2019-2020 CAREER GUIDE
CAREER PLANNING AND CAMPUS RECRUITING
SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY AND AGRICULTURAL & MECHANICAL COLLEGE
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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 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. (The interviewing season begins in September and ends in April.) Registering with Career Services provides students, which are not only comprehensive, but also preeminent in the

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.

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.

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.

Sincerely,

Tamara Foster-Montgomery
Director
Responsibilities of the Student

Responsibilities required of the student. Possible results from any interaction, we have outlined some inappropriate, they do affect the actor and other individuals actions. Whether the actions are reflected as individuals normally have certain motives or causes for their view of the first portion of the definition, it is implied that agent; or able to answer for one’s conduct and obligation.” In 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 Recruiter

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 Recruiter

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 himself/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 himself/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.

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.

Students must schedule an appointment to take advantage of one-on-one resume review sessions and mock interviews. Contact the center today!
Making Career Services Work for You

Many 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 rights 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 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.

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 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 sentence.

10. **Too modest.** The resume showcases your qualifications in competition with the other applicants. Put your best foot forward without misrepresentation, falsification or arrogance.

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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 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.

The Three Rs

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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 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.
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:
- Chronological – Highlight information starting with the most recent. Prioritize your sections so you start with the most important first!
- 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 it can demonstrate similar skills.

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

Content
The makeup of your document should be deliberate and powerful:
- Prioritize – Top two-thirds of the page receive priority when highlighting key categories and skills
- 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:
- Name, which should be bold and in larger print (14-20 font size)
- Permanent and/or current addresses (listing both signals a transition, e.g., graduation)
- One professional email address without the hyperlink
- One reliable telephone number
- 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:
- Use phrases such as “I obtained an internship in accounting/finance” or “Seeking full-time employment in engineering design, research or development”
- You can also include specialized interests/areas of focus to help distinguish yourself
- 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
- Name of institution and location, e.g., Southern University and A&M College, Baton Rouge, LA
- Official name of degree and major, e.g., Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering
- Concentrations, Minors—separate line, e.g., Minor Organizational Leadership
- 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
- Optional overall and/or major GPA and scale, e.g., 3.9/4.0
- Omit high school information, unless 1) freshman or 2) significant or related to field of

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

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

Skills
- Potential titles to consider: Technical/Computer Skills, Language Skills
- Acceptable to categorize or list together if they are all in the same category; just list them, e.g., Adobe Illustrator
- 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.
- Indicate your level of proficiency and be sure you can use them “on the job”
- 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:
  - Leadership (very impressive to employers)
  - Activities or Extracurricular Involvement or Student Organizations
  - Honors or Awards
  - Community Service or Volunteer
  - Certifications or Licensure
  - Presentations

Do Not Include
- Photographs, marital status, salary requirements, age, race, national origin, visa status or references

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

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

John R. Smith
8017 30th NW • Washington, D.C. 20004
(302) 573-0888 • johnrsmith@gmail.com

EDUCATION

University of Thurgood Marshall • Houston, TX
Bachelor of Science in Mathematics and Chemical Engineering 4/04 GPA 3.0

Relevant coursework: Biochemical Engineering I & II; Chemical Process Engineering, Atmospheric Chemistry & Physics, Environmental Engineering, Calculus I & II, Abstract Geometry

SPECIAL SKILLS AND SOFTWARE PROFESSIONAL

Microsoft Office, C++, Java, Excel, SolidWorks, AutoDesk, Comfort Station, GE -SOLIDWORKS ASPEN+ 10-Key, 75 WMF - Fluent in English and Spanish

WORK & LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

Research Assistant
Spring 2014

Conoco-Philips, Inc. • Houston, TX

- Worked with Chemical Engineers in various departments on several expansion projects.
- Recommended and implemented innovations program for oil-of-oil fractionation, saving $30 million in new building and equipment costs.
- Managed and completed more than forty (40) projects in less than three (3) months.
- Designed and wrote reports to maintain current client's based upon analysis of research.

Intern
Summer 2015

Chevron, Inc. • Phoenix, AZ

- Assisted Chemical Technology Group with focus on the different programmatic needs.
- Recommended and implemented near-stretching design, which resulted in improved equipment maintenance and operating efficiency.
- Achieved a hundred-fold (100) percent growth in productivity for the department.
- Designed and planned the layout of equipment.

Project Manager
Summer 2016

University of Thurgood Marshall • Houston, TX

- Conducted project on use of new programs and developed software solution system that increased productivity by fifty percent.
- Analyzed fifteen (15) percent reduction in staffing needs.
- Recruited and trained over twenty-five (25) volunteers, which saved $500,000 dollars in operational and administrative costs.
- Increased the membership program participant members by seventy-three (73) percent in six (6) months.

ACTIVITIES & HONORS

National Dean's List 2013, 2015, 2016 • National Honor Society • National Society of Black Engineers • Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. • National Honor Society • National Merit Scholar • Thurgood Marshall College Fund (TMCF) Scholarship Recipient • TMCF 2013 Leadership Institute

References Page Sample

John R. Smith
8017 30th NW • Washington, D.C. 20004
(302) 573-0888 • johnrsmith@gmail.com

References:

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

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

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

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

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

Foundational Standards
- Use the following information from the Developing a Winning Resume on pages 12 and 13:
  - Education
  - Experience
  - Skills
  - Accomplishments
  - Interests/Activities
  - Professional Certification

Education
- Include the following information:
  - Official name of degree(s) obtained or currently working toward a degree
  - Name of institution(s) where obtained or working toward a degree, listed in reverse chronological order
  - Official name of degree(s) and/or certification(s) obtained or currently working toward a degree
  - Official name of advisor

Additional Sections
- Depending on your background, you may want to add additional sections to your resume:
  - Teaching Experience and Interests
  - Research Experience and Interests
  - Service Experience and Interests

References:

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

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

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

- 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.

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

Comment: (3) Repeat as necessary

Reprinted with permission from the Career Planning Handbook of Purdue University.
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. Employers are often put off by casual language that is out of place 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—and 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 emotions. While a C 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.
• Do not use slang.
• Avoid using slang.
• Be sure to proofread and spell-check your email before sending it.
• You can include your name in the subject line, but be sure to keep the subject line short and to the point. Just be aware that email subject lines are often ignored.
• Use your name in the “From” line, as well as in the body of the email.
• Be polite but sincere in your desire for 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.
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 worry. 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 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 in an interview. Look professional. Make sure 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, experiences, and knowledge of your desired industry. Begin with an engaging statement. State your promise and focus on what you want to achieve. For example, “If you are interested in leveraging my diverse skills and knowledge to drive sales and revenue for a tech company, I'd love to speak to you. Let’s connect!”

4. Education
The education section is the place to list your full degree, indicate your major and minor, and include your 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. Showcase samples of presentations, research projects, senior capstone projects, and portfolios add value and credibility to your profile.

7. Volunteer Experience
Volunteer experience is a great way to demonstrate your passion and enthusiasm for the industry and the work you want to do. When you volunteer, be sure to include the name of the organization, your role within the organization and the location of the organization. For example, “I volunteered with Food Connexion, a non-profit organization in my city, by helping set up the annual blood drive. By volunteering in this role, I was able to learn more about the organization and gain valuable experience.”

8. Awards and Honors
Highlight any awards and honors received during your college career, including academic and extra-curricular activities 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.

9. Select Your Skills
Identify your top industry-specific, technical and general skills. Add this information to your LinkedIn profile when you endow yourself with a 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 you customize the message. Share with them who you are, why you want to connect, and how you found or known the individual. For example, if you met them in-person, tell them where and when.

Alumni Connections Feature
LinkedIn offers users a dynamic tool that connects 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 industry leaders are happy to assist their fellow alumni with career advice and even hire alumni. Don’t forget to attend to showcase your school pride in that customized invitation to connect.

Find Connections, 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 updates. Recruiters and companies, make note of who you are posting updates and job announcements. Use those clues to connect with recruiters and company leaders.

Social Media
Position yourself as a knowledgeable resource. Share interesting industry or work-related 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 InterviewMuse, a career consulting boutique for millennials. Connect with Gala on LinkedIn and check out her website at www.interviewmuse.com

Strategies for Safe and Strategic Social Networking

1. Be aware of what other people can see on your page. Recognize any sites that you wouldn’t want an interviewer to see, remove the offending content.

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 it.

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

Everyday people—especially younger ones—are getting into the act of networking online, thanks to social media sites like Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter. But the same thing can happen to you if you’re neglecting digital etiquette.

**Google Your Name**

Search for your name occasionally to see what comes up, or set up automated name alerts at Google.com/alerts. You may discover results for many other people (and possibly for you) that your friends have tagged you on or photos where friends have tagged you on might help you see your content, I guarantee it will get back to them.**testing shortcuts.**

**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 thinking "it’s just the guys" to "promoting myself as a polished professional." Foss recommends you adjust the privacy settings on your social media 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 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. Some recruiters will even 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.

**Blot Out the Bitter**

You have 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 a foul mood? Bad idea. “Whatever you wouldn’t do at the networking event, don’t do online,” says Oliver. Some recruiters will even 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 Schawbel, a personal branding expert and author of Me 2.0, offers these tips to keep your digital reputation clean:

• Don’t come to an interview without researching the company or asking for specific information about that employer.

**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.

**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.”

Getting the Most Out of a Career Fair

Many employers use career fairs—both on and off campus—to promote their opportunities and to screen applicants. Career fairs come in all shapes and sizes, from small community-sponsored events to giant regional career exhibitions 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 over-dressed 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.”

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Fair Tree 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 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 interview. It’s an opportunity that’s too valuable to miss.
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 talking to you. Look around the display for an opportunity to talk briefly with the employer’s representative.

2. Download the App
To get the app:

A Few Words About Career Fair Etiquette

3. 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.

4. 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.

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.

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 answer to 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 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
• 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.

Basic structure to begin with:
Hi, my name is _____________ and I ____________(this can be anything you choose). I’m looking to ________. I’m 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 five 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’d like to develop education programs on water conservation awareness. I am aware that your organization is...
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) ________________________________
   (c) ________________________________

4. Review job descriptions pertinent to your major for employer requirements. Note specific knowledge, skills, and abilities they seek.

5. List academic or employment experiences and activities where you demonstrated these skills:
   (a) ________________________________
   (b) ________________________________
   (c) ________________________________

6. 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.

   (a) _________________________________________________________
   (b) _________________________________________________________
   (c) _________________________________________________________

7. Review the employer’s 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.

8. Research all the employers on your “A” list. Look for current facts about each employer, including new products, services or acquisitions.

9. Write down some key facts about the employer:
   (a) ________________________________
   (b) ________________________________
   (c) ________________________________

10. Review job descriptions pertinent to your major for employer requirements. Note specific knowledge, skills, and abilities they seek.

11. List academic or employment experiences and activities where you demonstrated these skills:
   (a) ________________________________
   (b) ________________________________
   (c) ________________________________

12. 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.

   (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.

My qualifications and selling points:

(a) _________________________________________________________
(b) _________________________________________________________
(c) _________________________________________________________

My personal qualities:

(a) _________________________________________________________
(b) _________________________________________________________
(c) _________________________________________________________

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.

Developed 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 fast 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 cancellation and no-show policy.

Too Negative
“Keep your emotional baggage outside the interview door,” says Peggy Klaus, author of BRAKE! 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. “Don’t expect the interviewer to entertain you, so 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 just 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 testing 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 Yale, author of [NYT bestseller] Knock ‘em Dead, the Ultimate Job Search Guide: “No, you start with ‘Dear Martin...’ and then 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 Yale. “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, you’ll wear khakis and a polo shirt on the job, change to dress slacks and a blazer to the interview. Women should follow a similar “step up” plan. (Scope out company dress codes during informational interviews.)
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, is a sign 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 some 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 involved a business meal, he arranged for the candidate to exhibit a certain level of professionalism and etiquette in the workplace:

Good professional etiquette indicates to your hosts lead before taking a sip of water or disturbing the silverware.

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

I. Accepting the Interview Invitation

- RSVP (reply by) end your plate—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 waitress 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 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 host’s napkin.
- Start the setting place 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. Butter plate
2. Butter spreader
3. Napkin
4. Salad fork (if the salad will be served before the main entrée)
5. Dinner fork
6. Plate plate
7. Dinner knife
8. Salad knife (if the salad will be served before the main entrée)
9. Soup spoon
10. Water goblet
11. Ice tea glass
12. Dessert spoon
13. Dessert fork
**Don’t Forget the Small Companies**

Most students concentrate their job search on Fortune 500 companies or other large, well-known companies with defined and approachable personnel departments. And in an economic climate that has proven 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 20 or fewer employees is considered a small company. Even small companies with 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 you’ve seen, there can be just as shaky as small ones, so the questions really come down to: “Is a job interview opportunity will be the best gauge of the company’s 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 20 or fewer employees is considered a small company. Even small companies with 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, there 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.

**Finding a Job in a Small Company**

One of the first steps to finding a job in a small business is contacting a hiring manager. Good timing is critical. Remember, small companies can often have 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 in. Get the names of growing companies in the industry of your choice. Persuade the membership director.
- 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 newspaper articles about local companies. Send updates to professionals in your field.
- 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**
  - **No job postings**
  - **No hiring procedures**
  - **No standard hiring procedures**
  - **Keeps resumes on file**
  - **Usually won’t keep resumes**
  - **Interview held with...**
  - **Interview often held with recruiters and managers**
  - **Career section on website**
  - **Little/no career section on website**
  - **Hired on average of starting date**
  - **Hired to begin immediately**
  - **Job application**
  - **Open to all applicants**
  - **Make sure to network**

**Types of Federal Jobs**

Federal jobs are divided 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 scores.

Hiring managers for excepted service agencies are not required to follow civil service hiring procedures or pick from preferences. Excepted service positions are filled by allowing applicants to contact the agency directly for job opportunities. This means you must make a list of excepted service positions that interest you and then network with them to find out how to contact them.

**How to Apply**

There is no general way to submit an application to OPM or to any federal agency. 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, the nature of the job, 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. Instead, research the particular agency and see if you want to work for the federal government? You are about to learn about one of the nation’s largest employers: the federal government. Civilian workers worldwide. Federal employees receive a generous benefits package, and as of 2013 they earned an average salary of $73,579. The Federal government in the U.S., the Federal government offers a variety of career opportunities unparalleled in any other 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 of all races, ages and backgrounds.

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 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 do not 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.

**OPM and USAJOBS**

The 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 years. Links to the USAJOBS site (usa.jobs.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 found on 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, they often do.

Registered visitors to USAJOBS can create and post up to five resumes, which can be accessed by federal agencies to find resumes during applicant searches. Applicants can also use these resumes to apply directly to jobs that are not associated with an application option. In addition, job applicants can create as many as ten “search agents,” which will save jobs openings using certain criteria (such as location, job type, agency, salary range). Applicants can also search for jobs directly using the “search jobs” button on the USAJOBS homepage.

Remember, excepted service positions are not required to follow civil service laws passed by Congress. If you are interested in federal employment with an excepted service agency, be sure to visit 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 do not 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.

Written by Chris Entrom, a freelance writer from Nashville, Ind.
Prior to the Interview

1. Identify a career services staff person to help you prepare and coach for your interview with the employer.

2. Arrange for several taped, mock interview sessions to become more comfortable 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 you are uncomfortable with oral communication, create a written narrative to supplement your resume that details your abilities—not the disability.

4. Determine any technical support, resources and costs that might be necessary for your employment so that you can receive necessary employment-related accommodations.

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. Prepare to fully discuss the topic (just answer questions); maintain the appropriate control of the interview by tactically keeping the review 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.

**Tips on Managing the Interview**

**Ten Rules of Interviewing**

1. Before stepping into an interview, be sure to practice, practice, practice. A job-seeker going to a job interview without practicing is like an actor performing without rehearsing.

2. Tape yourself and see how long it takes you to fully answer a question.

3. Prepare for interviews by thinking about the general information and questions related to the specific job position. The more you know about the employer (i.e., its mission and goals), the easier it will be to answer related questions.

4. Put yourself on their team. Make a list of the questions or notes you have from the interview. This will help you write a follow-up letter and develop a sales presentation. In evaluating candidates, employers will look for evidence that you are interested in the company and improbable that you will fit in with the company's or department's goals.

5. Do your homework. If you research the company before meeting with the employer, you will be able to answer questions related to the company's mission and goals. Be sure that your career center has information for employers on interviewing persons with disabilities.

6. Be sure that your career center has information for employers on interviewing persons with disabilities.

7. Create a list of the 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 interview question, be sure to develop your sales presentation. 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.

8. 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 that got you 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.

9. Practice your key strengths three times. It is 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 be believed.

10. 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.

**In Summary**

Because of its importance, interviewing requires advance preparation. Take the time to review your credentials and could prevent the employer from judging your suitability for the position. Therefore, if you choose to disclose your disability—especially a visible disability—early in the process, then give careful consideration to where the information is placed and how it is stated. The reader should have a clear understanding of your abilities—not the disability. Be sure that your career center has information for employers on interviewing persons with disabilities.

**Recommended Reading**

- **Students With Disabilities: Acing the Interview**
- **Due date:** September 1

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

**Ten Rules of Interviewing**

1. Keep your answers brief and concise. Unless asked to give more detail, limit your answers and cut off the words at the end of your answer.

2. Include concrete, quantifiable data. Avoid making generalities. Unfortunately, generalities often fail to convince interviewers that the applicant has assets. Include measurable information and give specific details about specific accomplishments when discussing your strengths.

3. Repeat your key strengths three times. It is 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 be believed.

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10. 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.
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 your interviews, some of your individualism might 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.”

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 tie 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 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.
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 project you have faced and how you dealt with it.”

“Give an example of when you had to use 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.

“How did you feel about the outcome?”

“Could you give me an example?”

“What did you do?”

“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

Prepare

✓ 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.”

Situation

✓ 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 for our events had dropped by 30% in the past 3 years, and I wanted to find a solution to this problem.”

Task

✓ 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?

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.”

Action

✓ 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, our 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.”

Result

✓ Show us why we should hire you! And have good examples relating to their field of study.

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, our 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.”

The importance of clear articulation

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

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?
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?

**Education**
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?
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 clearly, unprepared answers to interviewers.

**The Site Visit/Interview: One Step Closer**

While on-campus screening interviews are important, on-campus visits are not the end. 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 even 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 or 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 and to ask questions in a normal 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 entrée. If you have the “living 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 complement the job for which you are applying, 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. Bendig, Career Services, New Mexico State University
**The Art of Negotiating**

Always begin by expressing genuine interest in the position and the organization, emphasizing your attention to details of agreement but allowing “wiggle room” to compromise on other areas. Be prepared to support your points of disagreement, outlining the particulars you would like to alter and discussing the importance of having the information clear in your head will help you determine what you are willing to compromise on. You will get exactly that, but having the information clear in your head will help you prepare for your request.

To prepare your defense, prioritize your goals. If you are hiring an employer, the term of your employment. Negotiations may be uncomfortable 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 of 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 employer 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 to present your case in a 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.

**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 make sure that you are 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 volley of bids and odds, trade-offs and compromises that occur over a period of time. It is a process—not a singular event!

Even once you have reached a conclusion with which you both are relatively comfortable, present in writing your interpretation of the agreement so that there is no ambiguity. Address it 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. Companies also 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.

**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.

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**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 goods and services, 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. To compare information from other sources, refer to these websites: www.salary.com and www.homefair.com/real-estate/salary-calculator.asp

#### Salary Comparison Equation

$$\text{City #1 \times Salary} = \text{City #2}$$

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City #1</th>
<th>x</th>
<th>Salary</th>
<th>=</th>
<th>City #2</th>
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<tr>
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<td>$50,000</td>
<td>=</td>
<td>$81,553</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chicago</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>(x)</td>
<td>=</td>
<td>(y)</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>x</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>y</th>
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Written by Lily Maestas, Career Counselor, Career Services, University of California, Santa Barbara.

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**Southern University and A & M College**

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