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## CAREER SERVICES HANDBOOK

2007-2008

California State University,  
Fresno

## CAREER SERVICES LOCATION

Joyal Administration, Room 256  
(559) 278-2381

## CAREER SERVICES STAFF

### Director

*Rita Bocchinfuso-Cohen*

### Career Counselors

*Adrian Ramirez—Career*

*Development Counselor*

*Vacant—Career Employment  
Counselor*

*Aleta Wolfe—Career*

*Experience Counselor*

### Employer Relations/Recruitment Coordinator

*Daryl Fitzgerald*

### Support Staff

*Mary Galvan*

*Rhonda Velasquez*

## Home page:

[www.FresnoStateCareers.com](http://www.FresnoStateCareers.com)

## EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

All company interviews are open to CSUF degree candidates without regard to race, creed, color, ancestry, sex, age or physical handicap.



211 W. Wacker Drive, Suite 900  
Chicago, IL 60606  
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# Message From the Director...



Dear Students, Graduating Seniors, and Fresno State Alumni:

Welcome to Career Services and the 2007/2008 edition of our Handbook!

Consider this handbook your introduction to the people, services and programs available to assist you with your career-related needs, no matter what your major or career field of interest. While this guidebook is filled with useful tips, information, resources and examples, keep in mind it is just a starting point.

At any stage in your college career you can meet with one of our career counselors to clarify your career direction, ensure you are prepared to market yourself well or develop a personalized job search approach. Our employer events, on-campus recruiting and on-line job posting systems can maximize your access to career opportunities.

You control your level of participation in our services. Maximize your transition to career success by regularly utilizing all that is available to you or choose only those features that best fit your individual needs. We're here to help you along the way.

Sincerely,

Rita Bocchinfuso-Cohen  
Director, Career Services



*Left to right: Adrian Ramirez, Aleta Wolfe, Daryl Fitzgerald, Mary Galvan, Rhonda Velasquez and Rita Bocchinfuso-Cohen*

# Making Career Services Work for You

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

We're here to help you succeed. As a centralized and comprehensive career center, Career Services assists all majors from entering freshmen through alumni. Whether you are just beginning to make a decision on your academic major or you are ready to enter the employment market, Career Services has counselors, programs and services to help you define and achieve your career goals.

## Develop Relationships

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

Your counselor will listen to your concerns and provide objective advice. You can bounce ideas off him or her, which will help you think through your options. A counselor who gets to know you can alert you about unique job opportunities that come in that seem to be a good fit for you.

## Attend Programs

Make sure you are aware of what's taking place. Our event calendar is available online through our web page. Keep in mind that our counselors work closely with employers and faculty to develop career programs which are relevant to your educational experience.

## Don't Be a Stranger

Your relationship with Career Services doesn't have to end the day you don your cap and gown. For a nominal annual fee, Fresno State alumni can continue to utilize all of our services mentioned below (fee begins six months after graduation). If you are seeking employment or considering a career change, Career Services offers high quality services designed to assist you in achieving your career goals.

## Programs and Services

In addition to these tips, it's helpful to understand more about what we offer and to take advantage of the following programs and services:

### Web Job Search Services

Through our web page, currently registered students and new graduates (within 6 months) can gain FREE access to our state-of-the-art, interactive job listing systems (MonsterTRAK and BulldogJobs.com) and on-campus interviewing system (MonsterTRAK/InterviewTRAK). Use these systems to view current job openings (part-time and full-time); register and upload resumes to Fresno State web resume books; and to sign-up for and participate in upcoming on-campus interviews and events.

[www.monstertrak.com](http://www.monstertrak.com)  
[www.BulldogJobs.com](http://www.BulldogJobs.com)

## Career Assessment, Career Counseling, and Career Resources

Find a major, or confirm that you are in the right field of study. Learn more about employment options for graduates in your major. Obtain suggestions from a career counselor to significantly improve your resume marketing effectiveness and polish your interview presentation skills. In addition, job search advising can help you plan the best strategy for your career needs.

[www.fresnostatecareers.com/students/assessment.htm](http://www.fresnostatecareers.com/students/assessment.htm)  
[www.fresnostatecareers.com/students/counseling.htm](http://www.fresnostatecareers.com/students/counseling.htm)  
[www.fresnostatecareers.com/students/resources.htm](http://www.fresnostatecareers.com/students/resources.htm)

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**Whether you are just beginning to make a decision on your academic major or you are ready to enter the employment market, Career Services has counselors, programs and services to help you define and achieve your career goals.**

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## Career Education Programs and Employer Events

Workshops, programs and resources are available to provide vital assistance with employer research, resume writing, interviewing skills and job search preparation.

[www.fresnostatecareers.com/students/job\\_search.htm](http://www.fresnostatecareers.com/students/job_search.htm)

On-campus Interviews for full-time career and paid internship opportunities are held each semester. Students must register online in advance through MonsterTRAK/InterviewTRAK.

[www.fresnostatecareers.com/students/interview.htm](http://www.fresnostatecareers.com/students/interview.htm)

Career and Job Fairs, held each semester, are an excellent way to meet prospective employers and learn more about career options available to you.

[www.fresnostatecareers.com/students/events.htm](http://www.fresnostatecareers.com/students/events.htm)

## Education Career Services

Considering a career in education? Check out this excellent website full of resources, and learn more about the annual Teacher Recruitment Fair.

[www.fresnostatecareers.com/ed/](http://www.fresnostatecareers.com/ed/)

For more details, please stop by our office in Joyal Administration Bldg, Room 256, call (559) 278-2381, or visit our website at [www.FresnoStateCareers.com](http://www.FresnoStateCareers.com).

# The Career Development Process

## Choosing a Major/Occupation

The transition from college to career is NOT an automatic event. It is a developmental process that takes planning and preparation. By taking the time to thoroughly assess career options early in your college years, you can ensure a more satisfying college experience and a successful job search upon graduation.

### What should I do to increase my chances of career success?

Take a look at the Career Planning Success Checklist we've compiled. This is a suggested timeline for completing career development activities at various points throughout your college experience. Follow this timeline, completing as many activities as suggested each class year, and you will be well on your way to a successful transition into your chosen career. Don't panic if you're behind schedule. It's never too late to begin these activities and is always worth the effort. However, early planning will help you maximize your efforts and minimize costly errors (especially as they relate to time, money, and academic credits).

### How will my choice of major relate to my career options?

Many students assume their academic major is the key to their later career success. The academic major is but one component of preparation for any given occupation. Because different academic majors emphasize development of a variety of transferable skills to varying degrees, the major you choose can prepare you for many occupations—even ones not obviously associated with that major. It is important for you to choose a major in which you have genuine interest. After all, you are spending, or will soon spend, much time, effort and money focusing on that field, so you will want to choose a field you will enjoy.

### I'm confused—how do I choose an academic major or career direction?

The key to choosing an appropriate major or career direction is to identify some critical information about yourself, how that information relates to various careers, and how well those various careers will meet your individual needs. It can be helpful to think of career decision-making as a series of steps. You may move "up" and "down" these steps during your college experience and most certainly at various points in your career lifetime as you and your individual needs change. In fact, it is not unusual to find yourself all the way back at step 1 more than a few times.

## Career Planning Success Checklist\*

\* As Suggested by Our Office

### Freshman Year

- Clarify who you are and what you want through personal reflection and self-assessment
  - SIGI<sup>3</sup> online computerized guidance system
  - Eureka online career exploration program
  - Undeclared 101 Workshops
  - Personalized Counseling
- Learn the academic system: study the *Fresno State Catalog* and *Schedule of Courses*
- Meet with your academic advisor to come up with courses that meet your needs based upon your interests and goals
- Enroll in *University 1: Introduction to the University*
- Take a variety of General Education classes
- Research part-time and summer jobs in your field of interest
- Volunteer through Community Service 1 or 101 class

### Sophomore Year

- Begin identifying career options for your major
- Gather information from resources / interviews
- Begin building marketable leadership skills
- Get involved with clubs and organizations that interest you and match your career goals
- Seek out career-related work experiences
- Volunteer through Community Service 1 or 101 class
- Seek faculty mentors
- Conduct informational interviews with people in careers that interest you

#### Career Services Resources:

Career Resource Library; Online "What Can I Do with a Major in..." resource; Informational Interviews; Career Fairs; Resume Building; Internship Information/Career Services' web job posting systems

### Junior Year

- Add skills through activities and work
- Research graduate schools (if applicable)
- Research employment for after graduation
- Establish a job search plan

#### Career Services Resources:

Resume Information; Office Job Search Workshops; Company Information; Internship Information/Career Services' web job posting systems; Career Fairs

### Senior Year

- Initiate the job search plan
- Select and contact professionals for references
- Fine tune resumes and research prospective employers
- Prepare for interviews
- Participate in the On-Campus Recruiting program
- Attend career fairs
- Apply to graduate schools (if applicable)

#### Career Services Resources:

MonsterTRAK; BulldogJobs.com; Mock Interviews; On-campus Recruiting (InterviewTRAK); Individual Job Search Counseling; Resume Critiquing; Workshops

# Career Assessment and Career Development

## The Importance of Career Assessment

Accurately assessing yourself—whether formally or informally—is the first crucial step in making an informed and appropriate academic major decision or career direction decision. Your goal is to identify your top values, areas of interest, skills and activities you enjoy. You can then use this information to explore careers and/or majors that will best match you as an individual.

Many career assessment tools are self-report instruments, meaning you will rate yourself on various dimensions. To get an accurate assessment, you must remain honest with yourself and avoid answering questions the way you think a person interested in a certain career or major you are considering would answer those questions. Other career assessment instruments include achievement tests, aptitude tests (tests designed to predict your potential for achievement in certain skill areas), correlation-based tests (that compare your answers/results to successful people in various professions) and behavior-based tests.

We recommend that you use more than one career assessment tool to help you with your decision-making. Do not hesitate to meet with one of our counselors to get objective input or help you make sense of the results. Assessment results can sometimes be very difficult to evaluate. If you see an undesirable occupation suggested as a good match for you, it does not necessarily mean it is the best match. It is more useful to understand why that occupation showed. Our counselors are available by appointment to help you through the assessment process.

## Assessment Tools Available Through Career Services

Career Services offers several assessment tools and resources to help students in the early stages of the career decision-making process. Our counselors may suggest alternate or supplemental assessments, depending upon the circumstances or needs of the individual. Our most frequently used tools include:

- *Sigi*<sup>3</sup> Career Planning Software  
<http://www.fresnostatecareers.com/sigi3.htm>  
Features include ability to generate a personalized list of occupations based on *your* work-related values, interests and skills; occupational information; information on financial aid, managing time, choosing a

graduate school; modules to assist you in establishing short-range goals; and more!

- *Eureka* Career Exploration and Information (contact Career Services for web access info and codes) Features include major and occupational information (including spanish occ-u-sort module); self-exploration; microskills inventory; “True Colors” module to help you identify your career personality; College and University Information (apply on line); scholarship and grant Information (6,200 resources), financial aid information; international careers information; job search information for ex-offenders; and more!
- *Self-Directed Search*  
A paper-and-pencil assessment designed to help an individual explore several occupational paths used as part of our Undeclared 101 Workshop. If you already have an occupation in mind, the SDS may provide further support for your decision or may suggest other possibilities.

## Need More Help with the Career Development Process?

- Our Career Resource Library (Joyal 256) contains numerous helpful books, handouts and information.
- Our web site ([www.fresnostatecareers.com](http://www.fresnostatecareers.com)) includes links for “What can I do with a major in...?”, several online assessments, and other useful resources.
- Our counselors are available by appointment to help you through the process and to address your individual needs. To schedule an appointment, call (559) 278-2381.

### A Word of Caution:

Our web site includes links to several useful online assessments. However, we suggest extreme caution when using online assessments. Many sites have not been validated as effective career decision tools. Also, assessment results can sometimes be very difficult to evaluate. If you see an undesirable occupation suggested as a good match for you, it does not necessarily mean it is the best match. It is more useful to understand why that occupation showed. Our counselors are available by appointment to help you through the assessment process.

# Informational Interviews

One of the easiest and most effective ways to meet people in a professional field in which you are interested is to conduct informational interviews. Informational interviewing is a networking approach which allows you to meet key professionals, gather career information, investigate career options, get advice on job search techniques and get referrals to other professionals.

The art of informational interviewing is in knowing how to balance your hidden agenda (to locate a job) with the unique opportunity to learn firsthand about the demands of your field. Thus, never abuse your privilege by asking for a job, but execute your informational interviews skillfully, and a job may follow.

## What motivates professionals to grant informational interviews?

The reasons are varied. Generally, most people enjoy sharing information about themselves and their jobs and, particularly, love giving advice. Some may simply believe in encouraging newcomers to their profession and others may be scoping out prospects for anticipated vacancies. It is common for professionals to exchange favors and information, so don't hesitate to call upon people.

## How do you set up informational interviews?

One possible approach is to send a letter requesting a brief informational interview (clearly indicating the purpose of the meeting, and communicating the fact that there

is no job expectation). Follow this up with a phone call to schedule an appointment. Or, initiate a contact by making cold calls and set up an appointment. The best way to obtain an informational interview is by being referred from one professional to another, a process which becomes easier as your network expands.

## How do you prepare for informational interviews?

Prepare for your informational interviews just as you would for an actual job interview: polish your presentation and listening skills, and conduct preliminary research on the organization. You should outline an agenda that includes well-thought-out questions.

Begin your interview with questions that demonstrate your genuine interest in the other person such as, "Describe a typical day in your department." Then proceed with more general questions such as, "What are the employment prospects in this field?" or "Are you active in any professional organizations in our field and which would you recommend?" If appropriate, venture into a series of questions which place the employer in the advice-giving role, such as, "What should the most important consideration be in my first job?" The whole idea is for you to shine, to make an impression and to get referrals to other professionals.

Always remember to send a thank-you letter to every person who grants you time and to every individual who refers you to someone.

## DENTISTS SINCE WHEN CAN A DENTIST GET A \$30,000 BONUS? SINCE NOW.



It's true. Join the Army Dental Corps and you may qualify for a \$30,000 bonus. Plus, you'll spend each day doing what you do best—treating patients. All without the worries of running a business. You'll have an established and diverse patient base, a skilled support staff, plus opportunities for overseas humanitarian missions, research, continuing education and more. Plus, you'll receive:

- 30 days of paid vacation time earned annually
- Low-cost life insurance
- Non-contributory retirement benefits with 20 years of qualifying service
- No-cost or low-cost medical and dental care for you and your family

To find out more, or to speak to an Army Health Care Recruiter, call 800-794-8867 or visit [healthcare.goarmy.com/hct/54](http://healthcare.goarmy.com/hct/54)



AN ARMY OF ONE™

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# Building Your Career-Related Experience

**I**n today's labor market, having a college degree may not be enough to become employed in your career of choice. Candidates are encouraged to gain additional skills to complement their education. The earlier you begin building these skills, the more opportunities will be available once you graduate.

## How do you do this?

By participating in one or more of the following:

- **Internship**—A career-related work experience that may also provide you an opportunity to earn academic credits and income. [www.fresnostatecareers.com/faculty/cooperative\\_education.htm](http://www.fresnostatecareers.com/faculty/cooperative_education.htm)
- **Community Service Scholarship Program**—Volunteer 150 hours with participating non-profit agencies, earn 3 units of credit and a \$1500 scholarship upon completion of hours. [www.fresnostatecareers.com/cssp/](http://www.fresnostatecareers.com/cssp/) and [www.fresnostatecareers.com/csspfs](http://www.fresnostatecareers.com/csspfs)
- **Scholars Service Grant**—An opportunity for high academic achieving financial aid student recipients to gain a renewable \$960 grant per semester, by completing 60 hours of community service at a university service site. [www.csufresno.edu/ssg](http://www.csufresno.edu/ssg)
- **Civic Engagement and Service Learning**—Provides students with quality volunteer experiences that cultivate a lifelong service-ethic which will stimulate and enhance the educational experience at all levels including earning credit. [www.csufresno.edu/cesl/](http://www.csufresno.edu/cesl/)

## What are some of the benefits of participating?

- Developing and enhancing employability skills
- Gaining valuable academic and career-related experience
- Applying classroom learning in real-world situations
- Exploring an area of interest and validating career choice(s)
- Earning a paycheck and/or academic credit
- Acquiring a greater sense of responsibility
- Building relationships with professionals who can advise and mentor you

## What are some strategies for locating an internship?

- Registering on-line on [www.monstertrak.com](http://www.monstertrak.com) and looking under "Co-op" and "Internship/Externship" or [www.bulldogjobs.com](http://www.bulldogjobs.com) and looking under "Paid Internships."
- Contacting your academic department for information on internship procedures and verifying requirements for arranging class credit. [www.csufresno.edu/CSUF/futurestudents/colleges.html](http://www.csufresno.edu/CSUF/futurestudents/colleges.html)
- Identifying and researching organizations where you may have an interest in applying. Check out websites of organizations where you might like to intern/work.
- Attending the "Career and Internship Marketplace" held each fall and the "Career and Internship Expo" held each spring. [www.fresnostatecareers.com/students/events.htm](http://www.fresnostatecareers.com/students/events.htm)
- Looking on MonsterTRAK.com's InterviewTRAK link to access employers who are interviewing on campus for internships. [www.monstertrak.com](http://www.monstertrak.com)
- Taking full advantage of workshops offered by Career Services on interviewing and resume writing. A professional presentation will increase your chances of being invited for an interview. [www.fresnostatecareers.com/students/job\\_search.htm](http://www.fresnostatecareers.com/students/job_search.htm)
- Networking by speaking with every resource available to you including family, friends, alumni, professors and members of professional organizations.
- Joining a student club or organization which will help provide excellent opportunities to develop leadership skills, network with professional guest speakers and provide community service. <http://studentaffairs.csufresno.edu/studentact/clubs-orgs>

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**"Our intern was a great representative at the hospital. She was professional and extremely capable at all times. The programs where she worked raised funds for our patients who could not afford healthcare. Our Intern's impact was enormous."**

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—Children's Hospital Central California Foundation

# Preparing Your Resume

## First Impressions Count

There is no single way to design your resume. However, 60 percent of employers in one study said they formed an opinion of a resume based on its appearance alone. It is recommended to use good paper stock and to print your resume on a laser printer.

Spelling, grammar and neatness in a resume are very important. Research shows that spelling or grammatical errors in a resume can be fatal to employment chances. Neatness is a projection of a job candidate's personality on paper.

In preparing your resume, bear in mind that it will be scanned in 60 seconds or less by an employer. So it is important that your resume gives an immediate favorable impression and that it is easy to read.

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**Use Career Services online resume writing package—OptimalResume—to quickly and easily create a professional-looking resume.**

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## Elements of an Effective Resume

### Contact Information

- Your name should stand out. Use large bold lettering, always positioned at the top.
- Include complete contact information, with phone, email address and mailing address.
- May include two addresses: permanent and local.
- Use professionally appropriate email addresses and announcements on phone message(s).

### Objective

- An objective tells your reader what you want to do, and the remainder of the resume highlights your qualifications.
- Objectives either include a clearly defined interest, position, industry, organization in which you want to work or focuses on a functional area (e.g. marketing, promotions or management).
- An objective can be stated on the resume or in the cover letter.

### Education

- Lead with highest degree, graduation month, year, major, area of concentration, minor and certificate (if applicable).
- Specify college/school with the name of the university spelled out.
- Include GPA if 3.0 or above.
- List relevant courses if appropriate.
- Use course titles.

### Summary (Optional)

- A summary includes 3-5 bulleted statements of key qualifications.
- Do not simply list personal skills and qualities.

- Use a summary to demonstrate accomplishments and concrete skills/experience as they relate to the position.

### Awards/Scholarships

- May also be included within the context they were awarded, e.g. education and work.
- Include award name, date and purpose.

### Activities/Leadership

- Activities/Leadership may be included in education or you may create a separate section for them.
- May include student organization involvement, positions held, intramural sports, community membership, etc. Use dates.

### Volunteer/Community Service

- Include position/title, organization name and dates.
- Demonstrate skills and accomplishments gained through your involvement and experiences.
- May include clubs, organizations, athletics, charity and community service.

### Internships

- Internships may be included within experience or you may create a separate section for them.

### Experience

- Start with the most recent experience and work backwards.
- Emphasize results produced, problems overcome, achievements and relevant transferable skills.
- Use simple bullet statements and start with action words/verbs.
- Use dates/general time frames.
- Use proper tenses for present and past.
- You may include more than one experience section as appropriate (e.g. relevant, other, etc.).

### Skills (Optional)

- Develop a special skill section that brings value to your resume.
- Skills may include languages, computer skills, lab skills and other areas.

### Phrases for Work Accomplishments

Put your work accomplishments into phrases, not a job description. Here are some examples:

- Promoted to...Researched and developed...
- Implemented first program of this kind...
- Established and maintained...Lowered cost by...
- Reorganized system for faster service...
- Successfully organized...Managed publicity for...
- Increased productivity by...Increased profit...
- Hired, supervised and trained...
- Wrote and distributed press releases...

### Other Tips for Writing Better Resumes

- Use standard format for your cover letter/resume.
- Keep your resume to one page, unless you have extensive related experience.
- Avoid the use of abbreviations.
- Use 8<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>" x 11" size envelopes for mailing.
- Use plain, good quality pale-colored paper.

# Verb List for Resumes

## Action Words Clustered by Skills

Writing an effective resume requires that you use action or vigorous verbs to present your skills and achievements. The following will help you think about your skills in functional clusters:

### Management Skills

Developed	Administered	Delegated
Organized	Produced	Fired
Supervised	Reviewed	Evaluated
Assigned	Planned	Contracted
Coordinated	Executed	Controlled
Prioritized	Scheduled	Determined
Hired	Directed	Recommended
Analyzed		

### Financial Skills

Calculated	Appraised	Maintained books
Computed	Allocated	Documented
Planned	Administered	Analyzed
Managed	Developed	Initiated
Budgeted	Solved	Prepared
Audited		

### Detailed Skills

Approved	Implemented	Operated
Validated	Arranged	Recorded
Retained	Collected	Processed
Executed	Systemized	Compiled
Dispatched	Inspected	Researched
Responded	Classified	Reviewed

### Communication Skills

Influenced	Obtained	Arbitrated
Helped	Interpreted	Mediated
Led	Motivated	Merged
Sold	Persuaded	Wrote
Recruited	Directed	Enlisted
Negotiated	Reasoned	Spoke
Arranged	Developed	Reconciled
Created		

### Manual Skills

Operated	Drove	Shipped
Controlled	Cut	Drilled
Assembled	Moved	Handled
Set Up	Lifted	Converted
Bound	Pulled	Designed

### Teaching Skills

Communicated	Tutored	Developed
Briefed	Established	Lectured
Encouraged	Monitored	Supervised
Coached	Managed	Improved
Clarified	Influenced	Interacted
Evaluated	Informed	Trained
Adapted	Taught	Conducted
Prepared	Instructed	Researched
Authored	Initiated	Wrote
Coordinated		

### Research Skills

Clarified	Interpreted	Examined
Interviewed	Isolated	Reviewed
Inspected	Decided	Evaluated
Synthesized	Recognized	Perceived
Diagnosed	problems	Wrote
Organized	Surveyed	Extrapolated
Critiqued	Investigated	Extracted
Collected	Gathered	

### Creative Skills

Innovated	Directed	Integrated
Created	Acted	Fashioned
Planned	Published	Wrote
Conceptualized	Developed	Performed
Abstracted	Designed	Produced
Shaped	Synthesized	Illustrated

### Helping Skills

Listened	Interviewed	Evaluated
Intervened	Demonstrated	Performed
Monitored	Collaborated	Implemented
Advised	Administered	Treated
Facilitated	Provided	Mediated
Analyzed	Counseled	Acted as a liaison
Coordinated	Referred	Assessed
Led	Spoke	Negotiated
Diagnosed	Directed	Developed
Conducted	Clarified	

# Sample Resume Formats

**JENNIFER SMITH**  
jennifersmith@csufresno.edu

**Local Address**  
1234 East San Ramon Ave.  
Fresno, CA 93720  
(559) 123-4567

**Permanent Address**  
4340 Watt Ave.  
Sacramento, CA 95821  
(916) 123-4567

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**OBJECTIVE**  
Entry-level, career marketing position.

**EDUCATION**  
California State University, Fresno (Fresno State)  
**Bachelor of Science in Business Administration** May 200x  
Option: Marketing G.P.A. 4.0

**QUALIFICATIONS**

- Highly organized, dedicated, positive attitude.
- Ability to handle multiple assignments in highly pressured situations.
- Excellent written, oral, and interpersonal communication skills.
- Thrive well when working in a challenging work environment.

**HONORS AND LEADERSHIP**

- Student Life Achievement Scholarship, 200x** – Granted to students excelling in campus and community civic engagement activities.
- Emerging Leader Scholarship, 200x** – Alumni Association award for outstanding leadership.
- Pi Sigma Epsilon (national marketing fraternity)** – President '0x-'0x, Treasurer '0x-'0x.
- Dean's List, '0x-'0x and '0x-'0x.**

**EXPERIENCE**

**Sales Associate Intern**, Target Store - Riverpark, Fresno, CA June 200x - Sept 200x  
Achieved highest sales volume for interns at a local retail store.

**Student Coordinator**, Central Valley Internet Program, Fresno, CA May 200x - June 200x  
Assisted director in coordinating targeted marketing program to student population.

**Recruitment Chair**, Pi Sigma Epsilon - Fresno State, Fresno, CA  
Planned and provided overall coordination of recruitment of new members.

**ACTIVITIES**

- Directed group activities for 70 fraternity members that increased group tea
- Motivated 25 underachieving students to succeed in school by coordinating Soup Program (high density population neighborhood program).
- Developed semester fundraising plan for Pi Sigma Epsilon marketing frater

**SOFTWARE APPLICATIONS**

- Proficient with MS Word, MS Excel, Adobe PhotoShop and Dreamweaver.
- Strong internet skills.
- Designed personal online portfolio.
- Developed visual concept for Pi Sigma Epsilon marketing fraternity membe

**Chronological Resumes**  
Represent your experiences in date order with most recent/ relevant experience listed first



**JOAQUIN VALLE**  
3434 East San Ramon Avenue • Fresno, California 93720 • (559) 335-9876  
joaquinvalle@csufresno.edu

**OBJECTIVE**  
Part-time internship or full-time summer position related to psychology in an organization focused on children or pre-teens.

**EDUCATION**  
Bachelor of Arts in **Psychology**, expected May 200x • GPA 3.5  
California State University, Fresno (Fresno State)

High School Diploma, May 200x • GPA 3.4  
Hoover High School, Fresno CA

**SKILL SUMMARY**

**Organization Skills**

- Organized and promoted Kid's Day event on campus-wide committee that supported activities for underprivileged children in the community; Responsible for direct contact with over fifty student organizations.
- Collaborated with team of students to create a positive, fun, and lively atmosphere for annual campus Vintage Days Celebration.
- Motivated 25 underachieving students to succeed in school by coordinating a tutorial/academic study lab in the Stone Soup Program.
- Presented workshops to parents on assessment of their children in the areas of various developmental and learning skills in a supervised setting.

**Creativity Skills**

- Conceptualized journal project as class assignment that will culminate in a journal of autobiographical works for an organization.
- Developed semester plan for fundraising for student organization.
- Designed an online portfolio.
- Designed brochure visual concept for membership activities for Psi Chi Society.
- Coordinated, scheduled and supervised after school recreation activities.
- Taught classes to elementary age students on motivation, crafts, team building and sports activities.

**Computer Skills**

- MS Word, MS Excel, Adobe PhotoShop, Dreamweaver, and strong internet skills.

**RELEVANT WORK EXPERIENCE**  
Intern (01/0x - 09/0x), Valley Children's Hospital, Fresno CA  
After School Recreation Assistant (09/0x - 05/0x), Frank Thomas Elementary School, Fresno CA

**HONORS/ACTIVITIES**  
High School: Captain in most extra-curricular activities joined; Honor Roll (4 years); Member, Volleyball, Track and Soccer teams  
College: Dean's list, Spring 200x

**RELATED COURSE WORK**  
Abnormal Psychology; Child Psychology; and Techniques in Interviewing and Counseling

## Functional Resumes

Emphasize qualifications according to functional categories using job-related skills. Work experience is placed under different skill categories, not under specific positions



# Sample Resume Formats (continued)

**Imma Student**  
789 N. Cedar Ave.  
Fresno, CA 93702  
559-844-2389  
immas@aol.com

**OBJECTIVE:** A full-time Application Engineer position emphasizing high-precision metal working that utilizes computer aided analysis to perform engineering tasks.

**EDUCATION:** **California State University, Fresno (Fresno State)**  
Bachelor of Science Degree, May 200x  
Major: **Mechanical Engineering** Minor: **Spanish** • Overall GPA: 3.7

**Relevant Courses:** Fluid Mechanics; Thermodynamics; Properties of Materials; Machine Design; Technical Communications; Statics; Measurement Systems; Heat Transfer

**Honors:** Dean's List four semesters; American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME) scholarship; Society of Manufacturing Engineers (SME) Scholarship; Member, Pi Tau Sigma (Mechanical Engineering honor society)

**RELATED EXPERIENCE:**

**Raytek, Inc.** Fremont, CA  
**Project Intern** (Summer 200x)

- Functioned as an assistant to the Manufacturing Engineers
- Modeled aluminum tubing framework of a DNA machine
- Provided cost analysis, vendor information, and drawings of components and assemblies

**Preli Rivett Corporation** San Jose, CA  
**Assistant Designer** (Summers, 200x and 200x)  
*Family-owned company since 1949, top 5 producer in California*

- Produced 3D AutoCAD drawings of parts for hydraulic power units
- Developed blueprints and designed service manuals
- Tracked weekly purchases and entered figures into o
- Performed general office duties

**OTHER EXPERIENCE:**

**Pi Tau Sigma Fraternity, Fresno State** Fresno, CA  
**Project Coordinator and Tutor** (September 200x - pre  
*Local high school science and math study labs*

**SPECIAL SKILLS:**

- Engineering:** strength testing, strain gauges, welding
- Devices:** lathe, milling machine and drill press
- Software:** AutoCAD, Mechanical Desktop 6, Inventor
- Language:** Advanced Spanish proficiency (written and

**Combination Resumes**  
Combine chronological and functional resume styles



**JOHN DOE**  
1010 E HERNDON AVE  
FRESNO, CA 93720

JDOE@YAHOO.COM  
559-555-1212

**OBJECTIVE:**  
A career position related to conference or event management, which will utilize proven interpersonal, project management, and supervisory skills.

**SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS:**

- Experience interacting with multi-cultural peers and clients at all levels; Comfortable relating to people with diverse backgrounds
- Able to work independently or with a team to "get the job done"
- Skilled in managing multiple tasks simultaneously to meet deadlines, problem solving and implementing solutions
- Served as Co-Event Coordinator for Executive Committee meetings, departmental meetings, training seminars and guest receptions at the golf course
- Adept at researching, organizing, reporting and presenting information

**EDUCATION:**  
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FRESNO • FRESNO, CA  
Bachelor of Science in Recreation Administration, May 200x  
Dual Emphasis: **Therapeutic Recreation & Leisure Services Management** GPA: 3.2

**Certifications:** First Responder (200x); CPR (200x)

**EXPERIENCE:**

**RIVERSIDE GOLF COURSE** • FRESNO, CA  
Pro Shop Assistant (01/0x - Present)

**HELP-U-SELL VALLEY REAL ESTATE** • FRESNO, CA  
Escrow Coordinator/Office Assistant (12/0x - 01/0x)

**BEST BUY (RETAIL ENTERTAINMENT STORE)** • VISALIA, CA  
Sales Associate (06/0x - 01/0x)

**COMMUNITY SERVICE/ACTIVITIES:**

Volunteer, Housing Authority of the City of Madera (Academic Year, 200x & 200x)  
Event Volunteer, Rotary Club of Simi Valley's 4th of July Extravaganza (200x - present)  
Tutor, Cathedral of Light, Selma, CA (200x - present)  
Three-sport high school athlete (200x - 200x); Scholar Athlete Scholarship Recipient (200x)

# Sample Resume Formats (continued)

## Scannable Resumes

A resume can be attractive and still be scannable. Since companies use different scanning hardware and software, it is impossible to know for sure how to format a resume. The best way to ensure that the document is formatted properly is to call the company's HR department and find out if they have specific guidelines. If you don't have this information, there are steps you can take to optimize scannability.

### EVAN APPLICANT

1518 E Herndon Avenue, Apartment 310  
Fresno, CA 93720  
559-555-1212  
eapplicant@yahoo.com

### OBJECTIVE

A sales position that will use my experience promoting products and services.

### EDUCATION

California State University, Fresno (a.k.a. Fresno State) Fresno, CA  
Bachelor of Arts, Political Science, May 200x  
GPA: 3.2

Awards: Dean's List (200x to 200x); President's Scholarship Recipient (200x)

### COMPUTER SKILLS

Ms Word, Excel, Access, and PowerPoint; WordPerfect; Adobe Photoshop; Dreamweaver, a Web page design program; WWW, Internet, and Lexus.

### QUALIFICATIONS

Presenter, planner, organizer, motivator, promoter, communicator, writer, speaker, listener, entrepreneur, self-starter, problem solver, and networker.

### WORK EXPERIENCE

Assistant Coordinator / Tutor, January 200x to Present  
Fresno State's Writing Lab, Fresno CA

- Tutor students with business writing needs
- Hire train and supervise tutors
- Coordinate promotions for the writing lab

Retail Management Intern, May 200x to January 200x  
Target, Clovis CA

- Gained knowledge in the retail management industry
- Performed managerial tasks with upper management of store
- Gained experience that enhanced my coursework

Pharmacy Intern, August 200x to August 200x  
Rite Aid Drug Store, Fresno CA

- Received and verified drug stock orders
- Filled prescriptions and counted out medications
- Performed business duties for the company

### ACTIVITIES/LEADERSHIP

Presidential Candidate, Associated Students of Fresno State: Winter 200x  
Legal Intern, Charles Smith, Attorney-At-Law, Summer 200x  
Volunteer, Housing Authority of the City of Madera, Academic Year, 200x & 200x  
Alpha Sigma Phi Fraternity Treasurer: 200x  
Lions Club Fundraising Assistant: September 200x to August 200x

Note: Although this sample is one page, a longer scannable resume is acceptable.

## Format:

- Use one of the standard serif or sans serif typefaces, such as Courier, Times, Helvetica, Futura, Arial, Optima, Palatino, Univers. Avoid using decorative fonts.
- Use a normal type size, usually in the range of 11 to 14 points.
- Maximum number of characters per line is 65 (partly dependent on type size).
- Avoid any kinds of graphics or shading.
- Keep formatting simple. Use all caps for major headings, but avoid bolding, italicizing, and underlining.
- Do not use bullets or lines.
- Left justify text.
- If your resume is more than one page, place your name at the top of each additional page.
- Print your resume on a high quality laser printer or inkjet. Do not use a dot matrix or low quality printer.
- Use only white or a very pale color paper—in standard letter size (8<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> x 11).
- Always send original copies.
- Try to mail or deliver your resume in a flat envelope or by fax. Do not staple multiple page resumes.

## Content:

- Include your major and minor, as well as your college degree(s).
- Include key skills and certifications, using industry standards to identify each.
- Use industry or job-specific keywords that employers might use to find candidates for the job you are seeking.
- While action verbs are still important, you need to add key phrases and nouns that could be used as search terms by your potential employer. Examples of phrases include "under budget," "surpassed goals," and "successfully developed." Examples of nouns include "HTML programming," "results oriented," "professional selling," "account manager," "marketing research," "strategic planning," and "certified public accountant (CPA)."
- After your objective, you might consider adding a "summary of accomplishments" section that focuses on results you achieved in your field rather than specific duties and responsibilities. A "Key Skills" section is also an option. The idea behind this section is to allow you to use more of the words, phrases, and jargon that resumes may be searched with by the potential employer.
- Use common abbreviations (such as BS for a Bachelor of Science degree) and maximize use of industry jargon (such as CAD for computer-assisted design), but when in doubt, it is best to use both abbreviations and write it out.

# 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.

## Exciting Opportunities for Civil internships and permanent E.I.T. positions

Land Development • Water Resources • Water/Wastewater • Structures •  
 Transportation/Traffic • Surveying • Construction Management

### #1 Ranked Arizona Engineering Firm

Ranking Arizona - The Best of Arizona Business 2004-2007



## WOOD/PATEL

PHOENIX • MESA • TUCSON • GOODYEAR

For more information or to apply please contact:

Kristy Nelson, Human Resources Coordinator

Phone: 602.335.8500 Toll Free: 1.877.335.8550

Fax: 602.926.2219

employment@woodpatel.com

www.woodpatel.com

# Job Search Letters

## Introduction

Job search letters provide an opportunity to make a good first impression with a prospective employer. They are a marketing tool that can be used to advertise your qualifications for a particular position. When they are well written they encourage an employer to consider the candidate for employment. Take the time to do an excellent job.

Descriptions and examples of several kinds of job search letters have been included.

## Letter Writing Tips

- Take time to research each company and tailor letters to the specific employer and position.
- Keep letters to one page and three or four paragraphs in length.
- Address letters to a specific person.
- Come to the point, state in the first paragraph why you are writing.
- Focus on your strongest qualifications and match them to the employer's needs.
- Arouse the reader's interest. Demonstrate enthusiasm and originality.
- Come to the point without the use of a lot of verbiage.
- Keep similar items together in a paragraph.
- Be positive in tone, professional yet warm.
- Proof read for accuracy and use spell check before printing final copy.

## A Word About Appearance

- Appearance sends a message to the employer.
- Produce all letters on the same high-quality paper used for the resume.
- Select a conservative color like off white, buff, light blue or gray.
- Sign your letter in clear, bold, black ink.

## Letter-Specific Information

### COVER/APPLICATION LETTERS

- Always send a cover letter when mailing an application and/or resume to an employer.
- Letters demonstrate your writing ability to an employer so communicate effectively.
- The purpose of a cover letter is to introduce yourself and show how your education and experience match the job for which you are applying.
- Share your purpose and interest.
- Outline your strongest qualifications, putting most important items first.
- Expand on items from your resume that you feel are especially important.
- Make reference to your enclosed resume.
- Prepare an original cover letter for each position for which you are applying.

KEY: The goal is to communicate your value to the employer.

### THANK YOU LETTERS

- Make your thank you letter warm and personal.
- Express your appreciation for being considered for the position.
- A letter of thanks provides an opportunity to re-emphasize your strongest qualifications.
- Be sure to restate your interest in obtaining the position.

### LETTERS OF ACCEPTANCE

- When you are offered a position and decide to accept, send a letter of acceptance to your future supervisor or the personnel officer who offered the position.
- Let them know that you appreciate the opportunity and look forward to joining the company.

# Sample Letters

## COVER/APPLICATION LETTER FORMAT

Your Name  
Your Current Address  
City, State Zip Code  
Date of Writing

Name of Contact Person, Title  
Organization Name  
Street Address  
City, State Zip Code

Dear Mr./Ms.,

### Paragraph I

State your reason for applying to the organization (including the name of the position or vocational area in which you are interested). Indicate the source of your information about the position or the organization.

### Paragraph II

Indicate one or two qualifications which you possess that would be most valued by the prospective employer. Include a brief statement regarding your educational background and employment experience if you feel this would be of interest to the employer. Tell the employer why you are particularly interested in the company.

### Paragraph III

Introduce your enclosed resume to the employer with an affirmative statement about your qualifications.

### Paragraph IV

Close your letter by requesting an interview and indicate the approximate date when you will contact the employer to discuss the matter. Be sure to thank the employer for considering your request.

Sincerely,

(Hand written signature)

Your Name

## COVER/APPLICATION LETTER SAMPLE

Your Name  
Your Current Address  
City, State Zip Code  
Date of Writing

Name of Contact Person, Title  
Organization Name  
Street Address  
City, State Zip Code

Dear Mr./Ms.,

I am applying for the (Job Title) position that was advertised with (Organization Name) this week. As a Business Administration major, I have a strong background in economics, accounting and finance. The position seems to fit very well with my education, experience and career interests.

I have worked in a part time position with (Organization Name) for the past eight months while completing my college education. My responsibilities included creating monthly management reports, collecting and preparing financial information and working along side management on a variety of projects. I also worked in a banking environment through my cooperative education and internship positions. My customer relations experience, as well as, my oral and written communication skills would also be an asset to your organization. I have extensive experience in using several software packages and independently created databases to facilitate monthly expense tracking.

My enclosed resume provides more details on my qualifications. Please accept my resume as an application for the position with your organization.

I would welcome the opportunity to review my qualifications and background in greater detail and will contact you next week to see if an interview can be arranged. Should you need to reach me, please feel free to call me at (Area Code) (Phone Number). I am available to meet at your earliest convenience.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to talking with you.

Sincerely,

(Hand written signature)

Your Name

There is no single format that is applicable for all occasions. This page contains examples of types of letters you may use in your job search. Note the use of appropriate letter format and effective writing style.

## THANK YOU LETTER SAMPLE

Your Name  
Your Current Address  
City, State Zip Code  
Date of Writing

Name of Contact Person, Title  
Organization Name  
Street Address  
City, State Zip Code

Dear Mr./Ms.,

Thank you very much for the opportunity to interview with you on (Interview Date) for the (Job Title) position. The time and courtesy extended to me increased my excitement about the possibility of working for your organization.

The information shared during the interview enhanced my previous research on (Organization Name) and confirms that my skills match nicely with the job requirements. I was impressed with the effective manner in which your organization has adapted the management-by-objective system to the technical operations. I think that I could make a significant contribution to your organization over time.

The interview experience has confirmed my interest in the (Job Title) position and in working with your staff. Please feel free to contact me at (Area Code) (Phone Number) if I can provide any additional information. As I understand, you will contact me within the month regarding further consideration. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Thank you again for the interview and your consideration.

Sincerely,

(Hand written signature)

Your Name

## LETTER OF ACCEPTANCE SAMPLE

Your Name  
Your Current Address  
City, State Zip Code  
Date of Writing

Name of Contact Person, Title  
Organization Name  
Street Address  
City, State Zip Code

Dear Mr./Ms.,

I am writing to confirm my acceptance of your employment offer with (Organization Name) as a (Job Title). I am certain that the responsibilities assigned to me will be both interesting and challenging. I am grateful for the opportunity that you have given to me.

Thank you for your offer of assistance in finding housing in the (City) area. This will make my relocation much easier. I understand that the monthly salary will be \$3,200 and that the organization will pay my relocation expenses.

As we discussed, I will report to work at 8:30 a.m. on (Date). I received the employment forms sent in the mail, and I will bring them with me when I report to work.

I look forward to working with you and your fine team. I appreciate your confidence in me and am very happy to be joining your staff.

Sincerely,

(Hand written signature)

Your Name

# Email Correspondence

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

Email is a powerful tool in the hands of a knowledgeable job-seeker. Use it wisely and you will shine. Use it improperly, however, and you'll brand yourself as immature and unprofessional. Dr. Sherry Reasbeck, a San Diego-based career counselor, warns that some email mistakes leave a bad impression. "It's irritating when the writer doesn't stay on topic or just rambles," says Reasbeck. "Try to succinctly get your point across—then end the email."

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

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

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

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

## Thank-You Notes

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

Dear Ms. Jones:

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

Sincerely,  
John Doe

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

## Cover Letters

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

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

## Tips

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

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

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

*Written by John Martalo, a free-lance writer based in San Diego.*

# 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. However, 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, concise 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
- Loyalty
- Personality
- Acceptance
- Recommendations
- Outside activities while in school
- Impressions made during the interview
- Character
- Initiative
- Communication skills
- Work record

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

# Dressing for the Interview

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

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

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

Here are some guidelines:

## MEN

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

## WOMEN

- A suit with a 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.

## Taking a Casual Approach

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

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

**Fashion Arrests:** 1) Never wear blue denim jeans or shorts unless the vast majority of others do; 2) Don’t dress too provocatively—you’re at work, not at a dance club; 3) “Casual” doesn’t mean “sloppy”—your clothes should always be free of stains or holes; 4) Workout wear belongs at the gym.

**Play It Safe:** 1) Chinos or corduroy slacks are usually a safe bet for both sexes; 2) As for formal business attire, buy the best that your budget will allow; 3) If you will be seeing clients, dress appropriately for *their* workplace, not yours; 4) Go to the mall—most department and specialty stores have sections devoted to this style of office attire.

# Professional Etiquette

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

## Meeting and Greeting

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

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

- Always rise when introducing or being introduced to someone.
- Provide information in making introductions—you are responsible for keeping the conversation going. "Joe, please meet Ms. Crawford, CEO at American Enterprise, Inc., in Cleveland." "Mr. Jones, this is Kate Smith, a senior majoring in computer information systems at Northwestern University."
- Unless given permission, always address someone by his or her title and last name.
- Practice a firm handshake. Make eye contact while shaking hands.

## Dining

Shirley Willey, owner of Etiquette & Company in Carmichael, Calif., reports that roughly 80% of second interviews involve a business meal. Cobb remembers one candidate who had passed his initial interview with flying colors. Because the second interview was scheduled close to noon, Cobb decided to conduct the interview over lunch. Initially, the candidate was still in the "interview" mode and maintained his professionalism. After a while, however, he became more relaxed—and that's when the candidate's real personality began to show. He had terrible table manners, made several off-color remarks and spoke negatively about previous employers. Needless to say, Cobb was unimpressed, and the candidate did not get the job.

Remember that an interview is always an interview, regardless of how relaxed or informal the setting. Anything that is said or done will be considered by the interviewer, cautions Cobb.

In order to make a good impression during a lunch or dinner interview, make sure you:

- Arrive on time.
- Wait to sit until the host/hostess indicates the seating arrangement.

- Place napkin in lap before eating or drinking anything.
- When ordering, keep in mind that this is a *talking* business lunch. Order something easy to eat, such as boneless chicken or fish.
- Do not hold the order up because you cannot make a decision. Feel free to ask for suggestions from others at the table.
- Wait to eat until everyone has been served.
- Keep hands in lap unless you are using them to eat.
- Practice proper posture; sit up straight with your arms close to your body.
- Bring food to your mouth—not your head to the plate.
- Try to eat at the same pace as everyone else.
- Take responsibility for keeping up the conversation.
- Place napkin on chair seat if excusing yourself for any reason.
- Place napkin beside plate at the end of the meal.
- Push chair under table when excusing yourself.

## Eating

Follow these simple rules for eating and drinking:

- Start eating with the implement that is farthest away from your plate. You may have two spoons and two forks. The spoon farthest away from your plate is a soup spoon. The fork farthest away is a salad fork unless you have three forks, one being much smaller, which would be a seafood fork for an appetizer. The dessert fork/spoon is usually above the plate. Remember to work from the outside in.
- Dip soup away from you; sip from the side of the spoon.
- Season food only after you have tasted it.
- Pass salt and pepper together—even if asked for only one.
- Pass all items to the right. If the item has a handle, such as a pitcher, pass with the handle toward the next person. For bowls with spoons, pass with the spoon ready for the next person. If you are the one to reach to the center of the table for an item, pass it before serving yourself.
- While you are speaking during a meal, utensils should be resting on plate (fork and knife crossed on the plate with tines down).
- Don't chew with your mouth open or blow on your food.

The interviewer will usually take care of the bill and the tip. Be prepared, however, if this doesn't happen and have small bills ready to take care of your part, including the tip. Never make an issue of the check.

Social skills can make or break your career. Kenitra Matheson, human resource director with Dellinger and Deese in Charlotte, N.C., emphasizes, "Etiquette and social skills are a must! Our employees have to exhibit a certain level of professionalism and etiquette, given that we constantly interact with our clients." Be one step ahead—practice the social skills necessary to help you make a great first impression and stand out in a competitive job market.

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

# Interview Questions

## Questions Asked by Employers

### Background

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

### Education

16. Why did you choose your major?
17. Why did you choose to attend your college or university?
18. Do you think you received a good education? In what ways?
19. In which campus activities did you participate?
20. Which classes in your major did you like best? Least? Why?
21. If you were to start over, what would you change about your education?
22. Do your grades accurately reflect your ability? Why or why not?
23. Were you financially responsible for any portion of your college education?

### Experience

24. What job-related skills have you developed?
25. What did you learn from your work experiences?
26. What did you enjoy most about your last employment? Least?
27. Have you ever quit a job? Why?
28. Give an example of a situation in which you provided a solution to an employer.
29. Give an example of a time in which you worked under deadline pressure.
30. How do you think a former supervisor would describe your work?

### Career Goals

31. Do you prefer to work under supervision or on your own?
32. What type of boss do you prefer?
33. Would you be successful working with a team?
34. Do you prefer large or small organizations? Why?
35. What other types of positions are you considering?

36. How do you feel about working in a structured environment?
37. How do you feel about working overtime?
38. How do you feel about travel?
39. How do you feel about the possibility of relocating?
40. Are you willing to work flextime?

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**Before you begin interviewing, think about these questions and possible responses and discuss them with a career counselor. Conduct mock interviews and be sure you are able to communicate clear, unrehearsed answers to interviewers.**

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## 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. How 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. Have you cut your staff in the last three years?
8. How do you feel about creativity and individuality?
9. Do you offer flextime?
10. In what ways is a career with your company better than one with your competitors?
11. Is this a new position or an I replacing someone?
12. What is the largest single problem facing your staff (department) now?
13. What is the usual promotional time frame?
14. What do you like best about your job/company?
15. Once the probation period is completed, how much authority will I have over decisions?
16. Do you fill positions from the outside or promote from within first?
17. What qualities are you looking for in the candidate who fills this position?
18. What characteristics do the achievers in this company seem to share?
19. Is there a lot of team/project work?
20. Will I have the opportunity to work on special projects?
21. How much travel, if any, is involved in this position?
22. What is the next course of action? When should I expect to hear from you or should I contact you?

# Are You Ready 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 gaining popularity 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.

# Job Search Strategies: Pros and Cons

There are many ways to look for a job, some of which are better than others. Presented below are some of the most popular ways, as well as helpful hints and pros and cons of each.

STRATEGY	TOOLS	PROS	CONS	HELPFUL HINTS
<b>WANT ADS</b> Scan want ads. Mail resume with cover letter tailored to specific job qualifications.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Newspapers</li> <li>• Journals</li> <li>• Newsletters</li> <li>• Trade magazines</li> <li>• Cover letters</li> <li>• Resumes</li> </ul>	Involves minimal investment of time in identifying companies. Resume and cover letter are sent for actual job opening.	Resume and cover letter will compete with large number of others. Ads follow job market; least effective in times of economic downturn.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use as a meter on the job market in a certain career field.</li> <li>• Try to get your materials in as early as possible.</li> </ul>
<b>EMPLOYMENT AGENCIES</b> Respond to employment agency ads in newspapers; check phone book for names of agencies to contact.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resumes</li> <li>• Business attire</li> </ul>	Fee-paid jobs for graduates in technical fields or those with marketable experience.	May be less help to non-technical/inexperienced graduates. Be wary if you, instead of the employer, have to pay a fee.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify agencies that specialize in your field.</li> <li>• Make frequent contact with your counselor to obtain better service.</li> </ul>
<b>WORLD WIDE WEB</b> Search online job banks and company Web sites. Submit resume online/post on job boards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to the Web</li> <li>• Electronic resume</li> </ul>	Actual job openings. Many employers use a wide variety of job listing services. Many listings have free to low-cost access. Worldwide geographic reach.	Competition is growing as use of the Web increases. Many jobs listed are technical in nature, though the visibility of nontechnical fields is growing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use the Web frequently as information and sites change quickly.</li> <li>• May need to conduct your search at off-peak times (early morning or late at night).</li> </ul>
<b>TARGETED MAILING</b> Develop good cover letter tailored to a specific type of job and the needs of the company. Send letter with resume to selected companies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• List of well-researched companies</li> <li>• Tailored cover letters</li> <li>• Resumes</li> </ul>	Better approach than the mass-mailing method. Investment of time and effort should merit stronger response from employers.	Requires a significant investment of time in researching companies and writing cover letters as well as following up with contacts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Try to find out who is in charge of the area in which you want to work; send your materials to that person. Great method when used in conjunction with networking.</li> </ul>
<b>IN-PERSON VISIT</b> Visit many companies. Ask to see person in specific department. Submit resume and application, if possible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business attire</li> <li>• Company address list</li> <li>• Resumes</li> </ul>	Resume and application are on file with the company.	Requires a great deal of time to make a relatively small number of contacts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research the companies prior to your visit. Ask for a specific person or ask about a specific type of job.</li> </ul>
<b>NETWORKING</b> Talk to everyone you know to develop a list of possible contacts; ask for information on job/companies and to circulate your resume.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• List of contacts</li> <li>• Resumes</li> <li>• Business attire</li> </ul>	May learn of unadvertised openings. May result in a courtesy interview. Often results in a closer match of your interests to a job.	A contact in itself is not enough to get you a job. You may exhaust all leads without landing a job. Quite time-consuming.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow through on all leads.</li> <li>• Keep broadening your network of contacts.</li> </ul>
<b>ON-CAMPUS RECRUITING</b> Follow specific procedures to secure on-campus interviews.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scheduling interviews</li> <li>• Employer literature</li> <li>• Resumes</li> <li>• Business attire</li> </ul>	One of the primary ways in which companies recruit for technical and business positions.	May be less effective for nontechnical/nonbusiness candidates.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use the interview schedule as a way to identify possible employers, even if you don't get to interview on campus with those employers.</li> </ul>
<b>RESUME REFERRAL</b> Register with one of the many national referral services. As jobs are listed by employers, the data bank of registrants is searched for matches. If your materials match, they are sent to the employers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Registration form supplied by service</li> </ul>	Another way to monitor the job market and get your qualifications to the attention of employers.	May involve a fee. Often more helpful to those in technical or specialized fields. May not learn of the status of your materials.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use only in conjunction with other job search strategies.</li> </ul>

*Adapted and reprinted with permission from Career Services, Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA.*

# Web-Based Recruitment Services

## Job Listing Systems

Career Services offers two web-based job and internship listing systems targeted specifically to Fresno State students and graduates. These systems include powerful features to help you better manage your job search and to better link you to the opportunities that will enhance your career readiness and success.



Use **MonsterTRAK** to locate and apply for jobs and internships in broad geographical areas; locate and apply for on-campus student positions; research organizations; sign up for On-Campus Recruiting interviews; publish your resume for employers to review; and find out about employer visits and information sessions on campus.



Use **BulldogJobs.com** to locate and apply for jobs and paid internships located in Fresno county and the other counties that surround it. In addition, you can publish your resume for local employers to review.

Visit [www.FresnoStateCareers.com](http://www.FresnoStateCareers.com) for detailed information on how to access and best utilize these two systems.

## On-Campus Recruitment

During the Fall and Spring semesters, employers visit our campus to interview Fresno State students for full-time, entry-level career positions as well as paid internships. Interviews are usually held in the Smittcamp Alumni House. Career Services uses InterviewTRAK to manage On-Campus Interviews.

What is InterviewTRAK? A Fresno State-specific feature of MonsterTRAK, InterviewTRAK is your web-based on-campus interview system. InterviewTRAK is powered by MonsterTRAK, the #1 job listing and resume database for college students and alumni. This system makes registration, resume submission and interview sign-ups available on-line, anywhere you have access to an internet connection.

Participating in On-Campus Recruitment (**OCR**) can maximize your access to career opportunities after graduation. In fact, you could receive and accept a job offer prior to graduation, making your transition from campus to career world that much easier. Many employers utilizing on-campus recruitment are open to interviewing and hiring ALL MAJORS, an additional benefit for those students seeking alternatives and additional opportunities.

Depending upon the employer and industry, the starting salaries for entry-level positions range from \$34,000 to \$44,000. Many positions offer additional benefit packages such as medical, dental and 401K. A number of employers have jobs nationwide, so it is to your advantage to remain geographically flexible.

## Checklist for a Successful On-Campus Interview

### 1. PREPARATION:

- Self-register on MonsterTRAK.
- Enter your profile information.
- Search the InterviewTRAK module within MonsterTRAK often to get the latest details about which organizations are coming to campus. Pay attention to application deadlines!
- Upload current resume(s) and targeted cover letter(s), if applicable. Be sure to visit a Career Counselor to have your resume critiqued before publishing.
- Conduct research on organizations of interest to you.
- Practice interviewing techniques.
- Sign up for interview and note the date, time and location.
- Prepare questions to ask recruiter.
- Attend organization's Information Session, if scheduled (usually held the day before the interview).
- Prepare what you will wear.
- Cancel interview promptly if necessary to allow another student or alumnus the opportunity.

### 2. INTERVIEW:

- Dress professionally.
- Bring resume and any materials you may need to reference.
- Show up at the appropriate location at least 15 minutes early.
- Keep cool.

### 3. FOLLOW-UP:

- Obtain the recruiter's name and address and send a thank you letter.
- Provide any information requested during the interview.
- If invited to visit the recruiter's organization at their expense, keep an accurate record of your expenses.
- Promptly accept or decline job offers.
- Upon accepting a job offer, do not continue to interview with other organizations.
- If applicable, complete a Graduating Student Survey on Career Services' website or at our office (Joyal 256).

# Getting the Most Out of a Career Fair

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

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

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

## Fashions and Accessories

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

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

## Stop, Look and Listen

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

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

Here’s a great bit of career fair advice from Stanford University’s *Career Fair ‘99* guide:

“Create a one-minute ‘commercial’ as a way to sell yourself to an employer. This is a great way to introduce yourself.

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

## You’re a Prospector—Start Digging

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

## Fair Thee Well

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

## A Few Words About Career Fair Etiquette

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

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# 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?’”

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

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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 utilized 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

# Federal Jobs: Working for Uncle Sam

**S**o you want to work for the federal government? You are not alone. Uncle Sam employs approximately 1.8 million civilian workers worldwide. Federal employees receive a generous benefits package, and as of 2006 they earn an average salary of \$63,125. As the largest employer in the U.S., the federal government offers a variety of career opportunities unparalleled in the private sector. No matter what your degree or level of experience, there is a job for you with the feds. 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 in the U.S. and abroad.

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. (For a complete list, visit [www.usajobs.opm.gov/EI6.asp](http://www.usajobs.opm.gov/EI6.asp).) 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 Web site ([www.opm.gov](http://www.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 recently launched USAJOBS site ([www.usajobs.opm.gov](http://www.usajobs.opm.gov)), which has its own set of tools and resources. Of particular interest to job applicants is "The Career Interest Center" page, which contains tools to help applicants find jobs that match their education, skills and interests. More importantly, 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 Web sites 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 students are interested in the environment, they should definitely visit the EPA's Web site," says Briane K. Carter, M.S., Director of Career Services at the University of Texas, El Paso. "But they should also make sure to visit the Web sites of other agencies that they don't associate with their major. It's not unusual for 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, Director of Career Services at Rutgers 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."

The OPM created an "Optional Application for Federal Employment Form-OF 612," which applicants can fill out instead of submitting a resume for many positions. However, the OPM Web site states that resumes are preferred in most instances. As with all jobs, make sure to create a tailored resume for any federal job that you apply for. Federal agencies require specific information on your resume before it can be processed. The OF 612 form and the specific job posting can be used together to ensure that your resume has all the sections and information necessary for your resume to be considered.

*Written by Chris Enstrom, a free-lance writer in Nashville, Ind.*

# Students With Disabilities: Acing the Interview

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

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

## To Disclose or Not to Disclose

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

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

## Reasons for Disclosing

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

## Timing the Disclosure

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

## When You Get the Interview

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

## Tips on Managing the Interview

### Prior to the Interview

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

### During the Interview

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

*Written by Rosita Smith.*

# International Students and the Job Search

**L**ooking 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 (USCIS) 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 Web site 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.*

# Is Graduate School Right for You?

**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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