Career Guide

Ball State University
CAREER CENTER
Dear Ball State University Students:

Greetings from YOUR Career Center at Ball State University. On behalf of the entire staff in the Career Center, I want to wish you a wonderful journey through your college experience at Ball State University and into the world of work as a proud alumnus.

We are committed to your success, which is why you have a Career Coach who is responsible for working with you one-on-one. Your Career Coach is also responsible for delivering services and programs which help you become confident in your informed choices, connect you with opportunities to meet employers, and to ultimately help you obtain employment upon graduation.

Before becoming a Career Center Director, I used to hire recent college graduates when I worked at places other than the university. We talk with employers every day about hiring students for internships, full-time and part-time jobs, and on-campus jobs. We know what employers want. As much as we want to help you be successful, we can’t do it alone. We need your help.

You must take ownership of your future by getting involved and participating in career planning and building a relationship with your Career Coach. We cannot “get you a job,” but our dedicated staff will be here to coach you along the way and to help you navigate the process of exploring, developing skills, gaining professional experience, and finding employment, as well as continuing your education, or whatever path you may choose upon graduating. The point is, you have choices, and we are here to help.

Cardinal Career Link is your gateway to:
1. Making an appointment with your Career Coach;
2. Finding an on-campus, off-campus, part-time, or full-time job or internship;
3. Applying for jobs;
4. Scheduling on campus interviews; and
5. Receiving important information from the Career Center.

One of the most important things you can do is to get to know your Career Coach. Be sure to make an appointment and ask about the Intern-Ready Program and Career-Ready program. These programs were created in partnership with employers for your benefit.

Our office hours fall and spring are Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Fall, and for your convenience drop in hours are 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Summer hours are and 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. during the summer and drop ins are 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

We look forward to working with you to make your career and life goals become a reality!

Jim McAtee, M.B.A., C.D.F.
Director, The Career Center
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Connecting With the Career Center

HOW TO CONNECT WITH OUR OFFICE
Career Coaching Appointment
At the core of the Career Center services is individualized career coaching assistance for all students and alumni at Ball State. Our coaching appointments can be either face-to-face or over the phone. To schedule an appointment, you have a few options:

1. Visit Cardinal Career Link and schedule an appointment online 24/7:
   a. Logon to Cardinal Career Link www.bsu.edu/careers/careerlink
   b. Use your Ball State user ID and password to login
   c. Select “Schedule a Career Coaching Appointment” on the right hand side of the screen.

2. Call our office at (765) 285-1522 Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and we’ll schedule an appointment for you.

3. Visit our office in person at Lucina Hall Room 220 Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Drop-in Coaching
For more immediate service for quick questions our drop-in service is available Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. with no appointment necessary. These sessions are intended for things like resume critique or help with navigating resources. Our drop-in service is staffed by exceptionally trained and knowledgeable Peer Coaches.

Email Us at careercenter@bsu.edu
For access 24 hours a day, please feel free to email us at careercenter@bsu.edu and we’ll return your question with 2 business days.

SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOLS AT THE CAREER CENTER
Deciding on a career path is like making any decision. It’s personal. Begin by identifying your values, skills, and interests. What is important to you? What skills do you have or do you need to develop? What do you enjoy doing? You need to identify careers that are a good fit for you.

TypeFocus is a personal assessment tool that can help you identify your interests. It takes about twenty minutes to complete. When you finish, you’ll get reports on your personality type and potential careers, as well as how to showcase your strengths on your resume and in interviews.

To access TypeFocus:
1. Visit www.typefocus.com
2. Click on the New Users button
3. Create an account using Ball State’s access code, which is bsu788
Career-Ready

The Career-Ready program leads you step-by-step through the career preparation process during your college years. This program is designed to help you develop relevant skills that can make you more competitive in the workforce.

- Networking event with potential employers
- Relevant leadership and volunteer experience
- Expertise in building resumes and writing cover letters
- Development of interviewing skills
- Personalized Career Coaching

Core Component
Complete all the following items.
2. Have a resume and cover letter reviewed by someone at the Career Center.
   a. Students can have documents reviewed during drop-in hours or set an appointment with a Career Coach.
3. Participate in a practice interview.
4. Take part in professional etiquette training.
5. Attend the “Using Your Creativity: Workplace Problem Solving” workshop.
6. Complete an informational interview or participate in job shadowing.
7. Demonstrate a power greeting, also referred to as a 30-second elevator pitch.
8. Practicum/clinical/student teaching.
9. Created a completed LinkedIn account.

Entrepreneurial Learning Component
Complete two or more of the following items.
1. Internship
2. Externship (two- or three-day job shadow)
3. Professional conference attendance
4. Employment for six or more months
5. Study abroad program
6. Immersive Learning project
7. Academic research/field study project
8. Practicum/clinical/student teaching

Service Learning / Volunteer Component
Complete at least one of the following items.
1. 20 hours of community service at non-profit organizations.
2. Phases one and two of the “Excellence in Leadership” program.

Electives Component
Attend two or more of the following workshops.
1. From Backpacks to Briefcases: Understanding the World of Work
2. Salary Negotiations: Getting What You’re Worth
4. Is Graduate School in Your Future? Making the Right Decision
5. To Post or Not to Post: How Social Media Impacts the Job Search
6. Sell Your Skills: Understanding the Value of Your Experiences
7. Networking: What It Is and How to Do It

Intern-Ready

What skills and experiences do employers want interns to have? How can you be more competitive in the internship search? Intern-Ready can help.

- Intern-Ready is a program created by employers with you in mind. This short program (can be completed in less than a semester) will give you the opportunity to prepare to compete for internships at a high level. Become a more competitive internship candidate and participate in this unique program.

What Do You Need to Do?
Meet with your Career Coach to get started (see page 3 for contact information). Your Career Coach will guide you through the following program components:

Core Component
Complete all the following items.

Intern-Ready Checklist
- Complete a Career Center self-assessment.
  - Visit www.bsu.edu/careers/careerlink to set up an appointment with a Career Coach.
  - Complete the Intern-Ready Resume Book which will be marketed to employers.

- Conduct an informational interview, or participate in job shadowing.
  - Contact a professional in your career field to learn more about the career.
  - Speak with a Career Coach if you need help finding a professional in your field.
  - Remember to meet with your Career Coach to discuss the experience.

- Have your resume and cover letter reviewed.
  - Visit the Career Center during drop-in hours or set up an appointment with a Career Coach.
  - After your critique, make sure to upload the documents to your Cardinal Career Link account.

*These count toward Career-Ready requirements. Discover more at www.bsu.edu/careers.
EXPLORING YOUR OPTIONS

A College Timeline: How to Plan for Career Success

FRESHMEN—QUESTION

- Explore your interests and abilities through academic courses
- Utilize self-assessment tools through your career services office
- Consider volunteer positions to help you build your resume and broaden your experience
- Collect information on internships, cooperative education, and other paid work experiences
- Learn about any cooperative education or internship programs offered through your career services office
- Join university organizations that will offer you leadership roles in the future
- Attend job fairs to gather information on potential careers and employers
- Familiarize yourself with the services and resources available at your career services office
- Visit each social media profile you have, and either edit your content or your privacy settings. It is time to put your professional foot forward
- Visit your career services office website
- Attend a resume workshop and create a first draft of your resume

JUNIORS—MAKING DECISIONS

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

SENIORS—JOB SEARCH

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

Adapted with permission from Career Services at Virginia Tech.

Networking Your Way to a Job

Many 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 a connected 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—you are your education, experience and skills. Practice a concise, one-minute presentation of yourself so that people will know the kinds of opportunities that interest you. 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, co-workers

3. Be Professional

- Do bring copies of your resume.
- Do talk to your career counselor about your job search and your field.
- Don’t be shy or afraid to ask for what you need.
- Don’t pass up opportunities to network.

4. Be Patient

- Keep in touch with your network, but do not wait too long to see if they are interested in your specific field or job.
- Be sure to thank them for their help and continued support.

5. Be Prepared

- Have a clear idea of what you want to say and how you want to present yourself.
- Be organized and prepared for each meeting.

6. Be Referral-Centered

- The person you meet networking with may 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 Progressive

- Organize 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.

QUESTIONS TO ASK DURING NETWORKING MEETINGS

- What do you like about working at your company?
- Who do you see as your most senior manager and how do you see your role evolving in the future?
- What kind of people does your company hire and how do you look for new employees?
- What do you enjoy most about your job and what do you wish you could change about it?
- What are the benefits you enjoy most about working at your company?
- What advice would you give someone who was just starting out in this field?

DO’S & DON’TS OF NETWORKING

- Do keep your networking meetings short and to the point.
- Do ask questions about the person’s experience and career path.
- Do be prepared for a slow down after you get started; networking may not always be easy.
- Do be patient and persistent; most people love to talk about themselves and their jobs.
- Do be clear and concise about what you are looking for in a job and your career goals.
- Do be closing and take initiative; don’t wait for the other person to make a move.
- Do be grateful for the time the other person is giving you.
- Don’t be too pushy or forceful; respect the other person’s time and space.
- Don’t be too vague or笼统 in your questions; be specific and focused.
- Don’t be afraid to ask for advice or help; most people are willing to share their knowledge and experience.
- Don’t be afraid to ask for referrals; networking is a two-way street.

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

One of the best sources for gathering information about what’s happening in an occupation or an industry is to talk to people working in the field. This process is called informational or research interviewing. An informational interview is an interview that you initiate—you ask the questions. The purpose is to obtain information, not get a job.

REASONS TO CONDUCT INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS:

• To explore careers and clarify your career goal
• To discover employment opportunities not advertised
• To expand your professional network
• To build confidence for your job interviews
• To access the most up-to-date career information
• To identify your professional strengths and weaknesses

STEPS TO FOLLOW TO CONDUCT AN INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW:

1. Identify the Occupation or Industry You Wish to Learn About
   Assess your own interests, abilities, values, and skills, and evaluate labor conditions and trends to identify the best fields to research.

2. Prepare for the Interview
   Read all you can about the field prior to the interview. Decide what information you would like to obtain about the occupation/industry. Prepare a list of questions that you would like to have answered.

3. Identify People to Interview
   Start with lists of people you already know—friends, relatives, fellow students, present or former co-workers, supervisors, neighbors, etc. Professional organizations, the yellow pages, organizational directories, and public speakers are also good resources. You may also call an organization and ask for the name of the person by job title.
   Sample Conversation: “Hi, thanks for taking my call. My name is Chris [interview] and I am a [ sophomore] at Winthrop University in Rock Hill, South Carolina, majoring in [history]. I would like to learn more about a career as a [museum curator]. I am interested in scheduling an informational interview with you as part of my career exploration process. Did I catch you at a bad time?” If this is an appropriate time:
   • Schedule the date and time for your visit
   • Give the interviewee your contact information (in case they need to cancel/reschedule)
   • Obtain directions and parking information
   • Confirm the details for the appointment and thank the contact for his/her time.

4. Arrange the Interview
   Contact the person to set up an interview:
   • By telephone, letter followed by a telephone call, or
   • by having someone who knows the person make the appointment for you.

5. Conduct the Interview
   Dress appropriately, arrive on time, and be polite and professional. Refer to your list of prepared questions; stay on track, but allow for spontaneous discussion. Before leaving, ask your contact to suggest names of others who might be helpful to you and ask permission to use your contact’s name when contacting these new contacts.

6. Follow Up
   After the interview, record and analyze the information gathered. Send a thank-you note within one week of the interview. Adjust your job search, resume, and career objective if necessary.

5 QUESTIONS!

• To discover employment opportunities not advertised
• Are there any opportunities to job shadow or internship possible?
• What training or education is required for this type of work?
• What part of this job do you find most satisfying? Most challenging?
• What entry-level jobs are best for learning as much as possible?

20 QUESTIONS!

• On a typical day in this position, what do you do?
• What training or education is required for this type of work?
• What part of this job do you find most satisfying? Most challenging?
• What entry-level jobs are best for learning as much as possible?
• What specific advice would you give a person entering this field?
• Who do you know that I should talk to next? When I call him/her, will you please pass along my name?
• Are there any opportunities to job shadow or internship at this company?

STOP, LOOK AND LISTEN

Keep your eyes and ears open—there’s nothing wrong with subtly eavesdropping on the questions asked and answers received by your fellow career fair attendees. You might pick up some valuable information, in addition to witnessing some real-life career search “do’s and don’ts.”

In order to maximize your career fair experience, you must be an active participant and not just a browser. If all you do is stroll around, take company literature and load up on the ubiquitous freebies, you really haven’t accomplished anything worthwhile (unless you’re a collector of key chains, mousepads and pocket flashlights). It is essential to chat with subtly eavesdropping on the questions asked and answers received by your fellow career fair attendees. You might pick up some valuable information, in addition to witnessing some real-life career search “do’s and don’ts.”

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

“The presentation of the company is a great way to introduce yourself. The goal is to connect your background to the organization’s need. In one minute or less, you need to introduce yourself, demonstrate your knowledge of the company, express enthusiasm and interest and relate your background to the company’s need.”

Getting the Most Out of a Career Fair

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

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

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

FASHIONS AND ACCESSORIES

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

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

YOU’RE A PROSPECTOR—START DIGGING

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

FAIR THEE WELL

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

A FEW WORDS ABOUT CAREER FAIR ETIQUETTE

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

2. If you have a real interest in an employer, find out the procedures required to secure an interview. At some career fairs, initial screening interviews may be done on the spot. Other times, the career fair is used to pre-screen applicants for interviews to be conducted later (either on campus or at the employer’s site).

3. Sincerely always wins. Don’t lay it on too thick, but don’t be too blasé either. Virtually all employers are looking for candidates with good communication skills.

4. Don’t just drop your resume on employers’ display tables. Try to get it into a person’s hands and at least say a few words. If the scene is too busy and you can’t get a word in edgewise, jot a note on your resume to the effect of, “You were so busy that we didn’t get a chance to meet. I’m very interested in talking to you.” Look around the display for the recruiter’s business card (or at the very least, write down his or her name and get some literature with the company’s address) and send a follow-up note and another copy of your resume.

5. If you know ahead of time that one of your “dream companies” is a career fair participant, do some prior research (at minimum, visit their website. A little advance preparation goes a long way and can make you stand out among the masses of other attendees.”
Power Greeting

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) ____________________________
   (c) ____________________________

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 those qualities.

   The employer is seeking:
   My qualifications and selling points:
   (a) ____________________________
   (b) ____________________________
   (c) ____________________________
   (d) ____________________________

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

   MY PERSONAL QUALITIES:
   (a) ____________________________
   (b) ____________________________
   (c) ____________________________

STEP 2: DEVELOP YOUR INTRODUCTION

Review the sample below. Using the information above, prepare and practice a brief power greeting or introduction to use when meeting employer representatives.

Hello, my name is ____________________________ and I am currently a junior, majoring in economics and working part-time as a ____________________________ at _____________________________. 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!

Clean Up Your Social Media Identity

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

GOOGLE YOUR NAME
Search for your name online occasionally to see what comes up, or set up automatic alerts at Google Alerts. You may discover results for many people with the same name, possibly with embarrassing or outrageous content. To find the real “you,” try tweaking your name (e.g., Sam versus Samuel) or add some additional identifying modifiers (perhaps your city or school).

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

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

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

THERE’S NO SWIMSUITS COMPETITION
Recruiters will judge you by your profile photos. Do they tell the right story? “Don’t post sexy photographs of yourself online. Don’t even be too glamorous. That’s a really big turnoff to employers,” says Vicky Oliver, author of 201 Smart Answers to Business Etiquette Questions: “Dress in photos as you would in an interview.”

Remove unflattering pictures, videos, and unfavorable comments you’ve posted on social networks. Post a high-quality headshot, the same one across all platforms.

Important: Don’t forget to check out photos where friends have tagged you on Facebook. If you’re pictured at a party with a drink in hand, delete the tag. Adjust privacy settings to prevent that from happening again.

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

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

GET LINKEDIN
This is the single best social media platform for job seekers because of its professional focus. Some savvy
**Using LinkedIn for the Job Search**

**CREATE A COMPLETE PROFILE**

- **Photo**: Make sure to upload a professional picture of you in business attire.
- **Headline**: Create a strong headline that showcases your top skills and/or industry-based key words in a creative way.
- **Summary**: Describe who you are and what your personal brand is in this section.
- **Experience**: Fully outline your experiences, skills and accomplishments in this section. In order to help people see your creativity, you can add photos and videos of your work.
- **Organizations**: Include any industry relevant organizations that you have joined and worked in.
- **Education**: Starting from college list all of your education and professional development activities.
- **Skills & Expertise**: Add relevant key skills so that co-workers can endorse you.
- **Honors & Awards**: If you received a significant accolade for your work, list it in this section.
- **Courses**: List relevant classes if you do not have much experience in the field.
- **Projects**: If you led a class project or worked on a significant project in college, let the world know by listing it here.
- **Recommendations**: Ask managers, supervisors and professors that you have worked with to write a recommendation for you.

**THE LINKEDIN ALUMNI TOOL**

This tool allows you the chance to see what career paths alumni choose based on their LinkedIn information. Explore your college to see where alumni live, work, and their career trajectory.

- Log-in to LinkedIn and choose the “Networking” option at the top bar. Choose “Find Alumni” in the drop down box.
- Choose the college that you are interested to learn about, or type in the name of another college.

**JOIN GROUPS**

Find and join LinkedIn groups by searching for groups from the “Groups You May Like” page.

- In the search box at the top of any page, select Groups from the dropdown list on the left. Then type in your keywords or group name to search.

**Researching Employers**

**Name of company/organization**: ____________________________  **Website**: ____________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What products/services does the employer provide?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What are the mission, vision, and values of the employer?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Who is the head of the organization?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What do you know about him or her?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Where is the company’s headquarters? How many locations does the employer have?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What is the culture of the employer?</td>
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<td>What is the reputation of the employer? Who are their major competitors?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What are the employer’s plans for the future?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Company strengths/weakness/challenges:</td>
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<tr>
<td>What projects/divisions of the employer interest you and why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why I am interested in working for this employer?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**HOW CAN I FIND THIS INFORMATION?**

**WHO** (People I know that work there, or know people that work there):

**WHAT RESOURCES** (Are there books or websites where I can find this information):

**HOW** (Are there any job fairs to attend or networking websites to use):
Internships

FINING INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITIES
- Meet with the internship coordinator in your academic department and ask about organizations where other students in the department have completed internships.
- Speak to your professors. They may be able to give you suggestions, especially about summer research and summer fellowship opportunities.
- Visit the Career Center for printed and web resources for finding internship postings.
- Review the internship positions section on Cardinal Career Link. On the Career Center’s home page click Cardinal Career Link.
- Participate in on-campus interviews in the Career Center. Register through Cardinal Career Link.
- Attend the Fall Career Fair (September) and Cardinal Job Fair (spring semester) to talk with potential employers.
- Network with classmates, alumni, faculty, previous employers, family, friends, and professional organizations.
- Use LinkedIn.
- Look at the businesses and organizations in the Chamber of Commerce in the places where you would like to intern. A directory of chambers of commerce websites can be found at http://www.chamberofcommerce.com.
- Partner with an organization to create your own internship opportunity.
- Meet with the Assistant Director for Student Connections at the Career Center.

CREATE YOUR OWN INTERNSHIP
Looking for organizations rather than listings opens up a world of possibilities in which to find work that is meaningful and challenging.
- Clarify your goals and objectives. Be sure that your resume effectively communicates to employers the skills, educational background, and experience you would bring to the organization.
- Focus your search. Research places you would like to live, the industry or type of organization you are interested in and the type of work, the work environment, and the time commitment you would prefer.
- Investigate the (not so) obvious. If you already have a relationship with local organizations through volunteer part-time work or summer positions, approach them about serving an internship. The key is to create a position that would fit your academic experience and career interests.

INTERNSHIPS
- One Semester Before Your Internship
  - Interview for internships.
  - Submit your letters to interviewers.
  - Follow up with the interviewers if you haven’t heard from them in a few weeks.
  - Evaluate offers and examine the entire internship opportunity.
  - May be paid or unpaid.
  - May be pursued without applying for academic credit.

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  - Interview for internships.
  - Submit your letters to interviewers.
  - Follow up with the interviewers if you haven’t heard from them in a few weeks.
  - Evaluate offers and examine the entire internship opportunity.
  - May be paid or unpaid.

INTERNSHIP TIMELINE
One to Two Semesters Before Your Internship
- Conduct research on employers and develop a list of organizations you want to contact.
- Develop a resume and cover letter to send to potential internship employers.
- Practice interview skills.
- Gather application materials (transcripts, references).
On-Campus Student Employment

On-Campus Job
- Look at the businesses and organizations in the Chamber of Commerce in the places where you would like to intern. A directory of chambers of commerce websites can be found at http://www.chamberofcommerce.com.
- Partner with an organization to create your own internship opportunity.
- Meet with the Assistant Director for Student Connections at the Career Center.

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Sample Resume

NAME
Street, City, State, Zip  
email  phone

Objective
A marketing position with Exact Target in Indianapolis, IN utilizing my skills in data analysis, target marketing, and problem solving

Capabilities Profile
My proven capabilities are applicable in a variety of areas, including:
Problem Solving  Research  Critical Thinking
Statistical Analysis  Professional Presentations  Web Design
Client Relationships  Target Marketing  Customer Service

Education
Master of Business Administration  Expected May 2016
Concentration: Finance
Ball State University, Muncie, IN

Bachelor of Science, Business
Major: Marketing  
May 2015
Ball State University, Muncie, IN

Selected Examples of Coursework:
Marketing Research, Business Writing, Marketing Strategy, Professional Speaking, Business and Organizational Marketing, Consumer Behavior, and International Business

Marketing Experience
Exact Target, Indianapolis, IN  May 2014 to Aug 2014
Marketing Intern
• Successfully conducted client needs analysis through meeting with client to uncover real needs and discuss expectations
• Responsible for survey development, deployment, data collection, and statistical analysis using SPSS
• Effectively presented findings utilized to enhance the mission of our client

Summer Olympics  Jan 2013
Immersive Learning Project – Ball State University
• Produced five video segments of behind-the-scenes interviews
• Captured action-shot photographs of athletes competing in various sports

Various Customer Service / Sales Experience
US Cellular, WZMB, Furniture Mart, Muncie, IN  Apr 2012 to Present
Customer Service / Sales
• Consistently achieved top sales
• Accurately managed inventory and effectively merchandised sales floor to increase revenue
• High awareness of product and service knowledge resulting in excellent customer service and return business

Honors & Awards
Honor Roll, Dean’s List, American Marketing Association New Member of the Year

Cover Letter Template

(Tip: The cover letter should be one page and use the same font and heading as your resume.)

Date of application
Recruiter Name/Contact
Recruiter Contact Title/Department
Organization Name
Mailing Address
(Tip: use the employer contact information from the job/internship posting or research the website)

Dear Recruiter First/Last Name (Tip: recommended) or Dear Sir or Madam (if unsure of recruiter contact):

Intro Paragraph (3-5 sentences)
• Reference the employer and opportunity and how you learned about the position (website, networking, etc.)
• Discuss your University, major, year of study/grad date, and/or relevant coursework
• Consider why you are applying for the position and discuss your interest and motivation for the opportunity (Tip: review the posting and employer’s about us webpage for ideas)
• For an internship, write about your learning objectives

Middle Paragraph(s) (3-5 sentences)
(Tip: write 2-3 multiple paragraphs with each focusing on a specific skill and/or experience)
(Tip: include a statement that connects your skills/experiences back to the position/employer)
• Review the job/internship posting and employer website and highlight your skills and past experiences that are the most applicable (Tip: complete a SWOT Analysis)
• Remember experiences can be paid, unpaid/volunteer, internships, academic coursework/programs, study abroad, leadership roles, student organizations, community programs, and/or military training
• Provide specific and detailed examples of your experiences and accomplishments
• Focus on your qualifications and transferability of skills if you have limited direct experience (Tip: if you have limited previous experience for the position, discuss an experience where you learned new skills)

Concluding Paragraph (3-4 sentences)
• Restate your interest in the position (Tip: to show enthusiasm, e.g. I am excited about…)
• When appropriate, add a follow-up statement; for example, I will contact you the week of Month/Day to follow-up on my application and address questions you may have
• If you do not plan to follow-up on the application, include your contact information
• End document with a thank you/appreciate statement

Sincerely,
Your Name
Email Correspondence

Dear Ms. Jones:

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

Sincerely,
John Doe

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

COVER LETTERS

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

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

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

3. Request further action. This is where you request the next step, such as an appointment or a phone conversation. Be polite but sincere in your desire for further action.

TIPS

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

• Make sure you spell the recipient’s name correctly. If the person uses initials such as J.A. Smith and you are not certain of his/her gender, then begin the email: “Dear J.A. Smith.”

• Stick to a standard font like Times New Roman, 12-point.

• Keep your email brief and businesslike.

• Proofread everything you write before sending it.

While a well-crafted email may not be solely responsible for getting you your dream job, rest assured that an email can be a gold mine of information and can illustrate the times when you have demonstrated skills that you will be able to use in the workplace.

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

RESUMES, COVER LETTERS & PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION

Power Verbs for Your Resume

accelerated
accommodated
accomplished
achieved
acquired
acted
activated
adapted
added
addressed
adjusted
administered
advanced
advise
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Adapted with permission from the Career Resource Manual of the University of California, Davis.

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

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

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

• Use a meaningful subject header for your email—one that is appropriate to the topic.

• Always be professional and businesslike in your correspondence. Address the recipient as “Mr., Ms., or Mrs.” and always verify the correct spelling of the recipient’s name.

• Be brief in your communications. Don’t overload the employer with lots of questions in your email.

• Ditch the emotions. While a ë or an LOL (laughing out loud) may go over well with friends and family, do not use such symbols in your email communications with business people.

• Do not use strange fonts, wallpapers or multicolored backgrounds.

• End your email with your full name.

• Avoid using slang.

• Be sure to proofread and spell-check your email before sending it.

Neal Murray, former Director of the Career Services Center at the University of California, San Diego, sees a lot of email from job-seekers. “You’d be amazed at the number of emails I receive that have spelling errors, grammatical errors, bad tone when we email friends, a professional tone should be maintained when communicating with prospective employers.

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

RESUMES, COVER LETTERS & PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION

Dear Mr. Smith:

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• Keep your email brief and businesslike.

• Proofread everything you write before sending it.

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

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

**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.

**INCLUDE CONCRETE, QUANTIFIABLE DATA.** Interviewers tend to like specifics. Unfortunately, generalities often fail to convince interviewers that the applicant has assets. Include measurable information and provide details about specific accomplishments when discussing your strengths.

**REPEAT YOUR KEY STRENGTHS THREE TIMES.** It’s essential that you comfortably and confidently articulate your strengths. Explain how the strengths relate to the 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—supported with quantifiable accomplishments—they will more likely be believed.

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

**PUT YOURSELF ON THEIR TEAM.** Ally yourself with the prospective employer by using the employer’s name and products or services. For example, “As a member of ______ ______ 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 not to say anything that would offend or be taken negatively. Your research will help you in this area.

**IMAGE IS OFTEN AS IMPORTANT AS CONTENT.** What you look like and how you say something are 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.

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

**MAINTAIN A CONVERSATIONAL FLOW.** By consciously maintaining a conversational flow—a dialogue instead of a monologue—you will be perceived as more positively. Use feedback questions or “What about if I were to” to create a conversational interchange between you and the interviewer.

**RESEARCH THE COMPANY, PRODUCT LINES AND COMPETITORS.** Include measurable information and provide details about specific accomplishments when discussing your strengths.

**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 questions. Did you ask questions to get the information you needed? What might you do differently next time? Prepare and send a brief interview letter. Restate your skills and stress what you can do for the company.

**THE COMPANY’S RESPONSIBILITY.** The interview is a two-way street whereby you and the interviewer assess each other to determine if there is an appropriate match. So you must be prepared to ask questions of your own. The interviewer may ask you about your strengths and weaknesses. Your answers will be tested for accuracy and consistency. If you are an entry-level candidate with no previous experience, leadership, teamwork, initiative, planning and customer service.

**BEHAVIORAL VS. TRADITIONAL INTERVIEWS.** If you have training or experience with traditional interviewing techniques, you may have difficulty in 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”). You must be able to concentrate on areas that are important to the interviewer and not allow him or her to concentrate on areas you may feel are important.
- You may not get a chance to deliver any prepared stories. Follow-up questions will be taking notes throughout the interview.

**INTERVIEW THE INTERVIEWER.** Business professionals are trained to be objective. You may find it helpful to role play the interview situation. If you are an entry-level candidate with no previous experience, leadership, teamwork, initiative, planning and customer service.

**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, but you may find the interviewee 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.

**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.
- Practice 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 very much involved in a team member wasn’t pulling his or her weight” might go as follows: “I had 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 else to work with the other course. He was only 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 role?” “What did you confront him about?” “What did you do to help?” “How did you feel?” “What was the result?” 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.
Dress to Impress

Part of researching an employer is trying to find out how the company culture dictates employees’ appearance. For an interview, try to dress to one level higher than the employer expects. Best practices for interview appearance are as follows.

Suits

- A suit or tailored dress is the most professional attire.
- Choosing a conservative, classic style is usually a good rule because it is versatile and a good investment. Build your professional wardrobe around a neutral color like navy, charcoal gray, black, or beige.

Accessories

- Shoes should be comfortable, conservative, closed-toed heels or dress flats that match your suit or dress. Such accessories as handbags, belts, and scarves should be coordinated with your dress. Such accessories as handbags, belts, and scarves should be coordinated with your dress.
- Jewelry should be conservative and elegant, not distracting. Choose small gold, silver, or pearl jewelry. Facial jewelry is not appropriate for a conservative professional setting.

Grooming

- Personal hygiene is essential in all professional settings, including clean and well-groomed hair: clean, healthy nails; and well-groomed facial hair.
- A short, conservative hairstyle is the most professional. If you have a beard or mustache, groom it daily. Tattoos should be covered for a professional look.

For Women

- Suits
  - The best choice in a suit is a pure wool or wool-blend suit in navy or charcoal gray with or without pin-stripes. Wear traditional cotton or cotton-blend shirts in white or light blue with long sleeves and straight or button collars.

For Men

- Suits
  - A suit or tailored dress is the most professional attire.

Accessories

- The best fabric for ties is silk, followed by polyester that has a silk appearance. The tie should reach just above your belt buckle and be a repetitive pattern in a dark color. The best shoes for an interview are leather or simulated leather lace-up shoes that match the color of your pants. Watches, wedding rings, and conservative men’s rings are appropriate, but facial jewelry is not appropriate for a conservative, professional setting.

Grooming

- Personal hygiene is essential in all professional settings, including clean and well-groomed hair: clean, healthy nails; and well-groomed facial hair.
- A short, conservative hairstyle is the most professional. If you have a beard or mustache, groom it daily. Tattoos should be covered for a professional look.

Is Graduate School Right for You?

At 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 graduate 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: Do you believe you have the grades to win a fellowship? A free education is always the best option. The catch is you need a high GPA, good GRE/GMAT/GRE/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?
   - a. Identify your true strengths, interests and values to help you discover what is right for YOU—not your friends or parents.
   - b. Keep your grades up and sign up (and prepare) to take the required standardized tests.
   - c. 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.
   - d. 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.
   - e. Investigate creative ways to finance your education—by planning ahead you may reduce your debt.
   - f. Research graduate schools to help you find a good match.
   - g. Investigate the admissions process and the current student body profile of your targeted schools to evaluate your probability for admission.
   - h. Have faith and APPLY! Remember, you can’t get in unless you apply.

Written by Roslyn J. Bradford.
Guidelines for Writing Your Personal Statement

STEP 1: BRAINSTORMING

Actions:
- Devote time to reflect on the following questions.
- Discuss them with friends or family members.
- Jot down notes. In some cases write sentences.
- Think about the flip side of each question. For example, why are you really committed to the field of biology despite pressure from your parents to become a lawyer or to get a job?

Your answers to some of these questions will form the heart of your personal statement.

1. How did your pre-college education influence your decision to pursue graduate study in your field?
   Think about: High school courses, teachers, special programs, student organizations, and community or volunteer work.

2. How has your college experience influenced your decision?
   Think about: College courses, professors, academic interests, research, special programs, student organizations, and the decision-making process you went through to choose your major.

3. How has your work experience influenced your decision?
   Think about: Internships, externships, part-time jobs, summer jobs, and volunteer or community work.

4. Who has had the most influence on your decision to pursue graduate study in your field?
   Think about: Parents, relatives, teachers, professors, clergy, friends of the family, college friends, parents of friends, local merchants, supervisors, coaches, doctors, dentists, lawyers, etc.

5. What situation has had the most influence on your decision?
   Think about: Family, academic, work or athletic situations. Think about happy, sad, traumatic, moving, or memorable situations.

6. What personally motivates you to pursue graduate study in this field?
   Think about: Your personal skills, interests, and values.

STEP 2: WRITING YOUR PERSONAL STATEMENT

Actions:
- Incorporate your responses to the above questions. Begin writing your first draft:
  1. Develop an outline of your statement prior to writing. It doesn’t have to be detailed. It can be three or four main points in the order you want to make them.
  2. Accentuate your strengths and what makes you unique.
  3. Explain your weaknesses in positive ways. For example, refer to them not as weaknesses but as areas for improvement or growth.
  4. Paint pictures and tell stories about what makes you special. In this way the admissions readers will remember you. The story can be happy or sad. The more feeling you can inject into your statement, the more you will stand out.
  5. Find out the specific orientation and philosophy of the graduate program. Adapt and refine your statement to fit. This will make you stand out from other applicants who recycle the same personal statement with each application.

Suggested Outline

Your personal statement will likely range from 250-1200 words or 1-6 pages. The typical personal statement should be 2-3 double-spaced pages or 500-700 words. Here is a suggested outline. You should adjust the main point of each paragraph and number of paragraphs depending on the desired length of your personal statement and the areas in your background that you choose to emphasize.

Paragraph 1   A personal human-interest story
Paragraph 2   Your academic interests and achievements
Paragraph 3   Your relevant work and/or research experiences
Paragraph 4   Your career interests
Paragraph 5   Why you are interested in this particular school
Paragraph 6   The qualities you will bring to this school

REFERENCES

Write for Success: Preparing a Successful Professional School Application. Third Edition, October 2006 by Evelyn W. Jackson, PhD and Harold R. Bardo, PhD. NAAHP, National Association of Advisors for the Health Professions, Inc.

"Perfect Personal Statements" by Mark Alan Stewart. Peterson’s Guide 2004

PERSONAL STATEMENT CRITIQUES

Contact your campus career office and make an appointment with a career counselor to have your personal statement critiqued. Ask a professor if they would review it as well. Having feedback from professionals with different points of view can only make for a stronger personal statement overall.

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

Job Search Steps

1. Know Yourself
   a. Identify your interest and skills and values.
   b. Be prepared to communicate your skills and accomplishments to potential employers verbally and in writing.

2. Develop Your Presence
   a. Practice your Interviewing skills

3. Define Your Goals
   a. Where do you want to work (geographically, professionally, etc.)?
   b. What skills do you want to acquire?
   c. What career field/industry/job function would you like to enter?

4. Implement Your Plan of Action
   a. Create a list of target companies that match your interest, skills and values.
   b. Fill out your Job Search Plan sheet

5. Develop a Network

6. Maintain Presence

7. Prepare and Submit Application Materials
   a. You may be asked to complete an application online or submit a resume, a cover letter, a transcript, a list of references, a letter of recommendation, essay answers to specific questions, or samples of your past work.
   b. Always send exactly what is asked for and always send a cover letter unless the job description specifies otherwise.

8. Obtain Professional Experience

9. Keep Records and Follow Up
   a. After applying to a position, call or email the employer (unless they specifically state not to call them). Find out if they’ve received your materials. State why you’re interested and what you believe you can do for them. Typically, the best time to follow up is a week after you think they have received your application.

10. Be Patient, Persistent, and Positive
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The Art of Negotiating

A n area of the job search that often receives little attention is the art of negotiating. Once you have been offered a job, you have the opportunity to determine the terms of your employment. Negotiations may be uncomfortable or unsatisfying because we tend to view them as a process that bears no relation to the concept of negotiations. Negotiating with your potential employer can make your job offer that much better. And since your own needs as well as those of your employer. To ensure successful negotiations, it is important to be prepared. The definition of negotiation as it relates to employment is: a series of communications (either oral or in writing) that reach a satisfying conclusion for all concerned parties, most often between the new employee and the hiring organization.

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

DOLLARS AND SENSE

Always begin by expressing genuine interest in the position and the organization, emphasizing the areas of agreement but being “wise” about your demands. Most students who have invested thousands of dollars in their education, often realize that relatively low loan balances mean they 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 employer is paying in other similar degrees and industries. The National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) is a good source of salary information for entry-level graduates. Their annual Salary Survey should be available in your campus career center. Make sure you factor cost-of-living differences when considering job offers. For example, a recent newspaper report mentioned 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. If it is 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 underestimate the importance of salary. Money is important, but it’s more important that you like your job. If your like your job, chances are you’ll be good at it. And if you’re good at your job, even having your financial rewards will be financed.

FACTOR IN BENEFITS

Of course, salary is only one way in which employers financially compensate their employees. Ask anybody with whom you interact and they’ll tell you how important the benefits are. When most people think of employee benefits, they think of things like health insurance, vacation time and retirement plan. But there are other benefits that are continually coming up with more and more creative ways to compensate their workers. For example, some employers offer memberships to fitness centers. 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 may have received 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 salary and compensation package, 2) the employer, and 3) co-workers. Don’t underestimate the importance of a good workplace. If you are a private person, you may not find a work environment to be your cup of tea in a cluster of cubicles. If you are an extrovert, you won’t be happy 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 an employee or previous co-workers about the corporate culture. You may also be able to get a sense of the environment during the interview process. At the very least, you can ask your potential boss and co-workers during the interview process. Ask yourself if the corporate culture is compatible with your personality.

Your boss and fellow co-workers make up the last part of your 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 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 handle?

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 for a lower cost of living, the key feature to look for is if the area is convenient to your commute. 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.

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 or two just might be the norm. But don’t request 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 thank you note or an email. Keep the letter short and state the agreed upon salary and the start date. When rejecting a job offer, it’s best 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 down the road. Just take you back to an employer you initially rejected.

Written by Chris Enstrom, a freelance writer from Nashville, Ind.
How to Excel at Work

1. Manage Your Own Career
   a. Become proactive about managing your career and do not expect others to do this for you.
   b. Develop a clear outline of your career goals and consider new opportunities that align with your current vision and values you hold for your life and work.

2. Make Your Personal Brand Known
   a. Know your purpose in life, and ensure that your career supports the fulfillment of that purpose.
   b. Have a clear and compelling personal brand that conveys your industry expertise that you are passionate about. Infuse your personal brand in everything that you do in and outside of the company.

3. Become an Industry Expert and Deliver Results
   a. Continue to learn at least one critical industry skill per year. This will ensure that you will have an above-average level of technical skills relevant to your profession. Seek to enhance your communication skills, whether by reading, taking courses, participating in organizations, or acting on feedback from peers and mentor(s).
   b. Work on projects that expand the scope of skills and knowledge you currently possess.
   c. Learn to solve complex, work-related problems and figure out creative solutions to obstacles that may surface.

4. Show Your Leadership Qualities—Even if You Are Not in a Leadership Role
   a. Take initiative on projects within your scope of authority and do not wait for someone to ask you to do it.
   b. Take informal opportunities to manage or mentor other people.
   c. Appreciate and acknowledge others’ work and accomplishments.

5. Continue to Nurture and Build Your Professional Contacts
   a. Treat everyone respectfully inside and outside the organization.
   b. Talk respectfully about your manager, coworker, and customers.
   c. Participate on cross-functional teams so that other people outside your department can see your value.

Create Your 30/60/90 Day Plan

Starting a new can be stressful. Developing a 30/60/90 day plan may help to set you on the right professional track. Your 30/60/90 day plan is your written roadmap from a new hire to an effective leader. By organizing and prioritizing your activities and goals, you can make the most out of the initial stages of your new job.

Here is a sample outline of suggested goals to incorporate into your own, customized plan:

30 DAYS—THE STARTING LINE
It is imperative at this stage to take the time to understand exactly what it is that the company is trying to accomplish through their strategic plan. As a new hire, it is important to put in the effort to study and learn the internal workings of the company as follows:

- Understand the mission statement and vision in order to reach these core values in your work.
- Understand your boss’s expectations of you in the job and with key projects.
- Begin forming professional relationships with coworkers by making appointments with key staff members to talk about their role in the organization.
- Learn about your customers and clients.
- Understand the overall company culture.

60 DAYS—CREATING YOUR OWN PATH
Once you have taken time to fully understand the company, begin adding your strengths to the position:

- Start building your own personal brand within the company by showcasing what you do well.
- Eagerly find new projects to work on that might add to your skill set outside of your normal set responsibilities.
- Continue to keep your boss’s expectations of you at the forefront of all that you do.

90 DAYS—COASTING STAGE
By this time, you fully understand the role you play in the company. You may start to become interested in taking on a leadership role with some of the projects. At this point, consider the following:

- You know your company well and all of the key players within it.
- Be aware of new projects and offer possible solutions to key issues in the company.
- Start to grow and nurture your contacts proactively.
- Look into getting more involved by joining a club, council, board, or committee.
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