IBM, the answer is International Business Machines.)

## Annoying Devices

“We get complaints about candidates taking a cell phone call, or checking email, or texting in a meeting,” says Kathleen Downs, recruiting manager at Robert Half International in Orlando, Fla. “It’s a mistake to not silence a phone during a meeting. Even in the waiting room, we’ve had phones go off and it’s an inappropriate ring tone, like a hip-hop song with swear words.”

Make sure you have a greeting on your voicemail—some employers won’t leave a message if they aren’t sure they’ve reached the right party. And if your phone number is blocked, they can’t call you back if you don’t leave a message. “I’ve called candidates and gotten obnoxious voicemail messages, ‘You know who this is. You know what to do,’” she says. That’s not the way to win over a recruiter.

## Poor Profile

Employers often complain of inappropriate photos or comments on an applicant’s social media profile. “You can try to make that info private, but somehow, somehow, there’s a way to get to it,” Downs says. She has her Facebook profile set to private, and directs business contacts to her LinkedIn profile. “Don’t ever post anything racy. For example, don’t post a picture of yourself in a bikini—even if you look good!”

## Tattoos and Piercings

Tribal tattoos, hair dyed colors not seen in nature, or dreadlocks may turn off conservative employers. If your personal style doesn’t go over well in interviews, cover up (easy with some tattoos) or get a makeover ASAP.

“A guy with a piercing came to an interview with a tongue ring in,” says Downs. “I told him to go to the restroom and take it out. It was stuck. He had to go to the tattoo parlor a few miles away and have it cut out.”

If your personal style is more important to you than a position with a company, spend a little more time researching the corporate culture of a company before you apply, so you can find the right fit.

Written by Jebra Turner, a former human resources manager, who writes about career issues, and other business topics. She lives in Portland, Ore., and can be reached at [www.jebra.com](http://www.jebra.com).

# Professional Etiquette

Your 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.*

# Dining Etiquette at the Interview Meal

Tips and strategies to help you successfully navigate the interview meal with poise and polish.

## I. Accepting the Interview Invitation

- RSVP (*répondez s'il vous plaît*=please respond) to the invitation within 24 hours.
- Write down the date, time, location and the name and phone number of the person with whom you will meet. Also ask exactly where to meet inside the restaurant.
- Verify the information the day before the interview.

## II. The Day of the Interview

- Arrive a few minutes early to organize yourself and check your appearance.
- Turn off your cell phone and other electronic devices.
- Enter the building with a warm, professional confidence.
- Greet your host with a firm handshake and a smile as you introduce yourself.

## III. Before You Are Seated

- Follow your host's cue and wait to be directed to take a seat at the table.
- Enter your chair from the right.

## IV. After You Are Seated

- Do not place keys, phones, purses, sunglasses or other items on the table.
- Wait for your host to place their napkin on their lap before you do. Sometimes the waitstaff will place your napkin on your lap for you, so be observant.
- Fold the napkin in half and place it on your lap with the crease facing your waist.
- Use good posture and do not cross your legs under the table. Keep both feet flat on the floor, or cross your ankles.
- Avoid touching your hair and face and do not apply makeup at the table.
- If you must excuse yourself, exit from the right side of the chair, place your napkin on the seat of your chair and remember to slide the chair under the table until you return. When you return, enter your chair from the right and place your napkin on your lap.
- Study the place setting for a moment and follow your hosts lead before taking a sip of water or disturbing the silverware.

## V. Ordering

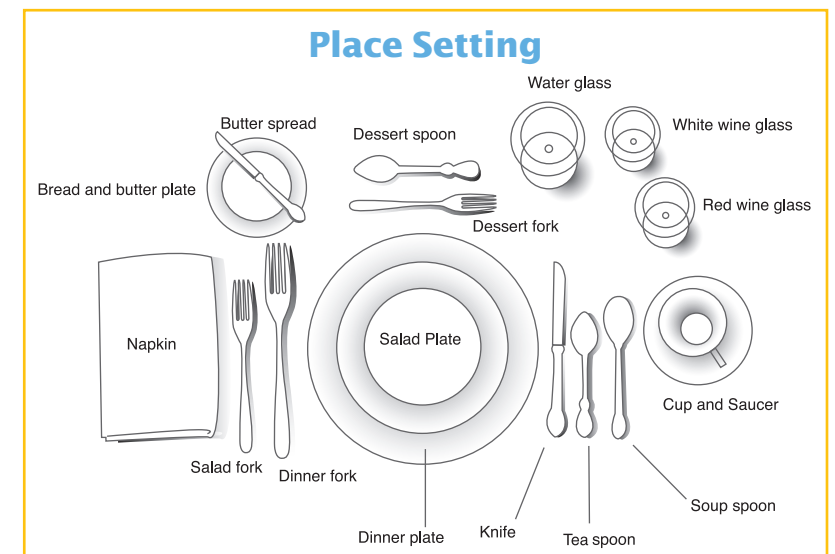
- Follow your host's cue and pay attention to any recommendations they make regarding menu selections. It will be a hint from them as to the level of hospitality they wish to extend to you. If you are not given recommendations you can ask for one. Try to select a menu option comparable to what your host orders.
- Remember to order menu items that are neat and easy to eat with a knife and fork such as chicken breast, cut

vegetables and roasted potatoes. Do not order messy food such as spaghetti or lobster.

- Do not order alcohol during an interview as you will need to be focused and mentally sharp to make the best impression possible.
- Do not smoke during the interview.

## VI. The Four-Course Place Setting

1. Bread plate
2. Butter spreader
3. Napkin
4. Salad fork (if the salad will be served before the main entrée)
5. Dinner fork
6. Place plate
7. Dinner knife
8. Salad knife (if the salad will be served before the main entrée)
9. Soup spoon
10. Water goblet
11. Iced tea glass
12. Dessert spoon
13. Dessert fork



## VII. Navigating the Place Setting

- Your bread plate will always be on your left.
- Your dinner plate will always be in the center.
- Your glassware will always be on your right.
- Forks will always be on your left and knives on your right.
- Begin using silverware from the outside and work your way in toward the dinner plate.

*Sonia Zubiate, Etiquette Coaching, Training and Consulting March 2011©*

# Don't Forget the Small Companies

Most students concentrate their job search on *Fortune* 500 corporations or other large, well-known companies with defined and approachable personnel departments. And in an economic climate that has proved challenging for small business, it would be easy to follow the path of “most students.”

But don't count out the small companies just yet. Small businesses have been at the forefront of innovation, economic growth and job creation, and there's no reason to doubt they'll continue to find themselves in this position in the future.

Generally, any business with 200 or fewer employees is considered a small company. Whether the business has 20 employees or 20,000, the research you do in preparation for an interview opportunity will be the best gauge of the company's outlook. As we've seen, large companies can be just as shaky as small ones, so the questions really come down to: “Is a small company right for you?” and “Are you right for a small company?” There are several things to consider when deciding between working in a large versus a small company.

## Is a Small Company Right for You?

Small companies tend to offer an informal atmosphere, an all-for-one camaraderie and require more versatility and dedication on the part of the company and workers. Small companies are usually growing so they are constantly redefining themselves and the positions within them. Look at the following list of small company traits and consider which are advantages and which are disadvantages for you.

- You are given more responsibility and are not limited by job titles or descriptions.
- Your ideas and suggestions will be heard and given more attention.
- Career advancement and salary increases may be rapid in a growing company.
- You have less job security due to the high rate of failure for a small business.
- You have the opportunity to be involved in the creation or growth of something great.
- You may be involved in the entire organization rather than in a narrow department.
- You may be eligible for stock options and profit sharing.
- The environment is less bureaucratic; there are fewer rules and regulations and thus fewer guidelines to help you determine what to do and whether you're succeeding or failing.
- Successes and faults are more visible.
- Starting salaries and benefits may be more variable.
- A dominant leader can control the entire organization. This can lead either to more “political games” or a healthy, happy atmosphere.
- You must be able to work with everyone in the organization.

## Are You Right for a Small Company?

Because most small companies do not have extensive training programs, they look for certain traits in potential employees. You will do well in a small company if you are:

- Self-motivated
- A generalist with many complementary skills
- A good communicator, both oral and written

- Enthusiastic
- A risk-taker
- A quick learner
- Responsible enough to get things done on your own

There are fewer limitations, and it's up to you to make the best or worst of that freedom. A small business often has a strong company culture. Learn that company's culture; it will help you on your way up the corporate ladder.

## Finding a Job in a Small Company

One of the biggest hurdles to finding a job in a small business is contacting a hiring manager. Good timing is critical. The sporadic growth of many small companies can mean sporadic job openings, so you need to network. A small business tends to fill its labor needs informally through personal contacts and recommendations from employees. Job hunters must find their way into the organization and approach someone with hiring authority. This means you must take the initiative. Once you have someone's attention, you must convince him or her that you can do something for the company. How do you find information on small companies? Try these techniques:

- Contact the chamber of commerce in the area you would like to work. Get the names of growing companies in the industry of your choice. Peruse the membership directory.
- Participate in the local chapter of professional trade associations related to your career. Send prospective employers a cover letter and resume, then follow up with a phone call.
- Read trade publications, business journals and area newspapers for leads. Again, follow up.
- Speak with small business lenders such as bankers, venture capitalists and small business investment companies listed in directories at local libraries.

Keep the following differences between large and small companies in mind as you conduct your job search:

Large Company	Small Company
Centralized Human Resources . . . . .	No HR
Formal recruiting program. . . . .	No full-time recruiters
Standardized hiring procedures . . . . .	No standard hiring procedures
Keep resumes on file . . . . .	Usually won't keep resumes
Interview held with recruiters and managers . . . . .	Interview often held with the founder or direct boss
Career section on website . . . . .	Little/no career section on website
Hiring done months in advance of starting date . . . . .	Hired to begin immediately
Formal training programs . . . . .	On-the-job training
Predetermined job categories . . . . .	Jobs emerge to fit needs

Always do your homework on the company, and persuade them to hire you through your initiative and original thinking. If you haven't graduated yet, offer to work for them as an intern. This will give you experience, and if you do well, there's a good chance that a job will be waiting for you on graduation day.

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

# Federal Jobs: Working for Uncle Sam

So you want to work for the federal government? You are not alone. Uncle Sam employs approximately 2.1 million civilian workers worldwide. Federal employees receive a generous benefits package, and as of 2015 they earned an average salary of \$84,153. As the largest employer in the U.S., the federal government offers a variety of career opportunities unparalleled in the private sector. Federal employees work with (and create) cutting-edge technology. They create policy, programs and services that impact the health, safety and welfare of millions of people worldwide.

But with these benefits come bureaucracy. If you do not like working within a system and following a defined chain of command, a federal job might not be for you. This bureaucracy is evident in the hiring process as well. Federal agencies follow strict hiring procedures, and applicants who do not conform to these procedures are left by the wayside. Typically, the federal hiring process can stretch on for months. In fact, many career professionals recommend that students applying for federal jobs begin the process at least two semesters before their graduation date.

## Types of Federal Jobs

Federal jobs are separated into two classes: competitive service and excepted service positions. Competitive service jobs, which include the majority of federal positions, are subject to civil service laws passed by Congress. Job applications for competitive service positions are rated on a numerical system in which applications are awarded points based on education, experience and other predetermined job qualification standards. Hiring managers then fill the position from a pool of candidates with the highest point totals.

Hiring managers for excepted service agencies are not required to follow civil service hiring procedures or pick from a pool of candidates who have been rated on a points system. Instead, these agencies set their own qualifications requirements, as occurs in private industry. However, both competitive service and excepted service positions must give preference to veterans who were either disabled or who served in combat areas during certain periods of time. The Federal Reserve, the Central Intelligence Agency and the National Security Agency are examples of some excepted service agencies. It's important to note that even agencies that are not strictly excepted service agencies can have excepted service positions available within them.

## OPM and USAJOBS

The U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) acts as the federal government's human resources agency. OPM's website (*opm.gov*) is expansive and contains a wealth of information for anyone interested in federal jobs, including federal employment trends, salary ranges, benefits, retirement statistics and enough links to publications and resources to keep a research librarian busy for days. Linked to the OPM site is the USAJOBS site (*usajobs.gov*), which has its own set of tools and resources that will be familiar to any standard job site user. USAJOBS acts as a portal for federal employment with thousands of job listings at any one time.

## Searching for Federal Jobs

Federal agencies now fill their jobs like private industry by allowing applicants to contact the agency directly for job

information and applications. However, most of these positions can be accessed through the USAJOBS site. All competitive service positions must be posted on the USAJOBS site, and although agencies are not required to post their excepted service positions on USAJOBS, many do.

Registered visitors to USAJOBS can create and post up to five resumes, which can be made searchable, allowing recruiters from federal agencies to find resumes during applicant searches. Applicants can also use these resumes to apply directly to jobs that have an online application option. In addition, job applicants can create as many as ten “search agents,” which search for job openings using certain criteria (such as location, job type, agency, salary requirements), and email matching postings directly to their inbox. Applicants can also search for jobs directly using the “search jobs” button on the USAJOBS homepage.

Remember, excepted service positions are not required to be posted on the USAJOBS site. If you are interested in employment with an excepted service agency, be sure to visit the recruitment section of its website for postings that may not have made it onto the USAJOBS site. It is often worthwhile to look at the sites of agencies that you do not associate with your field of study. If you are interested in the environment, you should definitely visit the EPA's website. But you should also make sure to visit the websites of other agencies that you don't associate with your major. It's not unusual for a biology major, for example, to find a job with Homeland Security or the Department of Defense.

## How to Apply

There is no general way to submit an application to OPM or to individual federal agencies. Instead, students should refer to each job posting for specific directions. Whether for competitive service or excepted service positions, federal job postings can be intimidating. A typical posting can run over 2,000 words and include sections on eligibility requirements, educational requirements, necessary experience, salary range, job duties and even a description of how applicants are evaluated.

Most importantly, all federal job postings include a section titled “How to Apply.” Instead of letting this avalanche of information overwhelm you, use it as a resource to help you put together the best application possible, paying particularly close attention to the “How to Apply” section. If you do not follow the instructions and procedures closely, your application may not be processed. “I would emphasize that applicants should carefully read the ‘fine print’ of all printed and online materials and applications,” says Dr. Richard White, Employer Relations Coordinator, Drew University. “Applicants who dot all their i's and cross all their t's gain a competitive advantage and rise to the top of the application pool.”

Federal agencies require specific information on your resume before it can be processed. The OPM created the USAJOBS Resume Builder in an effort to help applicants create a resume which can be used for most government agencies—go to *my.usajobs.gov* to get started. Agencies may also request that you submit additional forms for application (many of which are available on USAJOBS). Strictly following the “How to Apply” instructions will ensure that your application has all the information necessary.

*Written by Chris Enstrom, a freelance writer from Nashville, Ind.*

# 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.

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

### 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

# Students With Disabilities: Acing the Interview

**T**he traditional face-to-face interview can be particularly stressful when you have a disability—especially a visible disability. Hiring managers and employers may have had little prior experience with persons with disabilities and may react with discomfort or even shock to the appearance of a wheelchair, cane or an unusual physical trait. When this happens, the interviewer is often so uncomfortable that he or she just wants to "get it over with" and conducts the interview in a hurried manner. But this scenario robs you of the opportunity to present your credentials and could prevent the employer from identifying a suitable, qualified candidate for employment.

It is essential that you understand that interviewing is not a passive process where the interviewer asks all the questions and you simply provide the answers. You, even more than applicants without disabilities, must be skilled in handling each interview in order to put the employer representative at ease. You must also be able to demonstrate your ability to manage your disability and be prepared to provide relevant information about your skills, experiences and educational background. In addition, you may have to inform the employer of the equipment, tools and related resources that you will need to perform the job tasks.

## To Disclose or Not to Disclose

To disclose or not to disclose, and when and how to disclose, are decisions that persons with disabilities must make for themselves during the job search process.

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), you are not legally obligated to disclose your disability unless it is likely to directly affect your job performance. On the other hand, if your disability is visible, it will be evident at the time of the interview so it may be more prudent to acknowledge your disability during the application process to avoid catching the employer representative off guard.

## Reasons for Disclosing

You take a risk when you decide to disclose your disability. Some employers may reject your application based on negative, preconceived ideas about persons with disabilities. In addition, you may feel that the issue is too personal to be publicized among strangers. On the other hand, if you provide false answers about your health or disability on an application and the truth is uncovered later, you risk losing your job. You may even be held legally responsible if you failed to inform your employer and an accident occurs that is related to your disability.

## Timing the Disclosure

The employer's first contact with you will typically be through your cover letter and resume, especially if you initially contacted the organization. There are many differing opinions on whether one should mention the disability on the resume or in the cover letter. If you are comfortable revealing your disability early in the process, then give careful consideration to where the information is placed and how it is stated. The cover letter and resume should primarily outline relevant skills, experiences and education for the position for which you are applying. The reader should have a clear understanding of your suitability for the position. Therefore, if you choose to disclose your disability, the disclosure should be brief and placed near the end of the cover letter and resume. *It should never be the first piece of information that the employer sees about you.* The

information should also reveal your ability to manage your disability while performing required job functions.

## When You Get the Interview

As stated earlier, it may not be wise to hide the disability (especially a visible disability) until the time of the interview. The employer representative may be surprised, uncomfortable or assume that you intentionally hid critical information. As a result, more time may be spent asking irrelevant and trivial questions because of nervousness, rather than focusing on your suitability for the position. Get assistance from contacts in human resources, your career center or workers with disabilities about the different ways to prepare the interviewer for your arrival. Take the time to rehearse what you will say before making initial contact. If oral communication is difficult for you, have a career services staff person (or another professional) place the call for you and explain how you plan to handle the interview. If you require support for your interview (such as a sign language interpreter), contact human resources in advance to arrange for this assistance. Advance preparation puts everyone at ease and shows that you can manage your affairs.

## Tips on Managing the Interview

### Prior to the Interview

1. Identify a career services staff person to help you prepare employers for their interview with you.
2. Arrange for several taped, mock interview sessions to become more confident in discussing your work-related skills and in putting the employer representative at ease; rehearse ahead of time to prepare how you will handle inappropriate, personal or possibly illegal questions.
3. If your disability makes oral communication difficult, create a written narrative to supplement your resume that details your abilities.
4. Determine any technical support, resources and costs that might be necessary for your employment so that you can respond to questions related to this topic.
5. Be sure that your career center has information for employers on interviewing persons with disabilities.
6. Seek advice from other workers with disabilities who have been successful in finding employment.
7. Review the general advice about interviewing outlined in this career guide.

### During the Interview

1. Put the interviewer at ease before starting the interview by addressing any visible disability (if you have not done so already).
2. Plan to participate fully in the discussion (not just answer questions); maintain the appropriate control of the interview by tactfully keeping the interview focused on your abilities—not the disability.
3. Inform the employer of any accommodations needed and how they can be achieved, thereby demonstrating your ability to manage your disability.
4. Conclude the interview by reiterating your qualifications and giving the interviewer the opportunity to ask any further questions.

*Written by Rosita Smith.*

# Dressing for the Interview

Depending upon your fashion style, whether it is the latest trends for the club scene or merely college senior casual, a job interview may be cause for some drastic wardrobe augmentation.

For your interviews, some of your individualism might have to be shelved or kept in the closet. In most business and technical job interviews, when it comes to your appearance, conservatism and conformity are in order.

While many companies have adopted the “office casual” dress code, don’t try to set new standards in the interview. When in doubt, it is better to be too conservative than to be too flashy. For men and women, a suit is the best bet.

Here are some guidelines:

## MEN

- A two-piece suit will suffice in most instances.
- Solid colors and tighter-woven fabrics are safer than bold prints or patterns.
- Bright ties bring focus to the face, but a simple pattern is best for an interview. (A tip for larger men: Use a double Windsor knot to minimize a bulky appearance.)
- Wear polished shoes with socks high enough so no skin is visible when you sit down and cross your legs.

## WOMEN

- A suit with a tailored blouse is most appropriate.
- Although even the most conservative organizations allow more feminine looks these days, accessories should be kept simple. Basic pumps and modest jewelry and makeup help to present a professional look.
- Pants are more acceptable now but are not recommended for interviews.

## Staying Within a Budget

For recent graduates just entering professional life, additions to wardrobes, or complete overhauls, are likely needed. Limited funds, however, can be an obstacle. Image consultant Christine Lazzarini suggests “capsule wardrobing.” For example, by mixing and matching, she says, an eight-piece capsule wardrobe can generate up to 28 ensembles.

Before shopping, Lazzarini advises establishing a budget, 50% of which should be targeted for accessories. For women, “even a brightly colored jacket could be considered an accessory when it makes an outfit you already have look entirely different.”

The most important piece in any wardrobe is a jacket that is versatile and can work with a number of other pieces, according to one fashion expert. This applies to men and women. “If you focus on a suit, buy one with a jacket which may be used with other skirts or trousers,” says a women’s fashion director for a major national retailer. “Then add a black turtleneck or a white shirt. These are the fashion basics that you can build on.”

A navy or black blazer for men can work well with a few different gabardine pants. Although this kind of ensemble would be just as expensive as a single suit, it offers more versatility.

One accessory recommended by company representatives is a briefcase. “When I see one,” says one recruiter, “it definitely adds to the candidate’s stature. It is a symbol to me that the individual has done some research and that he or she is prepared.”

## A Final Check

And, of course, your appearance is only as good as your grooming. Create a final checklist to review before you go on an interview:

- Neatly trimmed hair
- Conservative makeup
- No runs in stockings
- Shoes polished (some suggest wearing your sneakers on the way to an interview and changing before you enter the interview site)
- No excessive jewelry; men should refrain from wearing earrings
- No missing buttons, crooked ties or lint

You want your experience and qualifications to shine. Your appearance should enhance your presentation, not overwhelm it.



## Taking a Casual Approach

“Office casual” is becoming the accepted mode of dress at more and more companies. The rules, however, for casual attire are subject to tremendous company-to-company variance. At some, “casual day” is a Friday-only observance, where the dress code is slightly relaxed—a sports coat and slacks for men and slacks and a sweater for women. At others, especially entrepreneurial computer companies, it’s shorts and sandals every day.

The safest fashion rule for new employees to follow is *dress about the same as your most conservatively attired co-worker*. As a new hire, don’t try to “push the boundaries” of casual attire.

### Fashion Arrests

- Never wear denim jeans or shorts unless the vast majority of others do.
- Don’t dress too provocatively—you’re at work, not at a dance club.
- “Casual” doesn’t mean “sloppy”—your clothes should always be free of stains or holes.
- Workout wear belongs at the gym.

### Play It Safe

- Chinos or corduroy slacks are usually a safe bet for both sexes.
- As for formal business attire, buy the best that your budget will allow.
- If you will be seeing clients, dress appropriately for *their* workplace, not yours.
- Go to the mall—most department and specialty stores have sections devoted to this style of office attire.

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## → CAREER READINESS PROGRAM

# Competencies for a Career-Ready Workforce

There are **eight career readiness competencies**, each of which can be demonstrated in a variety of ways.



### CAREER + SELF-DEVELOPMENT

Proactively develop oneself and one’s career through continual personal and professional learning, awareness of one’s strengths and weaknesses, navigation of career opportunities, and networking to build relationships within and without one’s organization.



### CRITICAL THINKING

Identify and respond to needs based upon an understanding of situational context and logical analysis of relevant information.



### LEADERSHIP

Recognize and capitalize on personal and team strengths to achieve organizational goals.



### TEAMWORK

Build and maintain collaborative relationships to work effectively toward common goals, while appreciating diverse viewpoints and shared responsibilities.



### COMMUNICATION

Clearly and effectively exchange information, ideas, facts, and perspectives with persons inside and outside of an organization.



### EQUITY + INCLUSION\*

Demonstrate the awareness, attitude, knowledge, and skills required to equitably engage and include people from different cultures and backgrounds. Engage in anti-oppressive practices that actively challenge the systems, structures, and policies of racism and inequity.



### PROFESSIONALISM

Knowing work environments differ greatly, understand and demonstrate effective work habits, and act in the interest of the larger community and workplace.



### TECHNOLOGY

Understand and leverage technologies ethically to enhance efficiencies, complete tasks, and accomplish goals.

**What Is Career Readiness?** Career readiness is a foundation from which to demonstrate requisite core competencies that broadly prepare the college educated for success in the workplace and lifelong career management.

\*This competency is currently under review. Please visit our website for more information.

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# 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.

# S.T.A.R. Method of Behavioral Interviewing

Behavioral Question and Answer Example: “Describe a time when you demonstrated effective problem-solving skills.”



- LISTEN to the question
- THINK of an event, scenario, project, situation
- ORGANIZE your thoughts within 5-8 seconds
- SHARE your story effectively using the following method



- Describe the setting in which your interview response takes place.
- What were you doing? Who were you working with? What project were you working on?

**Example Answer:** “During my role as an Event Planning Intern at Company X this past summer, I managed all of the details and supervised a group of five in order to successfully host certain events.”



- Explain how the situation changed, and how you were expected to address this change.
- What was the goal you were striving to accomplish, or the problem you were trying to solve?

**Example Answer:** “After reviewing the company’s annual report, I noticed that the attendance at our events had dropped by 30% in the past 3 years, and I wanted to find a solution to this problem.”



- Clarify the specific action steps that you took in order to address the task at hand.
- Demonstrate and mention skills that you utilized in each step.
- What did you do to resolve the problem or reach the goal?
- Present your key strengths confidently in the Action Step.

**Example Answer:** “First, I collected feedback by sending out a questionnaire to past attendees and partners on ways to improve our events. I gathered this research, and used it to design a new, more effective promotional packet using Software X.”



- Explain how your actions contributed to the overall end product.
- How did the situation end? What did you learn from this experience?
- Include concrete, quantifiable data to provide specific details in your response.

**Example Answer:** “Company X was able to utilize both my solutions and feedback from the community to host even better events. After implementing some of these strategies, we raised attendance to our events by 20% in the first year. I learned that it is essential to continually adapt strategies through marketing and research to increase participation.”

When answering behavioral based interview questions, you need to answer with specific examples with the actions you made. Telling us about a time your group did something does not tell us about you.

—Cummins

The importance of clear articulation of experiences and desires is very important. The better they are able to clarify and communicate, the better they will set themselves up for future success.

—PepsiCo

They are there to sell themselves just like we are there to sell ourselves. Come with enthusiasm! Show us why we should hire you! And have good examples relating to their field of study.

—Caterpillar

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# 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.

# The Site Visit/Interview: One Step Closer

While on-campus screening interviews are important, on-site visits are where jobs are won or lost. After an on-campus interview, strong candidates are usually invited to visit the employer's facility. Work with the employer to schedule the on-site visit at a mutually convenient time. Sometimes employers will try to arrange site visits for several candidates to take place at the same time, so there may not be much flexibility...but you'll never know if the employer is flexible unless you ask.

1. An invitation to an on-site interview is NOT a guarantee of a job offer. It is a chance to examine whether or not you will be a good match for the job and for the organization.
2. If invited to an on-site interview, respond promptly if you are sincerely interested in this employer. Decline politely if you are not. Never go on an on-site interview for the sake of the trip. Document the name and phone number of the person coordinating your trip. Verify who will be handling trip expenses. Most medium- and large-size companies (as well as many smaller ones) will pay your expenses, but others will not. This is very important, because expenses are handled in various ways: 1) the employer may handle all expenses and travel arrangements; 2) you handle your expenses and arrangements (the employer may assist with this), and the employer will reimburse you later; 3) the employer may offer an on-site interview, but will not pay for your travel.
3. Know yourself and the type of job you are seeking with this employer. Don't say, "I am willing to consider anything you have."
4. Thoroughly research the potential employer. Read annual reports, newspaper articles, trade journals, etc. Many companies have websites where you can read their mission statements, find out about long-term goals, read recent press releases, and view corporate photos. Don't limit your research only to company-controlled information. The internet can be a valuable investigative tool. You may uncover key information that may influence—positively or negatively—your decision to pursue employment with a given organization.
5. Bring extra copies of your resume; copies of any paperwork you may have forwarded to the employer; names, addresses, phone numbers and email addresses of your references; an updated college transcript; a copy of your best paper as a writing sample; a notebook; a black and/or blue pen for filling out forms and applications; and names and addresses of past employers.
6. Bring extra money and a change of clothes. Also, have the names and phone numbers of those who may be meeting you in case your plans change unexpectedly. Anything can happen and you need to be ready for emergencies.
7. Your role at the interview is to respond to questions, to ask your own questions and to observe. Be ready to meet people who are not part of your formal agenda. Be courteous to everyone regardless of his or her position; you never know who might be watching you and your actions once you arrive in town.
8. Don't forget your table manners. Plant trips may include several meals or attendance at a reception the night before

your "big day." When ordering food at a restaurant, follow the lead of the employer host. For example, don't order the three-pound lobster if everyone else is having a more moderately priced entree. If you have the "dining jitters," some authorities suggest ordering food that is easy to handle, such as a boneless fish fillet or chicken breast.

9. Many employers have a set salary range for entry-level positions and others are more negotiable. Though salary should not be brought up until an offer is extended, it is wise to know your worth in advance. In as much as you are a potential employee, you also represent a valuable skills-set product. You should know what kind of product you have created, its value and what the company is willing to buy. Contact your campus career center to obtain more information on salaries.

## Take note of how the employees interact, and also assess the physical work environment.

10. Soon after the site visit, record your impressions of your performance. Review the business cards of those you met or write the information in your notebook before leaving the facility. You should have the names, titles, addresses and phone numbers of everyone who was involved in your interview so you can determine which individuals you may want to contact with additional questions or follow-up information. A thank-you letter should be written to the person(s) who will be making the hiring decision. Stay in touch with the employer if you want to pursue a career with them.

A site visit is a two-way street. You are there to evaluate the employer and to determine if your expectations are met for job content, company culture and values, organizational structure, and lifestyles (both at work and leisure). Take note of how the employees interact, and also assess the physical work environment.

Just as any good salesperson would never leave a customer without attempting to close the sale, you should never leave an interview without some sort of closure. If you decide that the job is right for you, don't be afraid to tell the employer that you feel that there is a good fit and you are eager to join their team. The employer is interested in hiring people who want to be associated with them and they will never know of your interest if you don't voice your opinion. Keep in mind that although the employer has the final power to offer a job, your demeanor during the entire interviewing process—both on and off campus—also gives you a great deal of power.

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



- Voted Great District for Great Teachers  
National Council on Teacher Quality
- Winner of The Broad Prize for Urban Education  
The Broad Foundation
- Top Employer  
Atlanta Business Chronicle
- Reader's Choice Winner  
Gwinnett Daily Post
- Honored as AP District Of The Year  
College Board



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# The Art of Negotiating

An area of the job search that often receives little attention is the art of negotiating. Once you have been offered a job, you have the opportunity to discuss the terms of your employment. Negotiations may be uncomfortable or unsatisfying because we tend to approach them with a winner-take-all attitude that is counterproductive to the concept of negotiations.

Negotiating with your potential employer can make your job one that best meets your own needs as well as those of your employer. To ensure successful negotiations, it is important to understand the basic components. The definition of negotiation as it relates to employment is: a series of communications (either oral or in writing) that reach a satisfying conclusion for all concerned parties, most often between the new employee and the hiring organization.

Negotiation is a planned series of events that requires strategy, presentation and patience. Preparation is probably the single most important part of successful negotiations. Any good trial attorney will tell you the key to presenting a good case in the courtroom is the hours of preparation that happen beforehand. The same is true for negotiating. A good case will literally present itself. What follows are some suggestions that will help you prepare for successful negotiating.

## Research

Gather as much factual information as you can to back up the case you want to make. For example, if most entering employees cannot negotiate salary, you may be jeopardizing the offer by focusing on that aspect of the package. Turn your attention to other parts of the offer such as their health plan, dental plan, retirement package, the type of schedule you prefer, etc.

## Psychological Preparation

Chances are that you will not know the person with whom you will be negotiating. If you are lucky enough to be acquainted, spend some time reviewing what you know about this person's communication style and decision-making behavior.

In most cases, however, this person will be a stranger. Since most people find the unknown a bit scary, you'll want to ask yourself what approach to negotiating you find most comfortable. How will you psyche yourself up to feel confident enough to ask for what you want? How will you respond to counteroffers? What are your alternatives? What's your bottom line? In short, plan your strategy.

Be sure you know exactly what you want. This does not mean you will get exactly that, but having the information clear in your head will help you determine what you are willing to concede. Unless you know what you want, you won't be able to tell somebody else. Clarity improves communication, which is the conduit for effective negotiations.

## Practice

Rehearse the presentation in advance using another person as the employer. If you make mistakes in rehearsal, chances are that you will not repeat them during the actual negotiations. A friend can critique your reasoning and help you prepare for questions. If this all seems like a lot of work, remember that if something is worth negotiating for, it is worth preparing for.

## Dollars and Sense

Always begin by expressing genuine interest in the position and the organization, emphasizing the areas of agreement but allowing "wiggle room" to compromise on other areas. Be prepared to support your points of disagreement, outlining the parts you would like to alter, your suggestions on how this can be done and why it would serve the company's best interests to accommodate your request.

Be prepared to defend your proposal. Back up your reasons for wanting to change the offer with meaningful, work-related skills and positive benefits to the employer. Requesting a salary increase because you are a fast learner or have a high GPA are usually not justifiable reasons in the eyes of the employer. Meaningful work experience or internships that have demonstrated or tested your professional skills are things that will make an employer stop and take notice.

It is sometimes more comfortable for job-seekers to make this initial request in writing and plan to meet later to hash out the differences. You will need to be fairly direct and assertive at this point even though you may feel extremely vulnerable. Keep in mind that the employer has chosen you from a pool of qualified applicants, so you are not as powerless as you think.

Sometimes the employer will bristle at the suggestion that there is room to negotiate. Stand firm, but encourage the employer to think about it for a day or two at which time you will discuss the details of your proposal with him/her. Do not rush the process because you are uncomfortable. The employer may be counting on this discomfort and use it to derail the negotiations. Remember, this is a series of volleys and lobs, trade-offs and compromises that occur over a period of time. It is a process—not a singular event!

Once you have reached a conclusion with which you are both relatively comfortable, present in writing your interpretation of the agreement so that if there is any question, it will be addressed immediately. Negotiation, by definition, implies that each side will give. Do not perceive it as an ultimatum.

If the employer chooses not to grant any of your requests—and realistically, he or she can do that—you will still have the option of accepting the original offer provided you have maintained a positive, productive and friendly atmosphere during your exchanges. You can always re-enter negotiations after you have demonstrated your worth to the organization.

## Money Isn't Everything

There are many things you can negotiate besides salary. For example, benefits can add thousands of dollars to the compensation package. Benefits can range from paid personal leave to discounts on the company's products and services. They constitute more than just icing on the cake; they may be better than the cake itself. Traditional benefits packages include health insurance, paid vacation and personal/sick days. Companies may offer such benefits as child care, elder care or use of the company jet for family emergencies. Other lucrative benefits could include disability and life insurance and a variety of retirement plans. Some organizations offer investment and stock options as well as relocation reimbursement and tuition credits for continued education.

*Written by Lily Maestas, Career Counselor, Career Services, University of California, Santa Barbara.*

# The 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 Chicago?

$$\frac{\text{New York City } 168}{\text{Chicago } 103} \times \$50,000 = \$81,553$$

<b>Average City, USA</b>	100	<b>Idaho</b>		<b>Montana</b>		<b>Pennsylvania</b>	
<b>Alabama</b>		Boise	107	Billings	107	Philadelphia	96
Birmingham	78	<b>Illinois</b>		Missoula	110	Pittsburgh	84
Montgomery	89	Chicago	103	<b>Nebraska</b>		<b>South Carolina</b>	
<b>Alaska</b>		Springfield	87	Lincoln	91	Charleston	109
Anchorage	143	<b>Indiana</b>		Omaha	88	Columbia	99
<b>Arizona</b>		Bloomington	98	<b>Nevada</b>		<b>South Dakota</b>	
Flagstaff	119	Indianapolis	89	Las Vegas	99	Sioux Falls	95
Phoenix	99	South Bend	83	<b>New Jersey</b>		<b>Tennessee</b>	
Tucson	92	<b>Iowa</b>		Atlantic City	100	Chattanooga	88
<b>Arkansas</b>		Des Moines	82	Princeton	162	Memphis	73
Little Rock	88	Iowa City	105	Newark	122	Nashville	99
<b>California</b>		<b>Kansas</b>		<b>New Mexico</b>		<b>Texas</b>	
Fresno	105	Kansas City	85	Albuquerque	101	Austin	107
Irvine	215	<b>Kentucky</b>		Santa Fe	120	Dallas	106
Los Angeles	164	Lexington	95	<b>New York</b>		Houston	98
Sacramento	113	Louisville	87	Albany	102	San Antonio	92
San Diego	164	<b>Louisiana</b>		Buffalo	74	<b>Utah</b>	
San Francisco	243	Baton Rouge	90	New York City	168	Salt Lake City	115
San José	197	New Orleans	99	Syracuse	89	<b>Vermont</b>	
<b>Colorado</b>		<b>Maine</b>		<b>North Carolina</b>		Burlington	124
Boulder	155	Portland	118	Chapel Hill	128	<b>Virginia</b>	
Colorado Springs	101	<b>Maryland</b>		Charlotte	94	Richmond	95
Denver	115	Baltimore	88	Raleigh	101	Virginia Beach	110
<b>Connecticut</b>		<b>Massachusetts</b>		<b>North Dakota</b>		<b>Washington</b>	
Hartford	109	Boston	161	Fargo	98	Seattle	154
New Haven	113	<b>Michigan</b>		<b>Ohio</b>		<b>Washington, DC</b>	154
Stamford	167	Ann Arbor	111	Cincinnati	83	<b>West Virginia</b>	
<b>Delaware</b>		Detroit	73	Cleveland	79	Charleston	91
Wilmington	98	Lansing	82	Columbus	82	<b>Wisconsin</b>	
<b>Florida</b>		<b>Minnesota</b>		Dayton	76	Madison	116
Miami	119	Minneapolis	108	<b>Oklahoma</b>		Milwaukee	85
Orlando	92	St. Paul	102	Oklahoma City	89	<b>Wyoming</b>	
<b>Georgia</b>		<b>Missouri</b>		Tulsa	85	Cheyenne	103
Atlanta	97	Kansas City	94	<b>Oregon</b>			
<b>Hawaii</b>		St. Louis	84	Portland	126		
Honolulu	199						



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