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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. Allow this academic year to launch the beginning of your future success. And above all, remember that we are here to serve you!

Sincerely,

Tamara Foster-Montgomery
Director

Career Services
P.O. Box 10980
Baton Rouge, LA 70813
(225) 771-2200 Office
(225) 771-3272 Fax

www.subr.edu/careerservices

Career Services

Introduction

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

Course Description Cooperative Education (COOP200, COOP300, COOP400)

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

Cooperative Education COOP201-Professional Development

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

The Aim of Recruitment

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

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

1. Students interested in securing employment have the primary responsibility of registering with Career Services.
2. Students should exercise care in filling out the required information requested in preparation for interviews. All responses to items, e.g., current address, permanent address, email address, telephone number and grade point average, must be accurate.

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 Career Services 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 do it in good faith and with the sincere intention of honoring his/her commitment.
5. The employer should accept the student’s decline of a job offer as a final decision.
6. Prior to the time of employment, the employer should clearly explain to the student all conditions pertaining to employment.
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 may intelligently ask and answer questions.
9. The student should promptly acknowledge an invitation to visit an employer’s premises. He/she should accept invitations only when he/she is sincerely interested in exploring employment with that employer.
10. As soon as a student decides not to accept an offer, he/she should immediately notify the employer.
11. The student should not continue to present him/herself for interviews after he/she has accepted an employment offer.
12. When the student accepts an employment offer, he/she should do it in good faith and with the sincere intention of honoring his/her commitment.
13. The student should keep Career Services advised concerning employment negotiations. Recruiters also have certain responsibilities to the college and its students.

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.

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

1. The employer should accept the student’s decline of a job offer as a final decision.
2. The employer should do it in good faith and with the sincere intention of honoring his/her commitment.
3. The student should keep Career Services advised concerning employment negotiations. Recruiters also have certain responsibilities to the college and its students.

GET REGISTERED IN A FEW SIMPLE STEPS!

1. Go to www.subr.edu/careerservices.
2. Click on the “Student Services” tab.
3. Log in to Handshake or sign up to register for your account.
4. Upload your resume.
5. Upon approval your can browse career opportunities.

Students must schedule an appointment to take advantage of one-on-one resume review sessions and mock interviews. Contact the center today!
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 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 services 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 in which 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.

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

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

1. Too long. Most new graduates should restrict their resumes to one page. If you have trouble condensing, get help from a technical or business writer or a career center professional.

2. Typographical, grammatical or spelling errors. These errors suggest carelessness, poor education and/or lack of intelligence. Have at least two people proofread your resume. Don't rely on your computer's spell-checkers or grammar-checkers.

3. Hard to read. A poorly typed or copied resume looks unprofessional. Use a plain typeface, no smaller than a 12-point font. Asterisks, bullets, underlining, boldface type and italics should be used only to make the document easier to read, not fancier. Again, ask a professional's opinion.

4. Too verbose. Do not use complete sentences or paragraphs. Say as much as possible with as few words as possible. A, an and the can almost always be left out. Be careful in your use of jargon and avoid slang.

5. Too sparse. Give more than the bare essentials, especially when describing related work experience, skills, accomplishments, activities, interests and club memberships that will give employers important information. Including membership in the Society of Women Engineers, for example, would be helpful to employers who wish to hire more women, yet cannot ask for that information.

6. Irrelevant information. Customize each resume to each position you seek (when possible). Of course, include all education and work experience, but emphasize only relevant experience, skills, accomplishments, activities and hobbies. Do not include marital status, age, sex, children, height, weight, health, church membership, etc.

7. Obviously generic. Too many resumes scream, “I need a job—any job!” The employer needs to feel that you are interested in that particular position with his or her particular company.

8. Too snazzy. Of course, use good quality bond paper, but avoid exotic types, colored paper; photographs, binders and graphics. Electronic resumes should include appropriate industry keywords and use a font size between 10 and 14 points. Avoid underlining, italics or graphics.

9. Boring. Make your resume as dynamic as possible. Begin every statement with an action verb. Use active verbs to describe what you have accomplished in past jobs. Take advantage of your rich vocabulary and avoid repeating words, especially the first word in a section.

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

The Three Rs 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 kind of turnover the department experiences. Ask what they value education over experience (or vice versa) and what they don’t like about the position and the company; more important, ask what they don’t like about it.

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

One last word of advice: Before you go to the interview, review the version of your resume that you submitted to this employer. The resume can only get you the interview; the interview gets you the job.
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 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
- **Owning 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 “To obtain an internship in accounting or 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

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**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

**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 all pcourses 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:**
  - Study Abroad
  - Certifications or Licensure
  - Leadership (very impressive to employers)
  - Activities or Extracurricular Involvement or Student Organizations
  - Honors or Awards
  - Community Service or Volunteer

**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
Resume Sample

John R. Smith
2017 Street NW • Washington, D.C. 20004
(305) 573-8888 • johnrsmit@gmail.com

EDUCATION
University of Thurgood Marshall
Houston, TX
Expected Graduation Date: May 2018
Bachelor of Science in Mathematics and Chemical Engineering A-304 E3QA
Relevant coursework: Biochemical Engineering I & II; Chemical Process Engineering, Air Pollution, Chemistry & Physics, Biostatistics, Calculus I & II; Abstract Geometry

SKILLS AND SOFTWARE PROFICIENCIES
Microsoft Office 2014; AutoCAD, SPSS; Conflict Resolution Skills; UCE = Methods & ASPN; 10-Kay + 15 WPM; Fluent in English and Spanish

WORK & LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE
Summer 2016
Shell Oil Company
Houston, TX

• Worked with Chemical Engineers in various departments on several expansion projects.
• Recommended and implemented a new process for the use of oil materials, saving $350 million in new building project costs.
• Managed and completed forty (40) projects in less than three (3) months.
• Designed presentations for supervisor to present to potential clients based upon analysis of market research.

Summer 2015
Conoco-Phillips, Inc.
Phoenix, AZ

• Assisted Chemical Technology Group with the design of the new production facilities.
• Recommended and implemented new equipment and automation planning.
• Achieved a hundred forty-one (141) percent growth in productivity for the department.
• Designed and planned the layout of equipment.

Research Assistant
Spring 2014
University of Thurgood Marshall
Houston, TX

A research assistant position with Dr. Other Big Sister Program. Assisting in project coordination, distribution of materials, event planning, general office needs and field projects.
• Trained staff on use of new programs and developed an online automation system that increased productivity, which allowed them (10) percent reduction in staffing needs.
• Recruited and trained over twenty-five (25) volunteers, which saved $500,000 dollars in operating and administrative costs.
• Increased the monitoring program participant numbers by seventy-five (75) percent in thirty (3) months.

ACTIVITIES & HONORS
National Dean’s List: 2010, 2011, 2014 • University of Thurgood Marshall; SSA President • Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE), Recording Secretary • 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
2017 Street NW • Washington, D.C. 20004
(305) 573-8888 • johnrsmit@gmail.com

References:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Reference, Position</th>
<th>Company or Organization of Reference</th>
<th>Company or Organization Address</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
<th>Email Address</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Comment: (1) The format of this heading may reflect all of your names.

Comment: (2) You can opt to list this requested portion.

Comment: (3) Repeat as necessary

Comment: (4) The format of this heading may vary between disciplines. Therefore, consult with scholars within your discipline for current protocol.

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 departmental and tenure reviews
• 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:

• Heading
• Objective
• Format
• Content
• Experience
• Skills

Education
Include the following information:
• 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
• Name of Advisor

Add additional sections depending on your background. Include any of the following:
• Teaching, Experience and Interests
• Research Experience and Interests
• Related Experience: Internships, Practicum and/or Fieldwork
• Grants Received and Academic Awards
• Special Training
• Scholarships and Fellowships

Developing a Winning CV

Curriculum Vitae or CV is a professional document that is used for marketing your background for a variety of purposes, mostly within academia or research. It can be multiple pages, but should not be focused. Use the following tips to help you get started on your CV. Note: CV format and content may vary between disciplines. Therefore, consult with scholars within your discipline for current protocol.

Reprinted with permission from the Career Planning Handbook of Purdue University.
Many of you have requested feedback on your resumes. Last week we outlined the Power Verbs for Your Resume. This week we will show you how you can apply these verbs to your email correspondence to further market yourself.

**Cover Letters**

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

1. **Introduce yourself to the employer.** If you are a recent college graduate, mention your major and how it would apply to the job you are seeking. Discuss the organizations/ events you were involved in and the part-time jobs you held while a student, even if they might seem trivial to you. Chances are, you probably picked up some transferable skills that you will be able to use in the work world.

2. **Sell yourself.** Briefly state your education and the skills that will benefit the employer. Don’t go into a lot of detail here—that’s what your resume is for—but give the employer a sense of your strengths and talents.

3. **Request a job interview.** 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 sure how to address it, look up the person’s name online.
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**Email Correspondence**

Dear Ms. Jones:

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Sincerely,

John Doe

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- **Sell yourself.** Briefly state your education and the skills that will benefit the employer. Don’t go into a lot of detail here—that’s what your resume is for—but give the employer a sense of your strengths and talents.

- **Request a job interview.** 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.

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Work Your Network
Developing a Noticeable LinkedIn Profile

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

Is LinkedIn Like Facebook?
Nope. LinkedIn isn’t like Facebook. LinkedIn isn’t about personal details, like what you did last weekend. While you have a profile and a profile picture, that’s where the similarity ends. LinkedIn is a business platform, where you showcase your educational background, relevant experience, volunteer experience, your skills, knowledge of your desired industry, interaction with other business professionals, and communicate your “value proposition” to employers.

What Should Be Included In My Profile?
A polished LinkedIn profile is the crux of successful online networking. Consider your profile your first impression to a global online business community. While that can feel a bit intimidating, don’t worry. It’s easy to create a professional profile, but you’ll be making the search for the right job a whole lot easier. As a current or recent graduate, your LinkedIn profile will allow others to endorse you, receive recommendations, and connect with you. This will give your network credibility to your profile.

1. Headshot
LinkedIn profiles that have a headshot are more likely to be viewed by recruiters. Unlike your Facebook profile, your LinkedIn picture should be business-oriented. Your profile picture should be a preview of what it would be like to see you come in for an interview. Look professional and smile. Keep in mind that selfies are not recommended. In LinkedIn, you should consider that selfies are strictly prohibited if you want to land the job!

2. Keyword Rich Headline
The summary section is your 30-second elevator pitch. Use this top feature to start connecting with other professionals.

3. Customize the Invitation to Connect
Every time you send a message to connect with someone on LinkedIn, mention that you customize the share. Tell them why you are who you want to connect, and how you found or know the individual. For example, if you met them in-person, tell them where.

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 individuals are happy to assist their fellow alumni with career opportunities, so keep your guard down if you were having dinner with a potential employer. You can maintain a positive and professional approach when connecting with networking contacts online.

Networking Rules
When seeking and maintaining professional connections via social networking sites, follow the same etiquette you would if you were networking by phone and in person. Remember that everything you post is permanent. Online, you should tend to be less formal because you are communicating in a space that you typically share with friends. Just as you would not let your mother or father in law see a picture of you in the middle of an interview, so why would they allow employers to screen out discriminating employers and make it more likely that you will land an employer with your identity and expression.

If it’s OK for Mom, it’s OK for Facebook
The more controversial aspect of the interplay between social networking and job searching is the privacy debate. Some observers, including career counselors, deans, and parents, worry that students put themselves at a disadvantage in the job search by social networking. Information available on Facebook and Twitter pages. More and more companies are using such websites as a screening tool. Concerns about topics on two areas: social life and identity/affiliations. Parents and career counselors argue that job seekers would never show photos of themselves at a party in the hope that they would be asked to see party photos on a Facebook page? Students often respond that most employers do not even use social networking sites and that employers already know that college students drink.

Strategy for Safe and Strategic Social Networking
1. Be aware of what other people can see on your page. Recruiters, employers, or ask their colleagues to do searches on candidates.
2. Determine access intentionally. Some career counselors advocate deactivating your Facebook or Twitter accounts while job searching.
3. Set a standard. If anything appears on your page that you wouldn’t want an interviewer to see, remove the offending content.
4. Use social networking to your advantage. Use these sites to find alumni in the companies that interest you and contact them before you interview in your career center or before a site visit. In addition, use social networking sites, such as Facebook and LinkedIn for professional networking. How do you use it to network or find a job?

C ommunicate with the companies you are targeting by reaching out via LinkedIn. If you notice that one company’s page is more active than another’s, that the second company does not, that the second student will get the job offer.

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

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

What networking sites should I avoid?
You should avoid including personal information that might be offensive to other networks. While it may be true that senior managers are less likely to be online, they do check Facebook pages. When you interview for a job, you may be asked to provide your LinkedIn address. Your recruiter or employer may ask you to conduct online searches of candidates. Why risk losing a career opportunity because of a photo with two drinks in your hand?

Written by Hariett L. Schwartz.

Strategies for Safe and Strategic Networking
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Clean Up Your Social Media Identity

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

Google Your Name
Search for your name online occasionally to see what comes up, or set up automated name alerts at Google.com/alerts. You may discover results for many people with your same name, possibly with embarrassing or outrageous content. To find the real “you,” try tweaking your name (e.g., Sam versus Samuel) or add some additional identifying modifiers (perhaps your city or school). Search for your name on all the networks to which you’ve ever belonged, including Facebook and YouTube. (Recruiters check everywhere.) After a thorough review, ask yourself: Will this social media profile foster callbacks, interviews and job offers? If not, keep reading.

Keep Some Mystery
“Most new grads are growing up texting, Skypeing, Tweeting, Facebooking and reading or creating blogs,” says Jenny Foss, who operates Ladder Recruiting Group in Portland, Ore. “Older, more experienced competitors aren’t native social media people.” That’s the plus; the minus is you have to shift your mindset from “impressing the guys” to “promoting myself as a polished professional.”
Foss recommends you adjust the privacy settings on your social media profiles. LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, and Blogspot all rank high in Google searches.

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

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

Netiquette Tips
Dan Schwalbe, a personal branding expert and author of Me 2.0, offers these tips to keep your digital reputation clean.
• Don’t over-promote yourself or people will get turned off.
• Do share industry insights, useful resources, quotes and facts with your audience.
• Don’t send your resume to employers on Facebook.
• Do build a relationship through tweeting before you email blindly.
• Don’t come to an interview without researching the company and the hiring manager online, using LinkedIn first.

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

The rule of thumb for off-campus events, according to recruiters, is 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!”

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

Fair Threel 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.
Do not interrupt the employer reps or your fellow job-seekers. If someone else is monopolizing the employer’s time, try to edgewise, jot a note on your resume to the effect of, “You interested in talking to you.” Look around the display for words. If the scene is too busy and you can’t get a word in listen to the employer. 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 develop a cohesive “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 interest and follow up with your primary “soft” skill your strongest area and put your face and name back in context for them. Only then should you explain how they can help you. And after you deliver a pitch, try to give a really brief review of your talents, education, or skill set.

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

Basic structure to begin with:

Hi, my name is _____________. I’m looking to ______________. (this can be

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 working as a summer intern at an environmental consulting firm. I am interested in pursuing a career in environmental science and am looking for an entry-level position. My strengths include [list skills], and I am confident in my ability to [list achievements].

The Purpose of Your Elevator Pitch

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

Southern University and A & M College www.subr.edu/careerservices

A Few Words About Career Fair Etiquette

1. Don’t interrupt the employer reps or your fellow job-seekers. If someone else is monopolizing the employer’s time, try to make eye contact with the rep to let him or her know that you’re interested in speaking. You may be doing a favor by giving the recruiter an out. If all else fails, move to the next employer to let him or her know that you’re interested in speaking. You may be doing a favor by giving the recruiter an out. If all else fails, move to the next employer and grant the interview.

2. If you have a real interest in an employer, find out the procedures required to secure an interview. At some career fairs, initial screening interviews may be done on the spot.

3. Other times, the career fair is used to pre-screen applicants for interviews to be conducted later (either on campus or at the employer’s site).

4. Sincerity always wins. Don’t lay it on too thick, but don’t be too bland either. Virtually all employers are looking for candidates with good communication skills.
Develop Your Elevator Pitch

Step 1: Research the Employer

1. Preview the list of organizations participating in the event and plan a strategy for the day. Put together an "A" list and a "B" list of employers you want to target. Contact your career services office to see what employers may be recruiting on campus.

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

3. Write down some key facts about the employer:
   (a) ____________________________
   (b) ____________________________

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

5. List academic or employment experiences and activities where you demonstrated these skills.

The employer is seeking:

My qualifications and selling points:

(a) ____________________________
(b) ____________________________
(c) ____________________________
(d) ____________________________

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.

My personal qualities:

(a) ____________________________
(b) ____________________________
(c) ____________________________

Step 2: Develop Your Introduction

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

Business Etiquette Blunders

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

No Show = No Job

This should go without saying, but actually showing up on 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 BRAG! The Art of Tooting Your Own Horn Without Blowing It. We all have days when the alarm doesn't go off, the weather is a mess, and there's no parking spot. Don't whine. Be enthusiastic, eager, flexible, and most of all—likeable. "Don't expect the interviewer to entertain you, or do your job for you by drawing you out," she adds.

Thankless

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

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

Too Familiar

When emailing someone you don't know well, be a bit formal. Capitalize words, don't use 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 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'd wear khakis and a polo shirt on the job, wear dress slacks and a blazer to the interview. Women should follow a similar "step up" plan. (Scope out company dress codes during informational interviews.)

Clueless About the Employer

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

Dining Disaster

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

Consider ordering an easy-to-manage entrée.

Good News = Good Job

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

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

Poor Profile

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

Tattoos and Piercings

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

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

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

Written by Joba Turner, a former human resources manager, who writes about career issues, and other business topics. She lives in Portland, Ore., and can be reached at www.jobra.com.
Professional Etiquette

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

Meeting and Greeting

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

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

- Always rise when introducing or being introduced to someone.
- Provide information in making introductions—you are responsible for keeping the conversation going. “Joe, please meet Ms. Crawford, CEO at American Enterprise, Inc., in Cleveland.”
- When ordering, keep in mind that this is a talking business lunch. Order something easy to eat, such as a boneless chicken and rice.
- Do not hold the order up because you cannot make a decision. Feel free to ask for suggestions from others at the table.
- Wait to eat until everyone has been served.
- Keep hands in lap unless you are using them to eat.
- Practice proper posture; sit up straight with your arms close to your body.
- Bring food to your mouth—not your head to the plate.
- Try to eat at the same pace as everyone else.
- Take responsibility for keeping up the conversation.
- Place napkin on chair seat if excusing yourself for any reason.
- Place napkin beside plate at the end of the meal.
- Push chair under table when excusing yourself.

Eating

Follow these simple rules for eating and drinking:

- Start eating with the implement that is farthest away from your plate. You may have two spoons and two forks. The spoon farthest away from your plate is a soup spoon. The fork farthest away is a salad fork unless you have three forks, one being much smaller, which would be a seafood fork for an appetizer. The dessert fork/spoon is usually above the plate. Remember to work from the outside in.
- Dip soup away from you; sip from the side of the spoon.
- Season food only after you have tasted it.
- Pass salt and pepper together—even if asked for only one.
- Pass all items to the right. If the item has a handle, such as a seafood fork, pass it before serving yourself.
- While you are speaking during a meal, utensils should be resting on plate (fork and knife crossed on the plate with handles down). Don’t chew with your mouth open or blow on your food.
- The interviewer will usually take care of the bill and the tip. Be prepared, however, if this doesn’t happen and have small bills ready to take care of your part, including the tip. Never make an issue of the check.

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

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

Dining Etiquette at the Interview Meal

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

I. Accepting the Interview Invitation

- RSVP (repeat, please) to the interview by 24 hours.
- Write down the date, time, location 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

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

III. Before You Are Seated

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

IV. After You Are Seated

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

V. Ordering

- Follow your host’s cue and pay attention to any recommendations they make regarding menu selections. It will be a hint from them as to the level of hospitality they wish to extend to you. If you are not given recommendations you can ask for one. Try to select a menu option comparable to what your host orders.
- Remember to order menu items that are neat and easy to eat with a knife and fork such as chicken breast, cut vegetables and roasted potatoes. Do not order messy food such as spaghetti or lobster.
- Do not order alcohol during an interview as you will need to be focused and mentally sharp to make the best impression possible.
- Do not smoke during the interview.

VI. The Four-Course Place Setting

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

VII. Navigating the Place Setting

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

Sonia Zubiate, Etiquette Coaching, Training and Consulting

March 2011
Find your dream job now and get hired faster with "Job Ninja - Find Your Dream Job Now"! Our platform is dedicated to helping job seekers find their perfect fit in the job market. With our advanced search technology and personalized job recommendations, we make the job search process smoother and more efficient. Sign up today and start your job journey with Job Ninja.
Bing night without rehearsing. To help with the interview process, keep the following ten rules in mind:

Keep your answers brief and concise. Unless asked to give more detail, limit your answers and stop before the interviewer’s next question.

Rehearse answering the ten questions. Tape yourself and see how long it takes you to fully answer a question.

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

Repeat your key strengths three times. It’s essential that you comfortably and confidently articulate your strengths. Explain how the strengths relate to the job. You should be able to name them, and then tell some stories about how they have benefited the employer. If you repeat your strengths then they will be remembered and—if supported with quantifiable accomplishments—they will be more believable.

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.

Put yourself on their team. Ally yourself with the prospective employer by using the employer’s name and product or service. For example, “As a member of the [company], I would carefully analyze your results and...” Show that you are thinking like a member of the team and will fit in with the existing environment. Be careful though not to say anything that would offend or be taken negatively. Your research will help you in this area.

Image is often as important as content. What you look like and how you say something are often as important as what you say. Studies have shown that 67 percent of the conveyed message is nonverbal—gestures, physical appearance and attitude are highly influential during job interviews.

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

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

Research the company, product lines and competitors. Research will provide information to help you decide whether you’re interested in the company and important details you refer to during the interview.

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

In Summary

Because of its importance, interviewing requires advance preparation. You can positively affect the outcome. You must be able to compete successfully for the position the job you want. In order to do that, be certain you have considered the kind of job you want, why you want it and how you qualify for it. You also must face reality: Is the job attainable? In addition, recognize what it is employers want in their candidates. They want “can do” and “will do” employees. Recognize and use the following factors to your advantage as you develop your sales presentation. When evaluating candidate interviews, employers consider the following factors:

- Ability
- Loyalty
- Personality
- Acceptance
- Recommendations
- Outside activities while in school
- Impressions made during the interview

Tips on Managing the Interview

Prior to the Interview

1. Identify a career services staff person to help you prepare for your interview with the employer.
2. Arrange for several taped, mock interview sessions to become more confident in discussing your work-related skills and in putting the employer representative at ease. Rehearse ahead of time to prepare how you will handle inappropriate, personal or possibly illegal questions.
3. If you require support for your interview (such as a sign language interpreter), contact human resources to arrange for this assistance. Advance preparation puts everyone at ease and shows that you can manage your affairs.

During the Interview

1. Put the interviewer at ease before starting the interview by addressing any visible disability (if you have not done so already).
2. Plan to participate fully in the discussion (not just answer questions); maintain the appropriate control of the interview by tactfully keeping the interviewer 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 Rosie Smith
Dressing for the Interview

Depending upon your fashion style, whether it is the latest trends for the club scene or merely college senior casual, a job interview may be cause for some drastic wardrobe augmentation. For your interviews, some of your individualism might have to be shelved or kept in the closet. In most business and technical job interviews, when it comes to your appearance, conservatism and conformity are in order. While many companies have adopted the “office casual” dress code, don’t try to set new standards in the interview. When in doubt, it is better to be too conservative than to be too flashy. For men and women, a suit is the best bet. Here are some guidelines:

MEN
- A two-piece suit will suffice in most instances.
- Solid colors and lighter-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 wardrobe.” For example, by missing and matching, she says, an eight-piece capsule wardrobe can create up to 28 ensembles. Before shopping, Lazzarini advises establishing a budget, 50% of which should be targeted for accessories. For women, “even a brightly colored jacket could be considered an accessory when it makes an outfit you already have look entirely different.”

The most important piece in any wardrobe is a jacket that is versatile and can work with a number of other pieces, according to one fashion expert. This applies to men and women. “If you focus on a suit, buy one with a jacket which may be used with other skirts or trousers,” says a women’s fashion director for a specialty store. “Go to the mall—most department and specialty stores have sections devoted to this style of office attire.

A Final Check
And, of course, your appearance is only as good as your grooming. Create a final checklist to review before you go on an interview:
- Neatly trimmed hair
- Conservative makeup
- No runs in stockings
- Shoes polished (some suggest wearing your sneakers on the way to an interview and changing before you enter the interview site)
- No excessive jewelry; men should refrain from wearing earrings
- No missing buttons, crooked ties or lint

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

Taking a Casual Approach
“Office casual” is becoming the accepted mode of dress at more and more companies. The rules, however, for casual attire are subject to tremendous company-to-company variance. At some, “casual day” is a Friday-only observance, where the dress code is slightly relaxed—a sports coat and slacks for men and 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 dressed 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 “slippery”—your clothes shouldn’t 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.

Donations are solicited from alumni, business professionals, faculty, staff and students. Appropriate donation items include:
- Men’s business suits (black, navy or gray)
- Women’s business suits (black, navy or gray)
- Button-up business professional shirts for men and professional suit appropriate blouses for women
- Professional slacks for men and women
- Conservative ties

All donated attire MUST be...
- Appropriately cleaned
- Placed on hangers

After requirements are met, the student may choose their business attire of choice for the interviewing experience. For more information on the Career Clothes Closet, call us at (225) 771-2200. All questions concerning the Career Clothes Closet should be directed to Mrs. Tamara Foster-Montgomery or Ms. Kathy Scott.

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Delivered to:
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E.C. Harrison Drive
T.H. Harris Hall, Suite 1100 Baton Rouge, LA 70813

Tamara Foster-Montgomery • T.H. Harris Hall Suite 1100 • phone 225-771-2200 • tamara_montgomery@subr.edu

Career Clothes Closet (CCC) Open: Fridays Only 12:00pm – 2:00pm

What is the Career Clothes Closet?
The Career Clothes Closet will aid our students in looking their best in the professional world. As a student, it may be hard to attain funds to purchase appropriate interviewing attire. Therefore, the Career Services Center has implemented a program called the “Career Clothes Closet” that will ensure students a start in their future endeavors. We will provide students with “new or gently used” clothing donated by alumni, business professionals, faculty, staff, students and other professional organizations. Students are not required to return the clothing; it is for keeps for the benefit of their future.

In order to participate in this program, students must:
- Bring a current SU I.D, unofficial transcript and complete an application of request (Hardship Application Form).
- Bring an updated resume for critiquing by one of the career counselors.
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Are You Ready for a Behavioral Interview?

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

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

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

Behavioral vs. Traditional Interviews

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

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

The behavioral interviewer has been trained to objectively collect and evaluate information and works from a profile of desired behaviors that are needed for success on the job. Because the behaviors a candidate has demonstrated in previous positions are likely to be repeated, you will be asked to share situations in which you have displayed the behaviors a candidate has demonstrated in previous positions.

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.

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.

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

“To give you an example, the interviewer will look for behaviors in situations that are likely to be repeated, you will be asked to share situations in which you have displayed the behaviors a candidate has demonstrated in previous positions.

✓ 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.

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

Prepare

Situation

Task

Action

Result

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

—PepsiCo

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

—Caterpillar

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Questions Asked by Employers

Personal
1. Tell me about yourself.
2. What are your hobbies?
3. Why did you choose to interview with our organization?
4. Describe your ideal job.
5. What can you offer us?
6. What do you consider to be your greatest strengths?
7. Can you name some weaknesses?
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?

Experience
20. What job-related skills do you have developed?
21. Did you work while going to school? In what positions?
22. What did you learn from these work experiences?
23. What did you enjoy most about your last employment? Least?
24. Have you ever quit a job? Why?
25. Give an example of a situation in which you provided a solution to an employer.
26. Have you ever done any volunteer work? What kind?
27. How do you think a former supervisor would describe your work?

Career Goals
28. Do you prefer to work under supervision or on your own?
29. What kind of boss do you prefer?
30. Would you be successful working with a team?
31. Do you prefer large or small organizations? Why?
32. What other types of positions are you considering?
33. How do you feel about working in a structured environment?
34. Are you able to work on several assignments at once?
35. How do you feel about working overtime?
36. How do you feel about travel?
37. How do you feel about the possibility of relocating?
38. Are you willing to work flexible?

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, rehearsed answers to interviewers.

The Site Visit/Interview: One Step Closer

While on-campus screening interviews are important, the on-site visits are the best. 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 be some 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 statement, find out about long-term goals, read recent press releases, and view corporate photos.
5. 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.
6. Bring extra copies of your resume; copies of any paperwork you may have forwarded to the employer; names, addresses, phone numbers and email addresses of your references; an updated college transcript; a copy of your best paper as a writing sample; a notebook; a black and/or blue pen for filling out forms and applications; and names and addresses of past employers.
7. 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.
8. Your role at the interview is to respond to questions, to ask your own questions and to observe. Be ready to meet people in a formal and informal setting. 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.
9. 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 “luring jitters,” some authorities suggest ordering food that is easy to handle, such as a boneless fish fillet or chicken breast.

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 match the organization’s. Investigate job content, company culture and values, organizational structure, and lifestyles (both at work and leisure). Take note of the employer’s mission statement, find out about long-term goals, annual reports, newspaper articles, trade journals, etc. Many employers 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.

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.

Take note of how the interview goes, 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 Rosanne R. Bendly, Careers Services, New Mexico State University.
A n area of the job search that often receives little attention is the art of negotiating. Once you have been offered a job, you have the opportunity to negotiate the terms of your employment. Negotiations may be uncomfortable or unsatisfactory because we tend to approach them with a winner-take-all attitude that is counterproductive to the concept of negotiations.

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

Negotiation is a planned series of events that requires strategy, presentation and patience. Preparation is probably the single most important part of successful negotiations. Any good trial attorney will tell you to sit at the table and be prepared. It is no different in the courtroom that is the hours of preparation that happen beforehand. The same is true for negotiating. A good case will literally present itself. What follows are some suggestions that will help you prepare for successful negotiating.

Research

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

Psychological Preparation

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

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

Psychological preparation.

Money Isn't Everything

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

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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. The cost of living calculation to compare salaries in different cities is 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.