



**TUSKEGEE**  
UNIVERSITY  
1881

# 2014-2015 **CAREER GUIDE**

Career Planning and Campus Recruiting



Career Development and Placement Services Center  
Carnegie Hall, Third Floor  
Tuskegee University  
Tuskegee, Alabama 36088



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## TUSKEGEE UNIVERSITY

OFFICE OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT  
AND PLACEMENT SERVICES

Dear Students:

As you enter or return to Tuskegee University this year, you become part of an historic era with the selection of Brian Johnson, Ph.D. as the University's 7th President. President Johnson has indicated the University will become an "Outcomes-Oriented Organization" which includes "Creating a Student-Centered Culture: Student Success, Student Engagement and Parent-Student Satisfaction".

Career Development and Placement Services (CDPS) continues to be student centered, and we warmly welcome you. We strongly encourage you to utilize the many resources available within and sponsored by our office so that you will be able to own your goals and successes; thereby experience a high level of satisfaction relative to your career and life. Individually and collectively, you are our reason for being.

This **Career Guide** provides soft skill employability and graduate/professional school information for your review and use. Included in the **Career Guide** is a listing of services and programs that you should utilize frequently, beginning today:

- Career counseling, coaching, and mentoring
- Online interest and assessment tools
- Preparation for seeking employment and Graduate/Professional School opportunities, including ethical standards, interviewing techniques, resume writing, and dress for success techniques
- On-campus employer interviews, summer internship, cooperative education and full-time employment
- Career Fair, Graduate/Professional School Fair, Teacher Education Fair and eairs
- On-campus employer and Graduate/Professional School informational sessions
- Media and library materials of career opportunities and employers.

After you have read the **Career Guide**, see a CDPS staff member in Carnegie Hall, 3rd Floor for assistance. We look forward to working with you. Our historical data reflects that the earlier students begin working with our staff, the more likely they are to obtain career related summer internship, cooperative education assignments, full-time employment or graduate/professional school admission.

Hundreds of employers and representatives of graduate/professional schools interview on campus or post their career opportunities online. These employers or university representatives know that you, Tuskegee University students, are equipped to add value to their organizations. You follow a strong tradition of Tuskegee leaders and you will become stronger leaders in the future. We encourage you to make CDPS priority with your academics and present you knowledge and skills to our employers and university partners.

Congratulations to each of you, but especially to our seniors!

Sincerely,

Safah Stringer  
Director

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## CAREER GUIDE

2014-2015

**Tuskegee  
University**

**Career  
Development  
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**Brian L. Johnson, Ph.D.**  
President

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## CDPS Center Staff



Ms. Sarah Stringer  
*Director*



Ms. Rasheeda Tucker  
*Administrative Assistant*



Ms. Chantél Boyd  
*Office Assistant*

# Guide to Career Development and Placement Services

The Tuskegee University Career Development and Placement Services Center serves Tuskegee University students in the areas of career counseling, career planning, career development, and placement.

## Career Development and Placement Services (CDPS), Carnegie Hall, Third Floor

- Career Counseling
- Career Development
- Career Planning
- E-Fairs
- Career Fairs
- Summer Internships
- Cooperative Education Program
- Mentorships
- Full-Time Employment
- Graduate/Professional School

### Services Provided by CDPS Include:

- Assistance with career planning and development objectives
- Information about career fields and availability of employment opportunities
- Access to and information about specific job openings
- Information about co-op assignments and summer internships
- On-campus interviews by employers
- Career Awareness workshops
- Letters of application and resume preparation
- Employability techniques
- Alumni and other consultants in workshop settings to discuss their successes, opportunities and problems in specific employment situations

### Available Resource Materials Include:

- Career opportunities information
  - Available employment opportunities
  - Access to computers
  - Recruitment schedules of on-campus interviews
- All students MUST meet with CDPS personnel on their first visit to the center for orientation.

## Arranging Campus Interviews with Employers

During the period between September and April of each academic year, hundreds of representatives from business, industry, education and government visit the CDPS Center to interview students for career employment, cooperative education assignments and summer internships. Openings

offered by these employers include both trainee and staff positions. School systems and colleges interview for faculty and staff as well as for graduate school admissions.

Information concerning campus visits of employer organizations appears regularly on the CDPS website and on bulletin boards in the CDPS Center. Recruiting schedules and announcements are sent to academic departments, the residence halls, the college union, administrative offices and other locations on campus. Copies of the recruiting schedule may be obtained from the CDPS Center. Students should check periodically for updated recruiting schedules.

## Scheduling Appointments for Interviews

Employer recruitment schedules are available approximately one month prior to the visit by the recruiter. Information on the recruitment schedule includes: company name, recruitment date, majors, type of position (full-time, co-op or summer internship) and GPA requirements. If you do not meet all requirements, you are not allowed to schedule an appointment, unless permitted by the employer through the CDPS Center.

All students must make an appointment on the employer recruiting schedule in order to interview. Students must submit a current, approved resume electronically to the employer when an appointment is scheduled and provide the CDPS Center with a copy of the resume and an official transcript. Information about electronic sign-up is available from the CDPS staff. Students must meet with CDPS staff before they can participate in the recruitment process.

## Preparing for the Interview

1. Thoroughly research the employer organization.
2. Complete and submit the employer application.
3. Attend employers' Informationals.
4. Dress appropriately.
5. Arrive for the interview at least 10 minutes prior to the scheduled appointment.
6. Interviews are usually 30 minutes; however, some employers may request 45-minute or 1-hour interviews.
7. Interviews are held at the CDPS Center.

Procedures for arranging interview appointments have been developed to provide as many students as possible the opportunity to interview with employers. Students and employers are both expected to honor their commitment on the day of the interview. Cancellations are not acceptable except in emergency situations and should be discussed with CDPS personnel.

# Evaluating Yourself

An important part of deciding what you want to do is first understanding yourself. Self-evaluation will help you analyze what is important in the work you choose and the kind of employer for whom you will work. Answer each question honestly. There are no "right" or "wrong" answers.

1. What do you do best? Are these activities related to people, things or data? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Do you communicate better orally or in writing? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Do you consider yourself a leader of a team or group? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Do you see yourself as an active participant in a group or team? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Do you prefer to work by yourself? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Do you prefer working under supervision? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Do you work well under pressure? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Does working under pressure cause you anxiety? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Do you like taking responsibility? \_\_\_\_\_
10. Would you rather follow directions? \_\_\_\_\_
11. Do you enjoy new projects and activities? \_\_\_\_\_
12. Do you prefer to follow a regular routine? \_\_\_\_\_
13. Rank the following things in order of importance to you when thinking about a job:
  - Career Advancement \_\_\_\_\_
  - Prestige of Employer \_\_\_\_\_
  - Location \_\_\_\_\_
  - Salary \_\_\_\_\_
  - People (Boss and Colleagues) \_\_\_\_\_
  - Type of Work \_\_\_\_\_
14. Do you prefer to work a regular 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. schedule or an irregular schedule? \_\_\_\_\_
15. Would you like a job with a lot of travel, a moderate amount, or a small amount? \_\_\_\_\_
16. What kind of work environment do you prefer?
  - Indoors
  - Urban Setting
  - Outdoors
  - Suburban Setting
  - Rural Setting
17. What size of organization would you like to work for? \_\_\_\_\_
18. Are you willing to move? \_\_\_\_\_
19. Do you prefer to work for a nonprofit or for-profit organization? \_\_\_\_\_
20. Are there other factors to consider? \_\_\_\_\_

*Adapted with permission from the Office of Career Services at Rutgers University, New Brunswick Campus.*

# Considering Graduate School

**A**t some point in your college career, you must decide what you would like to do after graduation—and that includes whether or not to attend graduate school. If you're trying to determine whether graduate school is right for you, here are some pointers to help you make an enlightened decision.

## 1. Should I consider going to graduate school?

*Going to graduate school might be a good idea if you...*

- want to be a professor, lawyer, doctor, investment banker or work in any profession that requires a post-secondary education.
- wish to develop additional expertise in a particular subject or field to maximize your future earning potential and opportunities for career advancement.
- are deeply interested in a particular subject and wish to study it in-depth—AND have the time and financial resources to devote to further education.

*Going to graduate school might not be a good idea if you...*

- are trying to delay your entry into the "real world" with real responsibilities and real bills.
- are clueless about your career goals.
- aren't prepared to devote the time and hard work needed to succeed.
- want to stay in school longer to avoid a poor job market.

## 2. Is it better to work first or attend graduate school immediately after I complete my undergraduate degree?

*Work first if...*

- you would like to get some real-world work experience before investing thousands of dollars in a graduate degree.
- the graduate school of your choice prefers work experience (most MBA and some Ph.D. programs require this).
- you cannot afford to go to graduate school now, and you haven't applied for any scholarships, grants, fellowships and assistantships, which could pay for a great deal of your education.

*Go to graduate school now if...*

- you are absolutely sure you want to be a college professor, doctor, lawyer, etc., and need a graduate degree to pursue your dream job.
- you have been awarded grants, fellowships, scholarships or assistantships that will help pay for your education.
- you're concerned that once you start earning real money, you won't be able to return to the lifestyle of a "poor" student.
- your study habits and mental abilities are at their peak, and you worry whether you'll have the discipline (or motivation) to write papers and study for exams in a few years.

## 3. I am broke. How will I pay for tuition, books, fees and living expenses?

- *Family:* You've likely borrowed from them in the past; maybe you're lucky enough for it to still be a viable option.

- *Student Loans:* Even if you've taken out loans in the past, another \$50,000 - \$75,000 may be a sound "investment" in your future.
- *Fellowships/Scholarships:* A free education is always the best option. The catch is you need a high GPA, good GRE/GMAT/LSAT/MCAT scores and the commitment to search out every possible source of funding.
- *Teaching/Research Assistantships:* Many assistantships include tuition waivers plus a monthly stipend. It's a great way to get paid for earning an education.
- *Employer Sponsorship:* Did you know that some companies actually pay for you to continue your education? The catch is they usually expect you to continue working for them after you complete your degree so they can recoup their investment.

## 4. What are the pros and cons of going to graduate school full-time vs. part-time?

*Benefits of attending graduate school full-time:*

- you'll be able to complete your degree sooner.
- you can totally commit your intellectual, physical and emotional energy to your education.
- ideal if you want to make a dramatic career change.

*Benefits of attending graduate school part-time:*

- work income helps pay for your education.
- you can take a very manageable course load.
- you can juggle family responsibilities while completing your degree.
- allows you to work in the function/industry/career of your choice while continuing your education.
- employer will often pay for part (or all) of your graduate degree.

## 5. Assuming I want to go to graduate school in the near future, what should I do now?

- Identify your true strengths, interests and values to help you discover what is right for YOU—not your friends or parents.
- Keep your grades up and sign up (and prepare) to take the required standardized tests.
- Talk to faculty, friends and family who have gone to graduate school to get their perspective about the differences between being an undergraduate and a graduate student.
- Talk to faculty, friends and family who are in your targeted profession to get a realistic sense of the career path and the challenges associated with the work they do.
- Investigate creative ways to finance your education—by planning ahead you may reduce your debt.
- Research graduate schools to help you find a good match.
- Investigate the admissions process and the current student body profile of your targeted schools to evaluate your probability for admission.
- Have faith and APPLY! Remember, you can't get in unless you apply.

*Written by Roslyn J. Bradford.*

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



## Qualities Desired in New College Graduates By Businesses, Industries and Government Agencies

### Energy, Drive, Enthusiasm and Initiative

- Hard-working, disciplined and dependable
- Eager, professional and positive attitude
- Strong self-motivation and high self-esteem
- Confident and assertive, yet diplomatic and flexible
- Sincere and preserves integrity
- Ambitious and takes risks
- Uses common sense

### Adapts Textbook Learning to the Working World

- Quick learner
- Asks questions
- Analytical; independent thinker
- Willing to continue education and growth

- Committed to excellence
- Open-minded, willing to try new things

### Knowledge of Computers

- Established word processing, spreadsheet, database and presentation software skills
- Excellent computer literacy

### Communications Skills

- Good writing skills
- Excellent oral communication skills
- Listens well; compassionate and empathetic
- Excellent problem-solving and analytical skills
- Creative and innovative

### Leadership Skills

- Organizational skills and attention to detail

- Accepts and handles responsibilities
- Action-oriented and results-driven
- Loyal to employers
- Customer-focused
- Team-spirited; understands group dynamics
- Always willing to help others
- Mature, poised and personable
- Diversity aware; treats others with respect and dignity

### Oriented to Growth

- Acceptance of an entry-level position; doesn't view required tasks as "menial"
- Academic excellence in field of study
- Views the organization's total picture, not just one area of specialization
- Willing to accomplish more than required

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

# Transferable Skills

If you're wondering what skills you have that would interest a potential employer, you are not alone. Many college seniors feel that four (or more) years of college haven't sufficiently prepared them to begin work after graduation. And like these students, you may have carefully reviewed your work history (along with your campus and civic involvement) and you may still have a difficult time seeing how the skills you learned in college will transfer to the workplace.

But keep in mind that you've been acquiring skills since childhood. Whether learning the value of teamwork by playing sports, developing editing skills working on your high school newspaper or developing countless skills while completing your coursework, each of your experiences has laid the groundwork for building additional skills.

## What Are Transferable Skills?

A *transferable* skill is a "portable skill" that you *deliberately* (or inadvertently, if you haven't identified them yet) take with you to other life experiences.

Your transferable skills are often:

- acquired through a class (e.g., an English major who is taught technical writing)
- acquired through experience (e.g., the student government representative who develops strong motivation and consensus building skills)

Transferable skills supplement your degree. They provide an employer concrete evidence of your readiness and qualifications for a position. Identifying your transferable skills and communicating them to potential employers will greatly increase your success during the job search.

Remember that it is impossible to complete college without acquiring transferable skills. Campus and community activities, class projects and assignments, athletic activities, internships and summer/part-time jobs have provided you with countless experiences where you've acquired a range of skills—many that you may take for granted.

## Identifying Transferable Skills

While very closely related (and with some overlap), transferable skills can be divided into three subsets:

- Working With People • Working With Things
- Working With Data/Information

For example, some transferable skills can be used in every workplace setting (e.g., organizing or public speaking) while some are more applicable to specific settings (e.g., drafting or accounting).

The following are examples of skills often acquired through the classroom, jobs, athletics and other activities. Use these examples to help you develop your own list of the transferable skills you've acquired.

### Working With People

- Selling • Training • Teaching • Supervising
- Organizing • Soliciting • Motivating • Mediating
- Advising • Delegating • Entertaining
- Representing • Negotiating • Translating

### Working With Things

- Repairing • Assembling parts • Designing
- Operating machinery • Driving
- Maintaining equipment • Constructing • Building
- Sketching • Working with CAD • Keyboarding
- Drafting • Surveying • Troubleshooting

### Working With Data/Information

- Calculating • Developing databases
- Working with spreadsheets • Accounting • Writing
- Researching • Computing • Testing • Filing • Sorting
- Editing • Gathering data • Analyzing • Budgeting

## Easy Steps to Identify Your Transferable Skills

Now that you know what transferable skills are, let's put together a list of your transferable skills. You may want to work with someone in your career services office to help you identify as many transferable skills as possible.

**Step 1.** Make a list of every job title you've held (part-time, full-time and internships), along with volunteer, sports and other affiliations since starting college. (Be sure to record officer positions and other leadership roles.)

**Step 2.** Using your transcript, list the classes in your major field of study along with foundation courses. Include electives that may be related to your employment interests.

**Step 3.** For each job title, campus activity and class you've just recorded, write a sentence and then underline the action taken. (Avoid stating that you *learned* or *gained experience* in any skill. Instead, present your skill more directly as a verifiable qualification.)

*"While working for Jones Engineering, I performed 3D modeling and drafting."*

**NOT** *"While working for Jones Engineering, I gained experience in 3D modeling and drafting."*

*"As a member of the Caribbean Students Association, I developed and coordinated the marketing of club events."*

**NOT** *"As a member of the Caribbean Students Association, I learned how to market events."*

**Step 4.** Make a list of the skills/experiences you've identified for future reference during your job search.

## Using Transferable Skills in the Job Search

Your success in finding the position right for you will depend on your ability to showcase your innate talents and skills. You will also need to demonstrate how you can apply these skills at an employer's place of business. Consult the staff at your career services office to help you further identify relevant transferable skills and incorporate them on your resume and during your interviews. During each interview, be sure to emphasize only those skills that would be of particular interest to a specific employer.

Transferable skills are the foundation upon which you will build additional, more complex skills as your career unfolds. Start making your list of skills and you'll discover that you have more to offer than you realized!

### Additional Tips to Help Identify Your Transferable Skills

1. Review your list of transferable skills with someone in your field(s) of interest to help you identify any additional skills that you may want to include.
2. Using a major job posting website, print out descriptions of jobs that interest you to help you identify skills being sought. (Also use these postings as guides for terminology on your resume.)
3. Attend career fairs and company information sessions to learn about the skills valued by specific companies and industries.

Written by Rosita Smith.

# Network Your Way to a Job

**M**any people use the classified ads as their sole job search technique. Unfortunately, statistics show that only 10% to 20% of jobs are ever published—which means that 80% to 90% of jobs remain hidden in the job market. For this reason, networking remains the number one job search strategy.

## Networking Defined

A network is an interconnected group of supporters who serve as resources for your job search and ultimately for your career. Some great network contacts might include people you meet at business and social meetings who provide you with career information and advice. Students often hesitate to network because they feel awkward asking for help, but it should be an integral part of any job search. Though you might feel nervous when approaching a potential contact, networking is a skill that develops with practice, so don't give up. Most people love to talk about themselves and their jobs and are willing to give realistic—and free—advice.

## Eight Keys to Networking

- 1. Be Prepared** First, define what information you need and what you are trying to accomplish by networking. Remember, your purpose in networking is to get to know people who can provide information regarding careers and leads. Some of the many benefits of networking include increased visibility within your field, propelling your professional development, finding suitable mentors, increasing your chances of promotion and perhaps finding your next job.  
Second, know yourself—your education, experience and skills. Practice a concise, one-minute presentation of yourself so that people will know the kinds of areas in which you are interested. Your networking meeting should include the following elements: introduction, self-overview, Q&A, obtaining referrals and closing.
- 2. Be Targeted** Identify your network. For some, “I don't have a professional network. I don't know anyone,” may be your first reaction. You can start by listing everyone you know who are potential prospects: family members, friends, faculty, neighbors, classmates, alumni, bosses,

### Questions to Ask During Networking Meetings

- What do you like most (least) about your work?
- Can you describe a typical workday or week?
- What type of education and experience do you need to remain successful in this field?
- What are the future career opportunities in this field?
- What are the challenges in balancing work and personal life?
- Why do people enter/leave this field or company?
- Which companies have the best track record for promoting minorities?
- What advice would you give to someone trying to break into this field?
- With whom would you recommend I speak? When I call, may I use your name?

co-workers and community associates. Attend meetings of organizations in your field of interest and get involved. You never know where you are going to meet someone who could lead you to your next job.

- 3. Be Professional** Ask your networking prospects for advice—not for a job. Your networking meetings should be a source of career information, advice and contacts. Start off the encounter with a firm handshake, eye contact and a warm smile. Focus on asking for one thing at a time. Your contacts expect you to represent yourself with your best foot forward.
- 4. Be Patient** Heena Noorani, research analyst with New York-based Thomson Financial, recommends avoiding the feeling of discouragement if networking does not provide immediate results or instant answers. She advises, “Be prepared for a slow down after you get started. Stay politely persistent with your leads and build momentum. Networking is like gardening: You do not plant the seed, then quickly harvest. Networking requires cultivation that takes time and effort for the process to pay off.”
- 5. Be Focused on Quality—Not Quantity** In a large group setting, circulate and meet people, but don't try to talk to everyone. It's better to have a few meaningful conversations than 50 hasty introductions. Don't cling to people you already know; you're unlikely to build new contacts that way. If you are at a reception, be sure to wear a nametag and collect or exchange business cards so you can later contact the people you meet.
- 6. Be Referral-Centered** The person you are networking with may not have a job opening, but he or she may know someone who is hiring. The key is to exchange information and then expand your network by obtaining additional referrals each time you meet someone new. Be sure to mention the person who referred you.
- 7. Be Proactive** Stay organized and track your networking meetings. Keep a list of your contacts and update it frequently with the names of any leads given to you. Send a thank-you note or email if appropriate. Ask if you can follow-up the conversation with a phone call, or even better, with a more in-depth meeting in the near future.
- 8. Be Dedicated to Networking** Most importantly, networking should be ongoing. You will want to stay in touch with contacts over the long haul—not just when you need something. Make networking part of your long-term career plan.

### Do's & Don'ts of Networking

- Do keep one hand free from a briefcase or purse so you can shake hands when necessary.
- Do bring copies of your resume.
- Don't tell them your life story; you are dealing with busy people, so get right to the point.
- Don't be shy or afraid to ask for what you need.
- Don't pass up opportunities to network.

*Written by Thomas J. Denham, managing partner and career counselor of Careers in Transition LLC.*

# Your 60-Second Commercial

Use the following guidelines to develop an introduction when meeting employers during interviews, career days and other networking events. Your goal is to create a positive and lasting impression in a brief amount of time.

---

## Step 1: Research the Employer

1. Preview the list of organizations participating in the event and plan a strategy for the day. Put together an "A" list and a "B" list of employers you want to target. Contact your career services office to see what employers may be recruiting on campus.
2. Research all the employers on your "A" list. Look for current facts about each employer, including new products, services or acquisitions.
3. Write down some key facts about the employer:

(a) \_\_\_\_\_

(b) \_\_\_\_\_

4. Review job descriptions pertinent to your major for employer requirements. Note specific knowledge, skills, and abilities they seek. List academic or employment experiences and activities where you demonstrated these skills.

**The employer is seeking:**

**My qualifications and selling points:**

(a) \_\_\_\_\_

(a) \_\_\_\_\_

(b) \_\_\_\_\_

(b) \_\_\_\_\_

(c) \_\_\_\_\_

(c) \_\_\_\_\_

(d) \_\_\_\_\_

(d) \_\_\_\_\_

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

### My personal qualities:

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

---

## Step 2: Develop Your Introduction

Review the sample below. Using the information above, prepare and practice a brief 60-second commercial or introduction to use when meeting employer representatives.

**Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. I am currently a junior, majoring in economics and working part-time as a supervisor at Campus Information Services. This role has enhanced my communication, management, and leadership skills. In addition, I had an internship over the summer with ABC Company where I worked in a team environment on a variety of marketing and website development projects. I recently read an article about your company's plans for business growth in the Northeast, and I'm interested in learning more.**

### Notes:

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

*Adapted with permission from the Office of Career Services at Rutgers University, New Brunswick Campus.*

# Marketing Your Liberal Arts Degree

**A**s liberal arts graduates enter the job market, their direction may not be as obvious as that of their technically trained counterparts. For the most part, engineering or computer science majors know exactly where to target their efforts.

Liberal arts majors are less fortunate in that regard—such a heading cannot be found in the want ads. Yet if they learn to target their aptitudes, they have as good a chance as anyone to find meaningful work.

Students are no longer necessarily hired just because they have a particular degree. Math and physics majors are getting engineering jobs and liberal arts majors are getting accounting jobs. The reason new graduates are being hired is because they have specific skills that meet the needs of the employer.

No one is more suited to this approach than the liberal arts major. What you need to do, explains one career advisor, is to find out what you really want to do—regardless of your major. Students often ask, “What can I do with a major in philosophy?” But that’s the wrong question. The real questions are, “What fascinates me? How can I connect my interests with a job? What do I really want to be doing in 20 years?”

## Conduct in-depth research on any companies that appeal to you, and try to match their needs to your wants.

Once you have answered those questions, look at possibilities for matching your interests with a job. There are more options than you might think. Don’t get stuck on titles. For instance, if you want to be an autonomous problem-solver, someone with good communication skills who can do a good job of synthesizing sources (as in writing term papers), forget about the titles and look at the job descriptions. Management consultants, career specialists, personnel managers, teachers or trainers within organizations and schools are just a few options.

As a liberal arts major, you have to do much more work in terms of researching different job markets and finding out where there is a demand. Conduct in-depth research on any companies that appeal to you, and try to match their needs to your wants. You must be specific, however. It is possible to be too general, too open and too flexible.

To be successful, you should combine your long-term vision with short-term specificity. Present yourself to your potential employer as someone who both understands the broad goals of the company and has the ability to grow and contribute in the long run. But most importantly, show how

you can excel in that specific job. And this, most likely, will involve some specialized skills. If you’ve taken business courses, had work experiences or done specialized work on a computer in your liberal arts work, point out those strengths.

Once you’ve taken the time to determine your real interests and have set some long-term goals, map out a plan—long- and short-term—on how to get there. Resources are plentiful—from the *Occupational Outlook Handbook* or *Dictionary of Occupational Titles* to numerous general job search books, as well as those dealing with specific topics such as *What to Do with a Degree in Psychology*, *The Business of Show Business*, etc.

Your liberal arts education has equipped you to take a broad topic and research it. Use those skills to make the connection between what you want and what companies need. Once you find job descriptions that match your long-term interests, set about shaping your resume and, if need be, getting the additional specific skills, training or certification to get that first job.

Your first job may not match your long-term goal. But it’s the first step. And that, at this point, is the all-important one.

## What Liberal Arts Graduates Are Doing

A sampling of the wide range of positions filled by liberal arts graduates:

Accountant	Librarian
Administrative assistant	Management consultant
Advertising account executive	Marketing representative
Air traffic controller	Medical/dental assistant
Artist	Museum coordinator
Auditor	Office administrator
Bank manager	Outpatient therapist
Business systems analyst	Paralegal
Buyer	Photographer
Child support enforcement officer	Probation officer
Claims examiner	Product specialist
Communications specialist	Psychologist
Computer specialist	Public relations specialist
Copywriter	Quality engineer
Counselor	Recreation administrator
Customer service representative	Research analyst
Editor	Restaurant manager
Employee relations specialist	Retail manager
Engineering planner	Sales representative
Financial consultant	Social worker
Graphic designer	Speech pathologist
Hotel manager	Stockbroker
Human resource specialist	Systems analyst
Industrial designer	Tax consultant
Interpreter/translator	Teacher
Journalist	Technical writer
	Transportation specialist
	Underwriter
	Urban planner
	Writer

# International Students and the Job Search

Looking for a job is seldom easy for any student. For you, the international student, the job search process can be especially confusing. You may lack an understanding of U.S. employment regulations, or perhaps you are unaware of the impact your career choice has on your job search. You may also be unsure about your role as the job-seeker and the resources used by American employers to find candidates.

The following is an overview of the issues most relevant to international students in developing a job search strategy. Additional information about the employment process and related topics can be found through your career center and on the Internet.

## Bureau of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Regulations

As an international student, you should only obtain employment-related information from an experienced immigration attorney or your campus USCIS representative. *Advice from any other resource may be inaccurate.* Once you have decided to remain in the United States to work, contact the international student services office or the office of human resources on your campus and make an appointment with your USCIS representative. In addition to helping you fill out necessary forms, the USCIS representative will inform you of the costs associated with working in the United States.

## Importance of Skills and Career Field

Find out if your degree and skills-set are currently in demand in the U.S. job market. An advanced degree, highly marketable skills or extensive experience will all make your job search easier. Find out what region of the United States holds the majority of the jobs in your field; you may need to relocate in order to find the job you want. Learn all you can about your targeted career field by talking to professors, reading industry publications and attending professional meetings and regional conferences.

## Role of Employers

It is the employer's responsibility to find the right people for his or her company—*not to help you find a job*. The interview is successful when both of you see a match between the employer's needs and your interest and ability to do the job.

The employer (through hiring managers, human resources staff or employment agencies) will most likely use several resources to find workers, including:

- College recruiting
- Campus or community job fairs
- Posting jobs on the company website or on national job posting sites on the Internet
- Posting jobs in major newspapers or trade publications
- Posting jobs with professional associations
- Resume searches on national online services
- Employee referrals
- Regional and national conferences
- Employment agencies ("headhunters")

Are you accessible to employers through at least some of the above strategies? If not, develop a plan to make sure your

credentials are widely circulated. Notify as many people as possible in your field about your job search.

## Strong Communication Skills

You can help the employer make an informed hiring decision if you:

- Provide a well-prepared resume that includes desirable skills and relevant employment experiences.
- Clearly convey your interests and ability to do the job in an interview.
- Understand English when spoken to you and can effectively express your thoughts in English.

It's important to be able to positively promote yourself and talk with confidence about your education, relevant skills and related experiences. Self-promotion is rarely easy for anyone. But, it can be especially difficult for individuals from cultures where talking about yourself is considered inappropriate. When interviewing in the United States, however, you are expected to be able to explain your credentials and why you are suitable for the position.

Be sensitive to the interviewer's verbal and nonverbal cues. Some international students may not realize when their accent is causing them to be misunderstood. Interviewers are sometimes too embarrassed or impatient to ask for clarification, so be on the lookout for nonverbal clues, such as follow-up questions that don't match your responses or sudden disinterest on the part of the interviewer. Also, make sure you express proper nonverbal communication; always look directly at the employer in order to portray confidence and honesty.

If your English language skills need some work, get involved with campus and community activities. These events will allow you to practice speaking English. The more you use the language, the more proficient you will become. These activities are also a great way to make networking contacts.

## Career Center

The career center can be a valuable resource in your job search. Be aware, however, that some employers using the career center won't interview students who are not U.S. citizens. Though this may limit your ability to participate in some campus interviews, there are numerous ways to benefit from the campus career center:

- Attend sessions on job search strategies and related topics.
- Work with the career services staff to develop your job search strategy.
- Attend campus career fairs and company information sessions to inquire about employment opportunities and to practice your networking skills.

It's a good idea to get advice from other international students who have successfully found employment in this country and to start your job search early. Create and follow a detailed plan of action that will lead you to a great job you can write home about.

*Written by Rosita Smith.*

# Turning Your Internship Into a Full-Time Position

One of the best benefits of an internship or cooperative education experience is that it can serve as your passport to future employment opportunities. Getting your foot in the door by landing the internship or co-op is only half of the challenge in turning your career dreams into a reality. The more vital half is to build a reputation during this career experience that will culminate in receiving a full-time job offer.

A growing number of employers are using internships as a way to gain a first in-depth look at prospective employees. In this respect, both you and your employer have a common goal—namely, to determine if there is a good fit between you.

Here are ten tips to becoming a savvy intern and making powerful career moves:

## 1. Exhibit a Can-Do Attitude

Pass the attitude test and you will be well on your way to success. Attitude speaks loud and clear and makes a lasting impression, so make sure that yours is one of your greatest assets. Take on any task assigned—no matter how small—with enthusiasm. Take the initiative to acquire new skills. Accept criticism graciously and maintain a sense of humor.

## 2. Learn the Unwritten Rules

Get to know your co-workers early in your internship. They will help you figure out quickly the culture in which you will be working. Being the “new kid” is like being a freshman all over again. You will need to adapt, observe, learn and process a large volume of information. Watch closely how things get done. Ask questions and pay attention to how people interact with each other.

## 3. Take Your Assignments Seriously

Build a reputation for being dependable. Be diligent and accurate in your work. You may encounter a great deal of ambiguity in the work environment, so seek direction when in doubt and do whatever it takes to get the job done. As an intern, you will generally start out by performing small tasks, asking a lot of questions and learning the systems. Your internship supervisor knows that there will be an initial learning curve and will make allowances for mistakes. Learn from your errors and move on to your next task. From there, your responsibilities and the expectations of others are likely to grow.

## 4. Meet Deadlines

Always assume the responsibility to ask when an assignment is due. This will help you to understand your supervisor’s priorities and to manage your time accordingly. Alert your boss in advance if you will be unable to meet expectations. This will show respect and professional maturity.

## 5. Set Realistic Goals and Expectations

Invest actively in the most critical element of your internship—that is, the learning agenda which you set up with your supervisor at the beginning of the

assignment. Your learning agenda should target specific skills and competencies that you wish to acquire and demonstrate. After all, the learning agenda is what distinguishes a short-term job from an internship. It is up to you to establish a correlation between your learning goals and the daily work you are asked to perform. Maintain a journal of your activities and accomplishments in order to monitor your progress. Seek regular reviews from your supervisor to assess your performance and reinforce the fact that you mean business.

## 6. Communicate Respectfully

Assume that everyone else knows more than you do. However, don’t be afraid to present useful ideas that may save time or money or solve problems. Make sure, however, that your style does not come across as cocky. Employers value assertiveness but not aggressiveness. Find out the proper way to address individuals, including customers. Maintain a pleasant and respectful demeanor with every person, regardless of his or her rank.

## 7. Be Flexible

Accept a wide variety of tasks, even those that may not relate directly to your assignments or those that may seem like grunt work. Your willingness to go the extra mile, especially during “crunch time,” will help you carve the way to assuming greater responsibilities.

## 8. Be a Team Player

Learn how your assignment fits into the grand scheme of things and keep a keen eye on getting the job done. In today’s work environment, success is often defined along the lines of your ability to get along with and interact with others. You’re a winner only if your team wins.

## 9. Get a Mentor

Identify at least one individual to serve as your mentor or professional guardian. It should be someone who is willing to take a personal interest in your career development and success. Once you know your way around, begin to network wisely and get “plugged in” by associating with seasoned employees who may share their knowledge, perspectives and insights. Get noticed, because many more people will have a role in determining your future than you might at first realize.

## 10. Have Fun!

Last but not least, enjoy learning, sharpening your skills and developing professionally and personally. Participate in work-related social functions and become an active member in your work community.

Make your internship or co-op experience work for you. It can be the first link in the chain of your career.

*Written by Lina Melkonian, Executive Director of Development at San José State University, College of Engineering.*

# Federal Jobs: Working for Uncle Sam

**S**o you want to work for the federal government? You are not alone. Uncle Sam employs approximately 2.7 million civilian workers worldwide. Federal employees receive a generous benefits package, and as of 2012 they earned an average salary of \$81,709. As the largest employer in the U.S., the federal government offers a variety of career opportunities unparalleled in the private sector. Federal employees work with (and create) cutting-edge technology. They create policy, programs and services that impact the health, safety and welfare of millions of people worldwide.

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

## Types of Federal Jobs

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

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

## OPM and USAJOBS

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

## Searching for Federal Jobs

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

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

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

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

## How to Apply

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

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

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

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

# 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, bold-face type and italics should be used only to make the document easier to read, not fancier. Again, ask a professional's opinion.
4. **Too verbose.** Do not use complete sentences or paragraphs. Say as much as possible with as few words as possible. *A, an* and *the* can almost always be left out. Be careful in your use of jargon and avoid slang.
5. **Too sparse.** Give more than the bare essentials, especially when describing related work experience, skills, accomplishments, activities, interests and club memberships that will give employers important information. Including membership in the Society of Women Engineers, for example, would be helpful to employers who wish to hire more women, yet cannot ask for that information.
6. **Irrelevant information.** Customize each resume to each position you seek (when possible). Of course, include all education and work experience, but emphasize only relevant experience, skills, accomplishments, activities and hobbies. Do not include marital status, age, sex, children, height, weight, health, church membership, etc.
7. **Obviously generic.** Too many resumes scream, "I need a job—*any* job!" The employer needs to feel that you are interested in that particular position with his or her particular company.
8. **Too snazzy.** Of course, use good quality bond paper, but avoid exotic types, colored paper, photographs, binders and graphics. Electronic resumes should include appropriate industry keywords and use a font size between 10 and 14 points. Avoid underlining, italics or graphics.
9. **Boring.** Make your resume as dynamic as possible. Begin every statement with an action verb. Use active verbs to describe what you have accomplished in past jobs. Take advantage of your rich vocabulary and avoid repeating words, especially the first word in a section.
10. **Too modest.** The resume showcases your qualifications in competition with the other applicants. Put your best foot forward without misrepresentation, falsification or arrogance.

## The Three Rs

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

# Power Verbs for Your Resume

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

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

# Sample Resumes

**Ashley L Barboza**  
ashley\_lena@email.com  
951-555-5555

**Local Address**  
Box xxxx Address Dr  
Tuskegee AL 36088

**Permanent Address**  
xxxx Address Dr  
Moreno Valley CA 92553

**Objective**

To acquire an internship that will allow me to utilize the abilities I have obtained in the health field, while learning to operate in various areas of public health.

**Education**

**Tuskegee University, Tuskegee AL**  
Dual Major: Food Science and Biology Cumulative GPA: 2.79 Expected Graduation: May 2014

**Special Skills**

Bilingual English and Spanish, Enthusiastic care giver, Diabetes and stroke patient care, Comfortable standing for long periods of time, Reliable and punctual

**Work Experience**

**Tuskegee University, Tuskegee, AL**  
*Food Science Research* Jan 2013-Present

- Conduct qualitative as well as quantitative tests on raw or prepared food products
- Examine chemical and biological samples in order to locate bacteria, or extraneous material
- Prepare slides and incubate slides with cell cultures

**Home Health Aide Riverside, CA**

Oct 2008-Present

- Provided nursing care
- Planned, prepared and served meals according to prescribed diets
- Provided personal nursing care in pre- and post-operative situations

**Tuskegee University, Tuskegee, AL**

*Biology Research Assistant* Aug 2011-May 2012

- Demonstrated basic laboratory techniques including preparations of serial dilutions, making agar and broth, and incubation
- Setup, operate and maintained laboratory instruments and equipment
- Monitored experiments, made observations, calculated/recorded results
- Performed experiments using Escherichia coli and Staphylococcus aureus

**Maxim Health Care, Riverside, CA**

*Certified Nursing Assistant* Oct 2008-Jan 2009

- Provided quality nursing care in accordance with resident care policies and procedures.
- Assisted with adequate nutrition and fluid intake

**Little Caesars Pizza, Parris, CA**

May 2007-Aug 2007

- Cashier duties taking food orders, ringing up transactions, and maintaining a clean work area.
- Served as a crew member and work in a timely manner to prepare, cook, bag, and serve food

**Activities/Honors**

Tuskegee University Cross Country/Track and Field (2009-Present)  
Tuskegee University Senior Class Officer (Treasurer 2011-2012)  
Zeta Phi Beta Sorority Incorporated (Vice Pres. 2012-2013, Senator 2011-2012)  
George Washington Carver Scholarship Recipient (2009-2011)

**Shanequa C. Toney**  
xxxx Address Dr, Anchorage, AK 99504 • 907-555-5555 • s.toney@email.com

**SUMMARY**

Self-motivated, intelligent, team player with proven leadership skills who takes initiative. Seeking an internship in the area of Accounting/Finance which utilizes my Accounting skills and gives me an opportunity to learn, contribute, and grow along with the organization.

**EDUCATION**

Tuskegee University, Tuskegee, AL  
Expected Graduation Date: May 2015

Candidate for Bachelors of Science in Accounting  
GPA: 3.17/4.0

*Relevant Courses:*

Accounting Principles I & II, Intermediate Accounting I, Busn Management, Busn Ethics, Management Information Systems, Principles of Economics I & II, Management Principles, Marketing, Managerial Economics, Finance

**ACTIVITIES**

- Sound Minds Mentoring: Member 2013-2014
- National Association of Black Accountants: Elected Treasurer 2013-2014

**AWARDS**

Tuskegee University Honor Roll, Tuskegee University Academic Achievement Award Scholarship, Brotherhood Inc. Scholarship, Alabama Endowment Scholarship

**JOB EXPERIENCE**

**HR Operations Intern/Global Talent Acquisitions**

EMCC Corporation, Hopkinton, MA

*Industry leader in information infrastructure with over \$22 billion in revenue and over 60,000 employees' world-wide.* Summer 2013

- Contributed to the processing of new hires through the applicant tracking system to keep information updated.
- Opened new requisitions in BrassRing to help increase the hiring process of hires.
- Supported 90+ recruiters by scheduling interviews for potential new hires.
- Responsible for issuing candidate reimbursements.
- Coached current employees on candidate reimbursements to help increase processing speed and delegate the work load amongst the Talent Acquisition team.
- Contributed to weekly team meetings designed to discuss priorities, communicate updates, and provide feedback to ensure continuous process improvements.
- Utilized LinkedIn Recruiter for special Talent Acquisition project searching through 156 candidates for a status report.
- Controlled and managed master budget for summer event for 400 interns.

**Cashier and Customer Service Representative**

Target, Anchorage, AK

*Employee of the Month 2010, 2012, 2013* 2008-Present

- Ensure quick and quality customer service on product returns, exchanges and sales.
- Operate cash register to ensure it stays balanced and full and manage inventory of products.
- Oversee daily workstation tasks ensuring they are done efficiently and effectively.

**Sales Representative and Cashier**

American Eagle Outfitters, Anchorage, AK

- Greeted customers in a welcoming and friendly manner assisting with purchasing decisions.
- Managed cashier operations and promoted the store rewards cards.
- Processed returns and exchanges in a quick effective manner for the customers.

**COMPUTER SKILLS**

Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Retail POS System, BrassRing, Outlook, PeopleSoft, Avature

**References:** Jackie Glenn-Global Chief Diversity Officer EMC, Steve Kimball- Sr Director Staffing & Search EMC

# Sample Resumes

## BIANCA DAVIS

BDavis@myemail.edu  
334.555.5555 (cell)

**Current Address:**  
xxxx Address Rd.  
Tuskegee Institute, AL 36088

**Permanent Address:**  
Address Blvd.  
Tuskegee, AL 36083

**OBJECTIVE:** To obtain an internship in the field of chemical engineering.

**EDUCATION:** Tuskegee University, Tuskegee, AL

Major: Chemical Engineering B.S. Chemical Engineering: May 2016 GPA: 3.53/4.0

### WORK EXPERIENCE:

Department of Energy National Nuclear Security Administration  
Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory

- Using *Graphene Aerogels for Energy Application* June 2, 2014- August 8, 2014
- Characterized hydrogen evolution reaction and determined the optimal catalyst using metal doped MoS<sub>2</sub>/graphene aerogels
- Concluded NiMoS<sub>2</sub> and PdMoS<sub>2</sub> have the most promising results.
- Detailed documentation of synthesis and characterization in a lab notebook.
- Reported research progress via oral presentation and written summary.

### SPECIAL PROJECTS:

- CIANNational Science Foundation Research Program  
*Determination of Contact Resistance in CG/N-Si Solar Cells* Tuskegee University Summer 2012
- Characterized the contact resistance in thin films of CuGaSe<sub>2</sub>.
- Concluded that these films deposited on n-Si with an Au metal contact possess the ideal good ohmic nature.
- Research Experience for High School Students Tuskegee University
- Effects of Wood Flour Treatment on the Properties of Epoxy Composites* Summer 2010
- Searched for an additional use for pine wood flour by creating composite materials of chemically treated pine wood flour and epoxy resins.
- Robotics Team Research Team Captain 2011-2012
- Compiled Notebook of various designs and procedures for robot design

### HONORS & AWARDS:

- New Engineers Recognizing Diverse Solutions Honor Society (2014-2015), Tuskegee University's Honor Roll (2012-2014), Wellington D. Swindall Book Scholarship (2013-2014), Kia Motors America STEM/ Sustainability Scholarship (2014-2015), Archie Alexander Fund (2013-2014), Honeywell International Scholarship (2013-2014), Tuskegee University's Achievement Award (2012), Alabama Incentive Award (2012)

### EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES:

- Tuskegee University Ambassador (2014-2015), Ignite the Dream Community Organization (2014-present)- Women's Empowerment Coordinator (2014-present), Tuskegee University Cheerleader (2013-2014), Sophomore Class Fundraiser Chair (2013-2014), National Society of Black Engineers (2013-present)- Community Outreach Chair (2014-2015), Society of Women Engineers (2012-present)- Vice President (2014-2015), Secretary (2013-2014), Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Sciences (2012-2014), Next STEP UP Mentor Program (2012-2013), Tuskegee University Business and Engineering Planning Committee (2012)

### COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES:

- Tuskegee's Fly In (May 2014), "Crafty Tuesday" Tuskegee Head Start (December 2013), "Healthy Harvest Festival" Booker T. Washington High (October 2013), Onyx (Co-Founder) (September 2011-May 2012)

## Chanel T. Collins

xxxx Address Drive • Tuskegee, AL 36088  
Phone: (334) 555-5555 • ChanelCollins@email.com

### Objective

Seeking full time employment in hospitality and/or retail industry that will utilize my communicative, leadership and negotiating skills.

### Education

Tuskegee University, Tuskegee, AL *Graduation Date: 05/10/2014*

B.S. of Psychology Minor of Business Administration  
Senior Seminar Research- Nature vs. Nurture and its effect on a person's personality  
**Special Skills:** Computer and Second Language Skills (Spanish)

### Work Experience

*Events Operations Group – Auburn, AL, Event Guest Services August 2013- May 2014*

- Provided coordination and project management to ensure event success
- Provided customer service and logistic support for events
- Provided set up and break down for events

*Kalllogg Hotel/Conference Center - Tuskegee, AL, Server October 2011- July 2013*

- Provided quality customer service to guest
- Managed food and supply inventory
- Dual role as hostess when short staffed

*Tuskegee University Library - Tuskegee, AL, Computer Lab Assistant November 2011-May 2014*

- Primary responsibility and provided student support and customer service
- Performed daily updating and maintenance of lab
- Provided available help resources and updates with new software and hardware applications

*California State Fair Catering Ovations - Sacramento, CA, Caterer July 2012-August 2012*

- Provided customer service to guests
- Set up, decorated, and prepared serving and dining areas
- Responsible for customer logistics

*Air Force ROTC - Tuskegee, AL, Squad Leader August 2009-May 2011*

- Developed subordinates for positions of increased responsibility
- Provided vision and guidance to staff members for the battalion's training, planning, and execution
- Supervised, refined, planned, and monitored mission preparations for subordinates
- Made sales for programs during community service projects

*Chatham Beauty Supply/Hair Salon – Sacramento, CA, Customer Sales Associate November 2008-August 2011*

- Responsible for inventory controls, customer service and consultation of product selection
- Prepared and maintained store supply records, forms, product display and stocking
- Received a bonus for achieving highest wig sales

### Skills & Activities

- Proficient in Microsoft Office Suite including Word, Excel, and PowerPoint
- Great team player, interpersonal, leadership, and negotiating skills
- Competent in Spanish (not fluent) and tutor in English
- Treasurer of English Club
- Next Step Up Program Student Advisor
- NAACP, Psychology Club, Pre Alummi Club, Student Government Association Events Committee

### Awards

Honor Roll 2009-2013, Lead Color Guard cadets, Drill Team Awards for Air Force ROTC, Tuskegee University Air Force ROTC Scholarship, United Negro College Fund Award

References upon Request

# Sample Resumes

**Dennis Stephan Williams, Jr.**  
 xxxx Address Street  
 Anchorage, AK 99507  
 (907) 555-5555 • DWilliams@email.com

## PROFILE

Seeking an internship or co-op position.

## EDUCATION

Tuskegee University, Tuskegee, AL  
 Sophomore, Mechanical Engineering, expected graduation date May 2016 GPA: 3.36/4.0

## RELATED COURSEWORK

- Engineering Graphics - Freshman Design - Manufacturing Process - Mechanical Dissection
- Strength of Materials - Statics - Dynamics - Thermodynamics

## CLASS PROJECTS

- Design and created a virtual model remote control hair brush, equipped with a headset and remote.
- Designed a small scale model bridge on the basis and criteria of an actual bridge having to withstand pressure, torsion, stress, strain, etc.
- Designed a remote control car, meeting the specifications of torque/rpm/volt of engine, wheel radius and ability to pull loads.
- Designed a manufacturing process for creating a brake pedal for a race car. Had to determine costs, material, and casting process.

## MECHANICAL TOOL EXPERIENCE

- Spot welding machine - Table saw - Lathe
- Engine jack - Power Drills

## COMPUTER SKILLS

- Proficient in Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Auto-Cad and NX Graphics

## WORK EXPERIENCE

- June 2013-August 2013 Tuskegee, AL: Worked at family business.
  - Changed gasket covers, tires, oil, and removing engines.
  - Fusion welded and removed engines.
- October 2012-November 2012 Tuskegee, AL:
  - Tutored K-12 students reading, writing, and math.
  - Performed experiments and social activities such as density labs and the effects of gravity.
- October 2010-2012 Anchorage, AK: Worked at family business.
  - Changed brake pads and oil.
  - November 2011 Anchorage, AK: Water Park.
    - AP class students
    - Toured facility operations and maintenance.
    - Repaired valves on a centrifugal pump after learning the operation systems of a water park.
  - October 2010- February 2010 Southside Roofing Co. Anchorage, AK:
    - Maintained and repaired roofs.

## ORGANIZATIONS

- Upward Bound
- World Federation of Turtles
- A.S.I.M.E
- Tuskegee University Pre-Alumni Council (Membership and Fundraise Committee)
- TUBE (Tuskegee University of Business and Engineering)

## SERVICE

Trash Men – Collected students trash from all dorms, commons, and nearby student-resident apartments.  
 Upward Bound – Alumnum and graduate. Performed tutoring duties and help organize trips.  
 Meet the World 2012 – Helped set up booths and organized the different groups of cultures into a parade.  
 Kids Day 2010/2011 – Supervised and hosted booths (storytelling, animal petting farm, outdoor games) for kids in the community.

## ACHIEVEMENTS

- Upward Bound Program Graduate - National Society of High School
- Academic Achievement (Upward Bound) - Scholars - Stellar Participation Award
- Academic Achievement (Tuskegee University) - National Society of Leadership and Success Recipient - Leadership Award Recipient - Academic Rigor Award Recipient

**DEJANNA T. HILL**  
 xxxx Address Ave. Oakland, CA 94605  
 Email: hildejanna@email.com | (510) 555-5555

## Objective

To secure a position with a well established organization that will lead to a lasting career in the field of Financial Marketing.

## Education

Tuskegee University College of Business and Information Science, Tuskegee, AL  
 Double Major: Sales/Marketing and Finance  
 GPA: 3.40  
 Expected Graduation Date: May 2016

## Experience

### Inventory Control Specialist

- LiveNation Merchandise
- Process warehouse withdrawals, purchase orders, and stock adjustments.
- Maintain vendor relationships and settle any issues with purchase orders.
- Manage cycle count and physical inventory control.
- Performed data entry duties into multiple advanced operational systems.

San Francisco, CA  
 Jun 2014 - Present

### Sales Person

- Waffle House
- Serve and assist restaurant patrons.
- Manage sanitation of cooking and dining area.
- Maintain customer relations with regular and new customers.

Auburn, AL  
 Sept 2013 - Dec 2013

### Office Manager

- Obscura Digital
- Managed the office cataloging and record keeping.
- Maintained office appearance and stocked with supplies.
- Handled the entire department's travel expenses, reservations, and conference calls.

San Francisco, CA  
 May 2013 - Aug 2013

### Sales Associate

- Pottery Barn Kids
- Greeted customers and offered assistance with purchase
- Managed gift wrapping and customer pick ups
- Organized and filled stock rooms

Pleasanton, CA  
 Jun 2012 - Jan 2013

### Mentor Volunteer

- Rainbow Recreational Center
- Supervised children's indoor and outdoor activities
- Assisted in cooking and arts and craft classes
- Tutored in SAT/ACT college prep courses

Oakland, CA  
 May 2013 - Aug 2013

## Skills

Proficient in Inventory Control System Crystal and CounterPoint, MS Office, Macintosh Appliances, Intermediate in French, Great Communication, Strong Organization, Analytical, Self Management, Team Leader, and Team Player

## Activities/Honors

Active Member of Pi Sigma Epsilon (2013-present)  
 NAACP Events Committee (2012-present)  
 Positive Steps of the NCBW (2010-present)

# Sample Resumes

**Ernest Stevens, V**  
erneststvn5@email.com

**Permanent Address:**  
xxxx Address Dr. Apt. X  
Tuskegee, AL 36088  
216-555-5555

**Permanent Address:**  
xxxx Address Ave.  
Lakewood, OH 44107  
216-555-5555

**OBJECTIVE:** I've developed skills in Accounting & Supply Chain Management. My goal is to integrate those skills into a work environment that my enthusiasm and diligence would support intellectual balance with my personal goals.

**EDUCATION:** Tuskegee University  
Major: Accounting & Supply Chain Management  
GPA: 3.18  
Expected Graduation Date: December 2015

**RELEVANT COURSES:**

- Production & Operation Management
- Database Management Systems
- Intro to Supply Chain Management
- Total Quality Management
- Systems Analysis & Design
- Intermediate Accounting I & II
- Advanced Accounting
- Government Accounting
- Auditing

**EXPERIENCE:**

**Forest City Enterprises, Cleveland, OH**      **Corporate Tax Management Intern**      **May - August 2012, 2013 & 2014**

- Conducted audits, team site design, and data entry for commercial properties
- Trained on how to input purchase orders and check request into SAP
- Gained extensive experience with programs such as ITAM and LiveLink
- Used Microsoft Excel to create analysis reports and property budgets

**Arby's, Lakewood, OH**      **Team Trainer**      **February 2011 – August 2012**

- Trained new members on providing good customer service and handling monetary transactions
- Managed cash registers up to \$1,000 each shift
- Received superior customer service ratings from manager and customer reviews

**Tax Doctor, Cleveland, OH**      **Seasonal Tax Office Intern**      **January 2007 – April 2011**

- Prepared tax returns
- Handled, on average, 50 phone inquiries per shift
- Job shadowed on tax return data entry

**LEADERSHIP:**

**CSCMP Tuskegee University Roundtable**      **Member**      **August 2014 – Current**

- Assisted in promoting Supply Chain Management as a major to other students
- Participated in distribution center visits

**National Association of Black Accountants**      **President**      **August 2014 – May 2015**

- Provided leadership, direction and vision for the Chapter, consistent with the mission of the Association
- Increased student membership by 10 students

**Pi Sigma Epsilon**      **VP of Finance**      **January 2015 – December 2015**

- Managed and budgeted financial accounts for the organization
- Reported financial information to the president monthly

**ACTIVITIES/AWARDS:**

- Alabama Society of Certified Public Accountants' Student Ambassador      August 2014 – May 2015
- AICPA Accounting Scholars Leadership Workshop Student Scholar      July 2014
- National Association of Black Accountants (NABA) Tutoring Committee Member      August 2013 – May 2014
- Marching, Concert & Pep Band Member      August 2011 – May 2014

**TECHNICAL / NON-TECHNICAL SKILLS:**

- PivotTable
- VLOOKUP
- Financial Calculator

**Gabrielle Marie Franklin**  
xxxxx Address St, Chadron, NE 69337  
Email: gfranklin@myemail.edu  
Phone: (334) 555-5555

**OBJECTIVE**

My Objective is to obtain a summer internship in the Social Science field that will enable me to use my strong leadership and communication skills in order to facilitate children and teenagers to bolster their self-worth.

**EDUCATION**

**Tuskegee University – Tuskegee, AL**

- Overall GPA 3.37/4.0 Graduation Date: May 2016
- Major: Social Work GPA: 4.0/4.0
- Minor: Sociology

**EMPLOYMENT HISTORY**

**Sable Learning Center (Summer 2013)**      **Hobson City, AL**

- Mentored boys and girls from ages 4-16
- Helped children advance their reading, writing, spelling, and mathematic skills
- Organized summer activities and field trips

**Child Care (2008-2012)**      **Chadron, NE**

- Self-Employed
- Supervising, feeding and organizing activities for 5 children daily from the ages of 4 months-13 years old

**Maurice's (2011-2013)**      **Chadron, NE**

- Back Stock; opening/tagging clothes and putting them out on the floor
- Greeting and helping customers obtain clothing items and checking customers out

**EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES & COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

- Volunteered for the Safe Haven Christmas Party (Fall 2013)
- Softball Camp held by Tuskegee Softball Team (Spring 2013)
- Volunteer at the Oaks at Tuskegee Institute (Fall 2012)
- Social Work Alliance (Fall 2012-Present)
- Tuskegee University Softball (Fall 2012-Present)
- Tutored Elementary Aged Children (Oxford, AL Summer 2011 and 2012)

**HONORS & AWARDS**

- The National Society of Leadership and Success (Inductee Fall 2013)
- Community Service Committee for the National Society of Leadership and Success (Fall 2013)
- Social Work Class Co-Captain (Fall 2013)
- Academic Achievement Scholarship to Tuskegee University (Fall 2012-Present)
- Gold Award (Highest Achievement in Girl Scouts)

# Sample Resumes

## Kira Kennedy

kennedykira@email.com | Cell (205) 555-5555 | xxxx Address Ave, Birmingham, AL 35224

### OBJECTIVE

Pursuing full time employment in any area of Animal Science with a preference in animal care.

### EDUCATION

**Tuskegee University:** Tuskegee, Alabama    **Major:** Animal Poultry and Veterinary Science  
**Graduation Day:** May 10<sup>th</sup> 2014    **Cumulative GPA:** 2.97/4.00

### RELATED RESEARCH AND EXPERIENCE

#### Deer Management Area Hunt

- Established the age of a deer by using teeth examination methods
- Demonstrated techniques to gather accurate measurements of their antlers
- Acquired knowledge of various deer skinning practices

#### Swine Production- Auburn University Pig Farm

- Displayed correct handling to remove sows from stalls to prepare for weaning of piglets
- Distributed vaccines to all piglets to ensure healthy growth and immune system functions
- Castrated the male piglets control to number of pigs used for breeding and meat production
- Assisted a sexually mature boar into the vagina of a "ready-to-breed" sow
- Exhibited appropriate herding techniques to safely move swine around facility

#### Tuskegee University's Caprine Research Center

- Assisted in testing the effects of sex and breed on growth, health performance, meat, and carcass quality of goats.
- Collected and recorded body measurements, scrotal circumference, body width, chest girth, hip width, height at withers, body conditioning scores and weight.
- Conducted blood collections, fecal analysis and FAMACHA scoring. Administered feed and medication to goats depending on weight.
- Examined the correct method in which to castrate goats from graduate student

#### Poultry Production Experiment

- Studied and performed the proper techniques used to slaughter and dissect chickens
- Displayed dissected chicken organs to examine digestive track process
- Canded chicken eggs to detect whether a viable embryo was inside
- Decontaminated poultry houses to allow for a pathogen free living space

### SPECIALIZED COURSEWORK & SKILLS

- **Coursework:** Meat and Meat Production, Genetics, Animal & Poultry Nutrition, Animal Behavior, Animal Biotechnology, Introduction to Animal Science, Cell and Genetics Biology, Poultry Science, Soil, Science, Swine Production, Animal Breeding & Genetics, Anatomy of Domestic Animals, MicroBiology, BioStatistics, Animal Biotechnology, Animal Behavior, Farm Management, Lab Animal Management
- **Skills:** Proficient in Microsoft Word, Basic Microsoft Excel and PowerPoint

### AWARDS/ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Lettie Paite Whitehead Scholarship Recipient (2009 – 2014)
- Perry L. White Birmingham Alumni Scholarship Recipient (2010)
- Tuskegee University Marching Band and Concert (2009 – 2013)

## Michael Alvin Verner, Jr.

Email: [vernermichael@email.com](mailto:vernermichael@email.com)  
Cell: (323) 555-5555

### College Address

xxxxx Address Drive  
Tuskegee University  
Tuskegee, AL 36088

### Permanent Address

xxxxx West Address Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90043

### Objective

To utilize acquired skills and recent educational background to an organization that offers opportunities for growth and advancement.

### Education

Tuskegee University, Tuskegee, AL 36088  
**Major:** Sociology  
**Minor:** Psychology  
**Cumulative GPA:** 3.175  
**Expected Graduation Date:** May 2015

### Skills

**Computer Skills**—Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel, Microsoft PowerPoint, Microsoft Access  
**Language Skills**—Fluent in English, Proficient in Spanish

### Work Experience

(07/11—08/11)    **Library Assistant**  
*Greater Ebenezer Missionary Baptist Church, 5300 S. Denker Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90062*  
Inputted books and music into the main computer system, organized and shelved them by category and author, operated as the morning shift coordinator, answered incoming calls, and created fire/earthquake escape routes.

(08/09—05/10)

### Academic Coach

*St. Bernard High School, 9100 Falmouth Ave., Playa del Rey, CA 90293*  
Tutored students in Intro to Art History, graded tests and quizzes, cleaned the room and art supplies, participated in school activities by designing and hanging up posters.

(06/09—01/10)

### Volunteer

*VA Greater Los Angeles Health Care Systems, 11301 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles CA 90073*

Worked in the Business Department and the Dental Clinic. Organized and filed paperwork, cleaned operating rooms, handled blood pressure monitors and x-rays, and escorted patients via wheelchairs and gurneys.

### Honors/Awards

Zeta Rho Foundation, Inc. Scholarship; Rev. A. W. Lott Memorial Scholarship; Pacific District Scholarship; Choir Scholarship; Bank of America Achievement Award (Liberal Arts)

### Activities

Tuskegee University Golden Voices Concert Choir (Librarian: 2011-present); S.T.E.P. Mentoring Program; Sociology Club;

### Community Involvement

Auburn Connects Program; Blueberry Fields Clean-Up; Lake Tuskegee Clean-Up; Service Learning Project at George Washington Carver Elementary School; Tuskegee Town Clean-Up; Tuskegee University Campus Clean-Up

# Business Etiquette Blunders

## And How to Fix Them

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

### No Show = No Job

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

If something pressing does come up, immediately call to cancel or reschedule. Decided you don’t want the job after all? Don’t just disappear. It’s not only rude, but every industry has a grapevine, and word of flakiness gets around. Failing to show for an on-campus interview can have even more severe consequences, so make sure you know the 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. “Do not expect the interviewer to entertain you, or do your job for you by drawing you out,” she adds.

### Thankless

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

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

### Too Familiar

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

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

### What Dress Code?

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

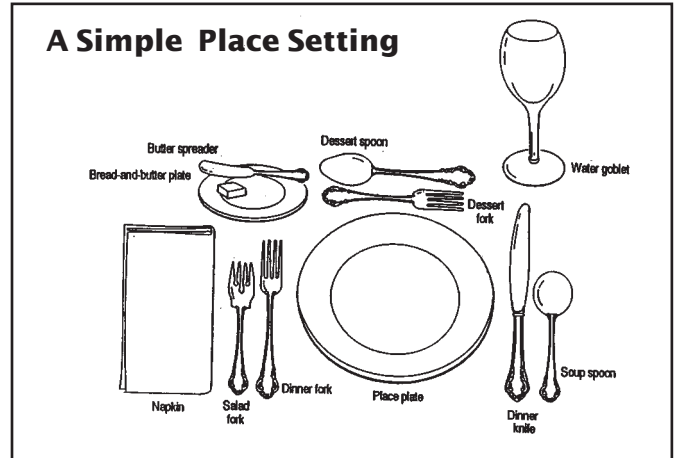
“On an interview, you’re dressing to get hired, not dated,” says Yate. “Your dress must be conservative and clean cut. It shows respect for the occasion, job, company, interviewer, and most of all—for yourself.”

### Dining Disaster

You may have an opportunity to interview at lunch or dinner. It can be doubly nerve wracking to think about what you’ll say, as well as how to keep the spaghetti on your fork. “If you eat like a caveman with a mastodon on your plate, you won’t be invited to dine with the chairman of the board, or important clients,” Yate says. Don’t drink,

even if your interviewer does, so that you can keep your wits about you, and be courteous to the wait staff. Consider ordering an easy-to-manage entrée.

### A Simple Place Setting



### Clueless About the Employer

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

### Annoying Devices

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

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

### Poor Profile

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

### Tattoos and Piercings

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

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

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

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

# Dressing for the Interview

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

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

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

Here are some guidelines:

## MEN

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

## WOMEN

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

## Staying Within a Budget

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

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

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

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

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

## A Final Check

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

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

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

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# What Happens During the Interview

**T**he interviewing process can be scary if you don't know what to expect. All interviews fit a general pattern.

While each interview will differ, all will share three common characteristics: the beginning, middle and conclusion.

The typical interview will last 30 minutes, although some may be longer. A typical structure is as follows:

- Five minutes—small talk
- Fifteen minutes—a mutual discussion of your background and credentials as they relate to the needs of the employer
- Five minutes—asks you for questions
- Five minutes—conclusion of interview

As you can see, there is not a lot of time to state your case. The employer may try to do most of the talking. When you do respond to questions or ask your own, your statements should be concise and organized without being too brief.

## It Starts Before You Even Say Hello

The typical interview starts before you even get into the inner sanctum. The recruiter begins to evaluate you the minute you are identified. You are expected to shake the recruiter's hand upon being introduced. Don't be afraid to extend your hand first. This shows assertiveness.

It's a good idea to arrive at least 15 minutes early. You can use the time to relax. It gets easier later. It may mean counting to ten slowly or wiping your hands on a handkerchief to keep them dry.

## How's Your Small Talk Vocabulary?

Many recruiters will begin the interview with some small talk. Topics may range from the weather to sports and will rarely focus on anything that brings out your skills. Nonetheless, you are still being evaluated.

Recruiters are trained to evaluate candidates on many different points. They may be judging how well you communicate on an informal basis. This means you must do more than smile and nod.

## The Recruiter Has the Floor

The main part of the interview starts when the recruiter begins discussing the organization. If the recruiter uses vague generalities about the position and you want more specific information, ask questions. Be sure you have a clear understanding of the job and the company.

As the interview turns to talk about your qualifications, be prepared to deal with aspects of your background that could be construed as negative, i.e., low grade point average, no participation in outside activities, no related work experience. It is up to you to convince the recruiter that although these points appear negative, positive attributes can be found in them. A low GPA could stem from having to fully support yourself through college; you might have no related work experience, but plenty of experience that shows you to be a loyal and valued employee.

Many times recruiters will ask why you chose the major you did or what your career goals are. These questions are designed to determine your goal direction. Employers seek people who have direction and motivation. This can be demonstrated by your answers to these innocent-sounding questions.

## It's Your Turn to Ask Questions

When the recruiter asks, "Now do you have any questions?" it's important to have a few ready. Dr. C. Randall Powell, author of *Career Planning Today*, suggests some excellent strategies for dealing with this issue. He says questions should elicit positive responses from the employer. Also, the questions should bring out your interest in and knowledge of the organization.

By asking intelligent, well-thought-out questions, you show the employer you are serious about the organization and need more information. It also indicates to the recruiter that you have done your homework.

## The Close Counts, Too

The interview isn't over until you walk out the door. The conclusion of the interview usually lasts five minutes and is very important. During this time the recruiter is assessing your overall performance.

It is important to remain enthusiastic and courteous. Often the conclusion of the interview is indicated when the recruiter stands up. If you feel the interview has reached its conclusion, feel free to stand up first.

Shake the recruiter's hand and thank him or her for considering you. Being forthright is a quality that most employers will respect, indicating that you feel you have presented your case and the decision is now up to the employer.

## Expect the Unexpected

During the interview, you may be asked some unusual questions. Don't be too surprised. Many times questions are asked simply to see how you react.

For example, surprise questions could range from, "Tell me a joke" to "What time period would you like to have lived in?" These are not the kind of questions for which you can prepare in advance. Your reaction time and the response you give will be evaluated by the employer, but there's no way to anticipate questions like these. While these questions are not always used, they are intended to force you to react under some stress and pressure. The best advice is to think and give a natural response.

## Evaluations Made by Recruiters

The employer will be observing and evaluating you during the interview. Erwin S. Stanton, author of *Successful Personnel Recruiting and Selection*, indicates some evaluations made by the employer during the interview include:

1. How mentally alert and responsive is the job candidate?
2. Is the applicant able to draw proper inferences and conclusions during the course of the interview?
3. Does the applicant demonstrate a degree of intellectual depth when communicating, or is his/her thinking shallow and lacking depth?
4. Has the candidate used good judgment and common sense regarding life planning up to this point?
5. What is applicant's capacity for problem-solving activities?
6. How well does candidate respond to stress and pressure?

# Ten Rules of Interviewing

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## 7 **Ask questions.**

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

interview process is a two-way street whereby you and the interviewer assess each other to determine if there is an appropriate match.

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **In Summary**

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

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

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

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

# Preparing for a Behavioral Interview

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

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

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

## Behavioral vs. Traditional Interviews

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

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

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

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

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

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

*"What class did you like the most? What did you like about it?"*

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

*"Can you give me an example?"*

*"What did you do?"*

*"What did you say?"*

*"What were you thinking?"*

*"How did you feel?"*

*"What was your role?"*

*"What was the result?"*

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

## How to Prepare for a Behavioral Interview

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

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

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

## Don't Forget the Basics

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

# Questions Asked by Employers

## Personal

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

## Education

20. Why did you choose your major?
21. Why did you choose to attend your college or university?
22. Do you think you received a good education? In what ways?
23. In which campus activities did you participate?
24. Which classes in your major did you like best? Least? Why?
25. Which elective classes did you like best? Least? Why?
26. If you were to start over, what would you change about your education?
27. Do your grades accurately reflect your ability? Why or why not?

28. Were you financially responsible for any portion of your college education?

## Experience

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

## Career Goals

38. Do you prefer to work under supervision or on your own?
  39. What kind of boss do you prefer?
  40. Would you be successful working with a team?
  41. Do you prefer large or small organizations? Why?
  42. What other types of positions are you considering?
  43. How do you feel about working in a structured environment?
  44. Are you able to work on several assignments at once?
  45. How do you feel about working overtime?
  46. How do you feel about travel?
  47. How do you feel about the possibility of relocating?
  48. Are you willing to work flextime?
- Before you begin interviewing, think about these questions and possible responses and discuss them with a career advisor. Conduct mock interviews and be sure you are able to communicate clear, unrehearsed answers to interviewers.

# Questions to Ask Employers

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

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

# The Site Visit/Interview: One Step Closer

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

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

8. Don't forget your table manners. Plant trips may include several meals or attendance at a reception the night before your "big day." When ordering food at a restaurant, follow the lead of the employer host. For example, don't order the three-pound lobster if everyone else is having a more moderately priced entree. If you have the "dining jitters," some authorities suggest ordering food that is easy to handle, such as a boneless fish fillet or chicken breast.
9. Many employers have a set salary range for entry-level positions and others are more negotiable. Though salary should not be brought up until an offer is extended, it is wise to know your worth in advance. In as much as you are a potential employee, you also represent a valuable skills-set product. You should know what kind of product you have created, its value and what the company is willing to buy. Contact your campus career center to obtain more information on salaries.

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

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

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

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

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

# Choosing Between Job Offers

**T**he first question many of your friends will ask when you receive a job offer is “What does it pay?” For many college graduates this consideration is near the top of the list, which is not surprising. Most students have invested thousands of dollars in their education, often racking up high student loan balances. Most graduates are looking forward to paying off that debt. Also, the value of a salary is easy to understand; the more zeroes after the first digit, the better.

In order to evaluate a salary offer you need to know what the average pay scale is for your degree and industry. The National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) is a good source of salary information for entry-level college graduates. Their annual Salary Survey should be available in your campus career center. Make sure you factor cost-of-living differences when considering salary offers. For example, you may need an offer of \$76,000 in San Francisco to equal an offer of \$40,000 in Huntsville, Ala.

Bonuses and commissions are considered part of your salary, so take them into consideration when evaluating an offer. It’s also important to have a good understanding of an employer’s policies concerning raises. Be sure to never make your decision on salary alone. Students tend to overemphasize salary when considering job offers. Money is important, but it’s more important that you like your job. If you like your job, chances are you’ll be good at it. And if you’re good at your job, eventually you will be financially rewarded.

## Factor in Benefits

Of course, salary is only one way in which employers financially compensate their employees. Ask anybody with a long work history and they’ll tell you how important benefits are. When most people think of employer benefits, they think of things like health insurance, vacation time and retirement savings. But employers are continually coming up with more and more creative ways to compensate their workers, from health club memberships to flextime. The value of a benefits plan depends on your own plans and needs. A company gym or membership at a health club won’t be of much value to you if you don’t like to sweat.

## Who’s the Boss?

Who you work for can have as much bearing on your overall job satisfaction as how much you earn and what you do. First, analyze how stable the potential employer is. If the company is for-profit, what were its earnings last year? What are its projections for growth? If the job is with a government agency or a nonprofit, what type of funding does it have? How long has the employer been around? You could receive the best job offer in the world, but if the job is cut in six months, it won’t do you much good.

## Corporate Culture

There are three aspects to a work environment: 1) the physical workspace, 2) the “corporate culture” of the employer, and 3) fellow co-workers. Don’t underestimate the importance of a good workspace. If you are a private person, you probably will not be able to do your best work in a cluster of cubicles. If you are an extrovert, you won’t be happy shut in an office for hours on end.

Corporate culture comprises the attitudes, experiences, beliefs and values of an organization. What’s the hierarchy of

the organization? Is there a dress code? Is overtime expected? Do they value creativity or is it more important that you follow protocol? Whenever possible, you should talk to current or previous employees to get a sense of the corporate culture. You may also be able to get a sense of the environment during the interview or by meeting your potential boss and co-workers during the interview process. Ask yourself if the corporate culture is compatible with your own attitudes, beliefs and values.

Your boss and fellow co-workers make up the last part of the work environment. Hopefully, you will like the people you work with, but you *must*, at least, be able to work well with them professionally. You may not be able to get a good sense of your potential co-workers or boss during the interview process. But if you do develop strong feelings one way or the other, be sure to take them into consideration when making your final decision.

## Like What You Do

Recent college graduates are seldom able to land their dream jobs right out of school, but it’s still important that you at least like what you do. Before accepting a job offer, make sure you have a very good sense of what your day-to-day duties will be. What are your responsibilities? Will you be primarily working in teams or alone? Will your job tasks be repetitive or varied? Will your work be challenging? What level of stress can you expect with the position?

## Location, Location, Location

Climate, proximity to friends and family and local population (i.e., urban vs. rural) should all be evaluated against your desires and preferences. If you are considering a job far away from your current address, will the employer pay for part or all of your moving expenses? Even if you are looking at a local job, location can be important—especially as it relates to travel time. A long commute will cost you time, money and probably more than a little frustration. Make sure the trade-off is worth it.

## Time is on Your Side

It’s acceptable to request two or three days to consider a job offer. And depending on the employer and the position, even a week of consideration time can be acceptable. If you’ve already received another offer or expect to hear back from another employer soon, make sure you have time to consider both offers. But don’t ask for too much time to consider. Like all of us, employers don’t like uncertainty. Make sure you give them an answer one way or another as soon as you can.

## It’s Your Call

Once you make a decision, act quickly. If you are accepting a position, notify the hiring manager by phone followed by a confirmation letter or an email. Keep the letter short and state the agreed upon salary and the start date. When rejecting an offer, make sure to thank the employer for their time and interest. It always pays to be polite in your correspondence. You never know where your career path will take you and it might just take you back to an employer you initially rejected.

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

# Backpack to Briefcase

## Tips for a Successful Transition from College to the “Real” World

**T**he transition from college life to your professional career is one of the most difficult challenges you may face. This is a tough adjustment period, particularly if you have never spent any time working in an environment like the one in which you will be spending 40 or more hours a week.

You need to recognize that your first year on the job is a separate and unique career stage. You will be in a transition phase during this time. You’re not a college student anymore, but you haven’t earned all the rights and privileges of a professional either. The most important thing you will need to do is lose your college student attitudes and behaviors and begin to think and act like a professional.

You will quickly learn that the world of work is quite different from the college environment. When you show up for work on the first day, there will not be a syllabus waiting for you to explain what to do and how to do it. You have lost some of the freedom you enjoyed over your daily schedule as a college student. You will be viewed as “the new kid on the block,” and the quality of your work will become very important. Your performance will be a direct reflection on your boss or supervisor. If you can’t get the job done right, someone else surely can.

### Five Main Differences Between College and Work

1. In college you are used to frequent feedback, evaluation and direction. Ask for too much of this on the job and you will appear insecure and lacking in self-confidence.

2. As a student you have enjoyed frequent breaks and vacations from school usually totaling approximately 27 weeks spent in school. During your first year on the job you may have to work six months or more before you earn any time off. You will work on average more than 50 weeks that first year, maybe without a break at all.

3. In college you can choose your own performance level (A, B, C) by attending class, turning in assignments, and studying for exams. In your career, A-level work is required at all times.

4. College tends to focus on effort and growth. The real world cares only about results.

5. Students are encouraged to put forth an individual effort and think independently. Once you begin working, you will see that you will be required to work a lot with teams and in collaborating efforts.

Now that you have had a chance to see what some of the main differences are between college and work, you should take some time to consider how to make that transition as smooth as possible. Please take a look at some suggestions for your first year on the job.

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### 10 Steps to First-Year Success

1. Set goals that include gaining acceptance, respect and credibility. Learn to be a professional.
2. Take advantage of mentor and coaching relationships.
3. Own up to your mistakes and learn from them.
4. Admit what you don’t know; sometimes that is more important than showing off what you do know.
5. Build a good track record. You may have to go above and beyond the call of duty during your first year to make a lasting positive impression.
6. Be prepared to pay your dues. You have to earn your “pin stripes” before you can shed them. Be prepared to work long, hard hours.
7. Find your “niche” with the organization. Work on building relationships and fitting into the company culture.
8. Absorb information and spend your first year learning as much as possible. Master the tasks of your job and improve your knowledge, skills and abilities. LEARN, LEARN, LEARN!
9. Have a positive attitude. You will make a better impression being positive and likable. Leave your complaining at college!
10. Recognize that office politics exist. Learn the politics of your office, but don’t get involved. Watch out for complainers; they tend to gravitate to new hires in hopes of bringing you to their “side.”



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