

# HPU CAREER SERVICES CAREER PLANNING GUIDE

## INTERVIEW**S**

Rés**U**mé Writing

**C**over Letters

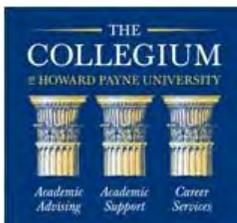
**C**urriculum Vitae

**N**Etworking

Graduate **S**chool Prep

Job **S**earch

*& More*



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# Choosing a Major

Choosing a college major is one of the most important decisions of your academic career and we know it can be challenging. Career Services can help. This page contains helpful resources for you as you investigate your interests, learn about different fields of study, and network with others. Also, be sure to schedule a face-to-face appointment with someone in Career Services. We can help you sort out all your options for choosing a major.

## STEPS FOR CHOOSING A MAJOR:

### 1. Examine your interests, skills, and values

Take a free assessment in Career Services:

- Sigi3  
<http://www.sigi3.org/login.asp?SQ=3122&SK=8806376129>
- MBTI -available in our office
- Occupational Information Network (O\*Net) This resource provides information about the typical skills, interests, abilities, values, and knowledge required for various occupations.

### 2. Research potential occupations

- *What Can I Do With This Major?*  
<http://www.hputx.edu/s/668/howardpayne.aspx?sid=668&gid=1&pgid=2103>  
This resource, compiled by The University of Tennessee, provides lists of potential careers related to over 80 different areas of study.

- Occupational Outlook Handbook  
[www.bls.gov/oco/](http://www.bls.gov/oco/) This free resource provides information for hundreds of jobs. Find information about required education for jobs, typical earnings by occupation, job expectations and duties, other related occupations and much more.
- Shadow Professionals in your field of interest.
- Conduct informational interviews. See pages 27-29 for more information.

### 3. Explore

- Join clubs, organizations, and teams on campus.
- Intern and volunteer
- Work part-time and summer jobs to learn and gain experience.

### 4. Meet with a Career Services professional



### Other things to consider . . .

- ✓ Your choice of major should be based on **your** interests, abilities, and values – not those of other people.
- ✓ A major is only *one* factor in determining your career.
- ✓ Choosing a second major OR a minor makes you more marketable to employers.
- ✓ For certain majors, declaring it sooner, rather than later, is best.

# HPU Career Services Four Year Plan

Academic	Career	Personal/Social
<b>Freshman Year - Imagine</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Get to know your academic advisor. S/he can be a valuable resource as you explore academic disciplines.</li> <li>● Develop study and time management skills.</li> <li>● If you don't understand something about your major or classes – ASK! We have all had questions and we want to help.</li> <li>● Actively participate in class.</li> <li>● Maintain a solid GPA.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Visit with Career Services staff to work on your own individualized 4-year plan.</li> <li>● Explore the online resources available on the HPU Career Services webpage.</li> <li>● Attend career events and workshops.</li> <li>● Begin creating your résumé. Visit with Career Services if you need help.</li> <li>● If you feel lost or confused about your major/career – just ask. We are here to help!</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Get involved on campus. Join at least one social organization.</li> <li>● Develop time management for your social and personal time.</li> <li>● Maintain a balance between social and academic activities.</li> <li>● Get involved with a local church or Bible study group.</li> <li>● Be sure to connect with your RA and RD. They are great resources to help you adjust to campus life.</li> </ul>
<b>Sophomore Year - Investigate</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Learn about career options related to different majors. Visit with Career Services for resources.</li> <li>● Confirm your major (You must have a degree plan on file with the Registrar before you reach 60 credit hours.)</li> <li>● Visit with your academic advisor to work on a plan for your major and discuss the pros/cons of also choosing a minor.</li> <li>● Maintain a solid GPA.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Attend workshops and seminars related to résumé writing or career planning.</li> <li>● Continue working on own résumé. Update it with your most recent experience.</li> <li>● Visit with faculty in your chosen field to investigate internship, study abroad, or other career experience building opportunities.</li> <li>● Start thinking about the possibility of Graduate School and what that means for you and your career plans.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Foster connections with peers and mentors on campus and in the community.</li> <li>● Participate in campus service projects and volunteer work.</li> <li>● Review and reaffirm your interests, values, and skills.</li> <li>● Consider joining a professional organization in your chosen field.</li> </ul>
<b>Junior Year - Interact</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Confirm that your degree plan has been filed with the registrar.</li> <li>● Meet with your academic advisor to confirm that you are still on the correct track to graduate on time with your major/minor.</li> <li>● Keep an open line of communication with professors in your chosen field. They are valuable resources for networking and finding internship opportunities.</li> <li>● Maintain a solid GPA.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Attend Career Services job fairs, graduate school fairs, and workshops.</li> <li>● Begin refining your online professional profile.</li> <li>● Update your résumé and have it reviewed by Career Services and at least one professor or professional in your chosen field.</li> <li>● Register and prepare for Graduate School admission tests. Links for resources are on the Career Services webpage.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Get to know alumni and actively network with professionals in your area of interest.</li> <li>● Take on leadership roles in your student organizations.</li> <li>● Maintain a healthy balance between work, social events, and school work.</li> <li>● Continue to develop stress management and time management strategies.</li> </ul>
<b>Senior Year – Implement</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Confirm your graduation status with your academic advisor and the Office of the Registrar.</li> <li>● Complete any graduation requirements such as application, fees, orders for cap, gown, etc.</li> <li>● Request information from prospective graduate schools.</li> <li>● Register for Graduate Admission exams.</li> <li>● Complete and submit graduate school applications.</li> <li>● Maintain a solid GPA. Don't let "Senior-itis" wreck your plans.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Finalize your professional résumé and have it critiqued by Career Services and other professionals in your chosen field.</li> <li>● Develop your list of professional references.</li> <li>● Request letters of recommendation from faculty and staff.</li> <li>● Participate in mock interviews and professional etiquette events.</li> <li>● Research potential companies, organizations, or employment options.</li> <li>● Attend career seminars, fairs and workshops.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Visit the Alumni office and make a plan to stay connected with University resources after graduation.</li> <li>● Join or renew membership with professional organizations.</li> <li>● Plan to stay involved in student organizations as an alumnus.</li> <li>● Continue to maintain relationships with mentors and professionals on campus and in the community.</li> </ul>

# Goal Setting Strategies

You have chosen a major and you have some career goals. Your four-year plan is drafted and you have a plan to complete it. Now what?

Without reasonable and measurable goals you may get lost on your way to reaching your full potential. Here are some strategies and guidelines to help you stay on track.

A **Goal** represents the result you would like to achieve.

**Goals should be:**

## Defined

Be Specific.

## Measurable

Plan a way to track your progress toward specific goals.

## Flexible

Be prepared for the unforeseen *without giving up*.



**Objectives** are the smaller goals that comprise the necessary steps to reach our overall goals for success.

As you review your educational and career goals, consider the individual objectives necessary to reach those goals. Use information in this workbook to help you brainstorm ways to reach goals each semester.

Some objectives to consider include:

## Networking

- Shadow a professional in your intended field.
- Become an intern or volunteer to get additional experience and meet people in the industry.
- Talk to faculty, staff, and alumni who have completed the program you have just started.

## Academic Achievement

- Set goals for the grades you want to earn each semester.
- Communicate with your professors and classmates.
- Get help with difficult courses early in the semester.
- Enlist the help of a mentor as an accountability partner - someone who will be honest with you and help keep you on track with attendance, projects, homework, etc.

## Increase your work experience

- Get a job on campus or in the community.
- Don't wait for your 'dream job' to start working.
- Gain experience and skills you will need in any type of career such as; customer service, working with fellow employees, responsibility for money and/or business property, leadership, etc.

# Guide to Résumé Writing

The first impression an employer has of you is often the one projected in your résumé. The information you choose to include and the way you describe your experience and skills can determine whether you will have the opportunity to interview for a position.

## Getting Started

Begin by making a list of all your employment and experience and the activities you have participated in. Pay special attention to the skills and abilities you bring to your chosen field. In addition, think of your past accomplishments and the skills you used to achieve success, regardless of the setting. Use the following **Reflection Questions** as a starting point.

### General

- What are your three greatest accomplishments?
- What did you contribute to the organization?
- Have you ever supervised anyone?
- What does an employer or graduate program most need to know about you? (Name only 3 things for this question.)

### Academic Reflections

- Did you design or create anything lasting?
- Did you achieve a superlative such as highest grade level? Best test score? Strongest essay?
- Did you have expertise in any research areas?
- Did you participate in any academic forums (presentations, conferences, publications, etc.)?

### Experience Reflections

- What leadership position(s) did you hold? For each position, list the skills required for the duties and responsibilities of the role.
- What was your greatest accomplishment in each role?
- Did you choose to take on additional responsibilities?
- What community service projects did you undertake?
- Did you use organizational, managerial or marketing skills in any way?
- What ideas did you develop to improve your organization?

- Were you responsible for money (cash) or budgets? If yes, in what amounts?
- In what ways did you exhibit interpersonal skills?
- Were any of your works published? If so, be ready to cite the publications correctly.
- Did you train, teach, or mentor new employees/members?
- Did you speak in public or write for an audience?
- Did you employ problem-solving, conflict-resolution, or mediation skills?
- Were you required to deal with the public?
- How did you demonstrate team work or individual drive and determination?

## Résumé Content

A résumé is a flexible document. It can be adapted to highlight particular skills or experiences and information can be included or omitted according to your needs. The order in which you present this information can vary as well.

### Essential Categories

The content categories you choose for your résumé will be determined by a number of factors. Your strongest “selling points” that are most relevant to the position you are seeking need to stand out. The following list provides an overview of the types of information normally included in the résumé.

**Identification Data:** (In a professional-style page header)

Name

Current and permanent address (with zip codes)

Email address

**Note:** Make sure your email address is professional in nature; john.doe@email.com *instead of* john\_rocks\_@email.com

**Also, make sure that the email you use will remain active.** HPU email is deactivated after you graduate. Employers will be unable to reach you if that is the only email they have on file for you. Use a professional-sounding email that you check regularly.

## **Career Objective:**

This is your goal statement. While it is optional, a well-written goal statement can identify what you have to offer quickly and succinctly. You can also use different goal statements for different positions.

For help writing a winning goal statement, check out the information on this subject at

[www.quintcareers.com](http://www.quintcareers.com) OR visit with us in Career Services.

## **Education**

Academic experiences should be listed in reverse chronological order. Your most recent degree or experience will appear first in the list. Include the institution, location, graduation date, degree type (spelled out— not abbreviated), and area(s) of study. Make sure to include any minors or concentrations. You may choose to list your cumulative grade point average and/or GPA in your major.

**Note:** GPAs should be carried out two decimal places and should *NEVER* be rounded up OR down. For help with your GPA, check with the Career Services Office or the Office of the Registrar.

Academic achievement is one of the areas in which employers have an interest. This may be particularly true if you do not have extensive work experience or extracurricular involvement. You may also list courses you have taken which relate specifically to your career, honors, international study, projects, or even presentations you made or participated in.

## **Experience**

This section will include full-time or part-time positions. However, internships, volunteer work, and extracurricular activities may also be included if they are relevant to the position for which you are applying. Consider how each experience, paid or un-paid, demonstrates your character, skills, and accomplishments as they relate to the job you want.

For *each* entry list:

- The name of the organization
- The city and state where it is located (not the full mailing address)
- Your job title while employed there
- Dates of employment

This list should be in reverse chronological order with your most recent employment or experience appearing first.

The only exception to this rule is with a different format of résumé. Please check with Career Services and/or faculty before using a new or different style. Some styles that are available online can be distracting or annoying to employers. That is something you don't want!

For each job/experience in your list include a brief, bulleted list of duties and responsibilities. **NEVER** use paragraph form. **ALWAYS** use Power Verbs to highlight your accomplishments and strengths. Focus on accomplishments and responsibilities that help the employer understand your abilities, values, character, and work ethic. Avoid mundane task lists that tell the employer very little about who you are. For more help with Power Verbs, check out the list on pages 11-13 of this guide or go to [www.jobskills.info](http://www.jobskills.info) for another list.

## **Certifications**

This section is especially important for education majors but may apply to others with career-specific certification or licensure. List your certifications, their respective dates, and whether they are anticipated or received. Check with someone in the school of your major (i.e.; School of Education or School of Business) to ensure that you list your credentials/certifications properly. A mistake in this section may ruin your chance of being considered for an interview.

## **Honors and Awards**

Consider academic, athletic, community, and/or campus recognition you have received.

## **Athletics or Extracurricular/Community Activities**

Your involvement in clubs, athletics, and social organizations indicate to an employer your interests, willingness to accept responsibility, and leadership abilities. This can be a significant factor when you are being considered for employment. Be sure to include offices or other positions of leadership you held. Avoid using abbreviations that may be unfamiliar to an employer.

## **Volunteer Experience**

Include any experiences you have had with community service organizations or projects such as Habitat for Humanity, Project S.W.E.A.T., Big Brothers Big Sisters, scout leader, church service projects or mission work, etc.

## Special Skills

Include any expertise you may have in foreign languages, computer operation and programming, TV/R production, technical writing or other areas of specialization.

## Professional Affiliations

If you have joined a professional association which is related to the career field in which you are seeking a position, be sure to list this and the dates of involvement.

## Publications

List by title, any articles, books, stories, or poems you have written which have already been published or are selected to be published.

## Research

If you have done extensive research on a specific topic, particularly if it relates to your chosen career field, you may wish to state the title of the paper or thesis and a brief description of your conclusions or findings. This may give the employer or prospective graduate school additional insight into your professional abilities and training.

## Additional Training

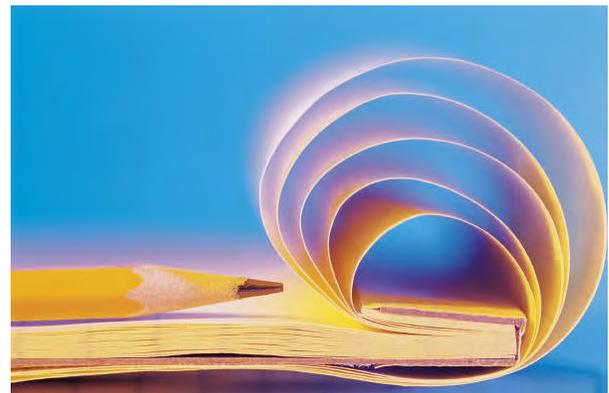
You should list any significant seminars or other training which has given you background or knowledge which will be helpful in your chosen career field.

## Political, Religious, or Social

Activities that indicate affiliation with any of these types of organizations may be potentially discriminatory. If you are not concerned with the effect of listing such an affiliation, leave them on. If you are concerned, you may want to speak to someone in Career Services or someone you know who works in the field of your choice for guidance on your specific affiliations and potential issues. If you decide to list them, regardless of how you choose the wording, be prepared to answer questions about them at a job interview.

## Language

- The language of a résumé is action oriented. Bullets should begin with action verbs. (See page 11) for examples.
- Describe your experience using short phrases and clauses with no subject rather than full sentences. Make the descriptions clear and succinct.
- Avoid phrases such as “My duties included . . .” or “Responsible for . . .”
- Do NOT use personal pronouns such as “I” or “My”.
- While it is important that you take credit for what you have done, be careful not to use words that inflate or exaggerate your responsibilities or experience.
- CHECK & RE-CHECK spelling, grammar, and formatting for consistency and accuracy. **EVEN ONE MISTAKE IS TOO MANY.**
- Quantify whenever possible. Numbers can speak louder than actions or statement.



## Career Objective

If you are uncertain about what your career objective is, you are not alone. Do not assume that you can put together one résumé that will work for all the different career areas in which you are interested. If you have three major areas of interest, for example, you may need three different résumés.

A good career objective defines for the employer what your career interests are and the setting(s) in which you would like to use your background. Your purpose is to clearly state the type of work you hope to pursue. There are times when your résumé may be used or passed on without the benefit of a cover letter. In this case, having an objective on your résumé can be crucial.

### Care Objective Hints

- With your objective you should be able to answer one of three questions:
  - ✦ What type of position am I seeking?
  - ✦ What type of organization do I want to work for?
  - ✦ Where (geographically) would I like to work?
- When constructing your objective, it is wise to describe skills or skill families rather than use job titles, unless you are using the résumé to apply for a specific job opening. Job titles vary among organizations and you risk slating yourself for a lower-level position if you use a title that a particular company associates with a certain level.
- Avoid using trite terms such as “. . . with a progressive company”, “. . . utilizing my strongest skills”, or “. . . with opportunity for advancement.” These terms are considered contrived and do not indicate the type of work you are seeking or what you have to offer an employer.
- You may find that starting with a general career field and adding specific areas of interest or special skills will serve you well.
- Some employers have reported a preference to see very specific objectives targeted toward their company and the particular job opening. Consider this when creating an objective. Don't forget to edit this statement for each job you apply for.

### Sample Professional Objectives

- A position in the field of public accounting with the objective of becoming a CPA
- A position in the marketing field focusing on the planning, promotion, and development of new products.
- To teach science in a public school setting
- To obtain an occupational therapist position at St. Joseph's Hospital.

More examples and tips are available online at [www.quintcareers.com](http://www.quintcareers.com)

## What Not To Include in your Résumé

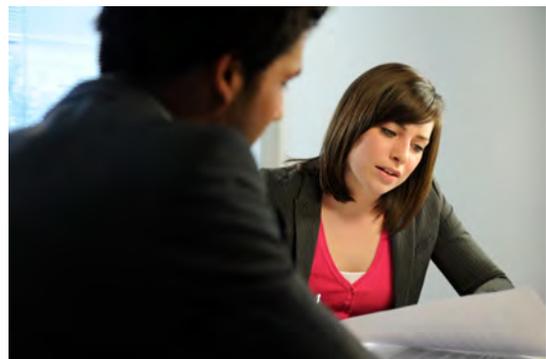
### Personal information

Do not include information such as marital status, age, birth date, health, children, religion, sexual orientation, and country of national origin. These are not necessary to reveal during the selection process and therefore not necessary to include on your résumé.

Emphasize what you do have to offer the employer — your skills, abilities, and talents — that can enhance their organization.

### NEVER use a template

While a template can be convenient and efficient, it is often a poor way to market yourself to prospective employers. Templates provide little flexibility in presenting your information and often result in documents that are more than one page long. Additionally, they are uniform in appearance and easily identified as a pre-set form. This makes them ordinary and they do not make a unique marketing statement that will draw positive attention to your résumé.



## Skills Evaluation

Skills and knowledge are acquired in the classroom, jobs (part-time, summer, or full-time), internships and volunteer experiences, clubs, athletic, and even hobbies. Evaluate your skills realistically and honestly. Your goal is to show employers what skills you have to offer and how you might apply these skills to positions in their organizations. Help them understand your abilities by identifying those which are especially relevant to the job or internship you are applying for. Consider the examples in the categories listed below.

**Work Content Skills** – Include those skills which relate specifically to being able to do a particular job.

- graphic arts
- research
- desktop publishing
- interior design
- human service
- marketing
- computer programming
- sales/persuasion
- word processing
- news/magazine writing
- statistical analysis
- recreation

**Self Management Skills** – Include personal strengths that are related to your personality and temperament.

- make decisions
- maintain confidentiality
- cooperative work attitude
- work under pressure
- take initiative
- dependability
- persistence
- self-confidence
- optimism
- assertiveness
- patience
- enthusiasm
- attention to detail
- flexibility
- sense of humor
- orderliness
- high energy level
- honesty
- loyalty
- risk taking



**Transferable Skills** – General skills which can be applied in a wide variety of work settings and are likely to be especially interesting to prospective employers.

### Communication

- writing
- group presentation
- persuasion
- selling

### Managerial

- organization
- attention to detail
- planning
- decision-making
- time management

### Manual/Physical

- mechanical reasoning
- construction
- manual dexterity
- solve problems

### Creative

- artistic
- imaginative with things
- imaginative with ideas

### Work with others

- supervise
- instruct/train
- coach
- advise

### Investigative

- research
- scientific curiosity
- define problems
- solve problems

### Social/Interpersonal

- at ease socially
- work well with a group
- deal effectively with the public
- accept criticism

### Numerical

- budgeting ability
- analyzing and evaluating data
- problem solving

### Top 10 Skills Employers Seek

1. Communication Skills
2. Strong Work Ethic
3. Teamwork skills
4. Initiative
5. Analytic skills
6. Computer skills
7. Flexibility/adaptability
8. Interpersonal skills
9. Problem solving skills
10. Technical skills

(From NACE 2011 Job Outlook Survey)

# Power Verbs For Your Résumé

## Planning

Example: Developed & implemented a training program that resulted in a 45% increase in employee satisfaction

Administered	Developed	Formulated	Prepared	Revised
Anticipated	Devised	Identified	Prioritized	Strategize
Commissioned	Evaluated	Observed	Researched	Studied
Determined	Forecasted	Planned	Reserved	Tailored

## Organizing

Example: Coordinated weekly office schedules for 8 employees

Acquired	Cataloged	Designated	Logged	Routed
Activated	Centralized	Designed	Mapped out	Scheduled
Adjusted	Charted	Dispatched	Neatened	Selected
Allocated	Classified	Established	Obtained	Secured
Altered	Collected	Facilitated	Ordered	Simplified
Appointed	Committed	Housed	Organized	Sought
Arranged	Confirmed	Implemented	Procured	Straightened
Assembled	Contracted	Incorporated	Programmed	Suggested
Assessed	Coordinated	Instituted	Recruited	Tracked
Assigned	Customized	Issued	Rectified	Tracked
Authorized	Delegated	Linked	Retrieved	

## Executing

Example: Handled 20-35+ customer calls per shift regarding coverage changes, renewal rates and billing procedures

Acted	Displayed	Input	Processed	Sold
Administered	Distributed	Installed	Produced	Stocked
Carried out	Entered	Labored	Proofed	Transacted
Collected	Exercised	Merchandised	Prospected	
Completed	Forwarded	Operated	Proved	
Conducted	Handled	Performed	Shipped	

## Supervising

Example: Developed and supervised the implementation of new computer filing system that reduced paper use by 35%

Adjusted	Correlated	Indexed	Overhauled	Screened
Analyzed	Developed	Judged	Oversaw	Set
Apportioned	Discovered	Licensed	Policed	Scrutinized
Assessed	Established	Maintained	Prohibited	Supervised
Certified	Examined	Measured	Refined	Supplied
Compared	Explored	Modified	Regulated	Tightened
Controlled	Graded	Monitored	Reviewed	Traced
Corrected	Inspected	Officiated	Revised	Updated

## Power Verbs For Your Résumé (cont'd)

adapted from: <http://www.uni.edu/careerservices/students/rcl/docs/actionverbs.pdf>

### Leading

Example: Trained 20+ new employees in customer service policies over a 2-year period

Accelerated	Elected	Guided	Mentored	Spearheaded
Assumed	Employed	Hired	Motivated	Stimulated
Caused	Empowered	Influenced	Originated	Strengthened
Chaired	Encouraged	Initiated	Pioneered	Supervised
Changed	Enlisted	Inspired	Promoted	Trained
Conducted	Envisioned	Involved	Raised	Transformed
Directed	Fostered	Led	Recognized for	Visualized
Disproved	Founded	Managed	Set goals	

### Getting Results

Example: Increased student participation by 25% over a 6-month period

Accomplished	Constructed	Ensured	Hastened	Minimized	Reduced (losses)
Achieved	Contributed	Excelled	Heightened	Modernized	Rejuvenated
Added	Delivered	Expanded	Improved	Obtained	Renovated
Advanced	Demonstrated	Expedited	Increased	Opened	Restored
Attained	Diminished	Extended	Innovated	Orchestrated	Targeted
Augmented	Earned	Finalized	Integrated	Overcame	Uncovered
Boosted	Eclipsed	Fulfilled	Introduced	Prevailed	
Built	Eliminated	Gained	Invented	Produced	
Combined	Enlarged	Generated	Joined	Qualified	
Completed	Enjoyed	Grew	Launched	Realized	
Consolidated	Enlisted	Guaranteed	Lightened	Received	

### Problem Solving

Example: Streamlined ordering through the use of computer technology, decreasing wait time from 6-2 days.

Alleviated	Conceptualized	Detected	Found	Repaired	Solved
Analyzed	Created	Diagnosed	Investigated	Revamped	Synthesized
Brainstormed	Debugged	Engineered	Recommended	Revitalized	Theorized
Collaborated	Decided	Foresaw	Remedied	Revived	
Conceived	Deciphered	Formulated	Remodeled	Satisfied	

## Power Verbs For Your Résumé (cont'd)

adapted from: <http://www.uni.edu/careerservices/students/rcl/docs/actionverbs.pdf>

### Quantitative

Example: converted files from COBAL to JAVA in order to increase compatibility with current systems

Accounted for	Checked	Dispensed	Grossed	Projected	Tabulated
Appraised	Compiled	Dispersed	Increased	Purchased	Totaled
Approximated	Compounded	Earned	Inventoried	Quantified	
Audited	Computed	Enumerated	Maximized	Rated	
Balanced	Conserved	Estimated	Multiplied	Reconciled	
Budgeted	Converted	Figured	Netted	Recorded	
Calculated	Counted	Financed	Profited	Reduced	

### Communicating

Example: Presented to groups of 30+ transfer students on a weekly basis concerning university policies and procedures

Acted	Composed	Elicited	Justified	Rendered	Summarized
Adapted	Consented	Explained	Lectured	Reported	Supplemented
Admitted	Concluded	Extracted	Marketed	Represented	Supported
Addressed	Convinced	Fabricated	Medicated	Revealed	Surveyed
Allowed	Consulted	Fashioned	Moderated	Sanctioned	Synthesized
Amended	Corresponded	Greeted	Negotiated	Settled	Systematized
Arbitrated	Critiqued	Highlighted	Perceived	Shaped	Tested
Argued	Dedicated	Illustrated	Persuaded	Smoothed	Taught
Ascertained	Defined	Improvised	Presented	Specified	Translated
Attested	Deliberated	Indicated	Publicized	Spoke	Transmitted
Briefed	Demonstrated	Inferred	Queried	Sold	Verified
Clarified	Drafted	Informed	Questioned	Solicited	Welcomed
Cleared up	Dramatized	Instructed	Referred	Submitted	Wrote
Closed	Edited	Interpreted	Reinforced	Substantiated	
Communicated	Educated	Interviewed	Related	Suggested	

### Helping

Example: Provided academic support for 30+ at-risk primary school students through comprehensive after-school program

Aided	Bolstered	Eased	Familiarized	Prescribed	Returned
Accommodated	Coached	Elevated	Helped	Provided	Saved
Advised	Continued	Enabled	Interceded	Protected	Served
Alleviated	Cooperated	Endorsed	Mobilized	Rehabilitated	Sustained
Assisted	Counseled	Enhanced	Modeled	Relieved	Tutored
Assured	Dealt	Enriched	Polished	Rescued	Validated

## Résumé Checklist

- The grammar, punctuation, and spelling are correct. This document is **LETTER PERFECT**.
- Formatting is consistent regarding font, spacing, layout, bullets, etc.
- The résumé is an **original** document and **NOT a template**.
- This résumé was **critiqued by several people** including someone from Career Services.
- Someone can scan this résumé in **30 seconds** and obtain the essential information. The formatting makes the résumé easy to read and key word searchable.
- My **contact information** (name, address, city, state, zip code, email address, and telephone number (local and permanent) are at the top of the page.
- Optional: A **career objective** appears directly under my name and address so the reader's eye is led to it immediately. The statement is as specific as possible.
- All **meaningful activities** related to my career/ internship goal that assisted in developing my skills, whether or not they were paid experiences, are listed.
- For **practical experiences** (paid or unpaid), each includes: position title, employing organization, location, and date range of employment. These are presented in a consistent format.
- For extracurricular activities such as clubs, organizations, athletics, honors and awards, each includes: organization with which it is affiliated, location and date range of involvement.
- My résumé is **one page**. A two page résumé is acceptable for certain majors if you have extensive related experience. Margins may be as small as 1/2 inch. Traditional font is 12 but can be 11 or 10 as long as it is legible and does not look crowded on the page.
- The final résumé is an **accurate** representation of my abilities.
- My résumé **does not include** any **high school information** unless it will help in obtaining an interview **OR I** am still a first or second year college student.
- My résumé **does not include** personal data such as height, weight, date of birth, social security number, marital and health status, information about my spouse or other family members, or personal photo.
- Abbreviations are used sparingly**. My degree is spelled out and the name of my colleges and organizations are also spelled out.
- Ample white space** for readability is included.
- If seriously considering several career areas, a **different résumé is developed for each career area**. Not only are objectives different, but the way work and academic experiences are described and arranged are also changed to reflect the qualifications for the different positions.
- The résumé is printed on **quality résumé paper**, using white, cream, ivory, or very light gray. (Avoid pastels or very bright colors.)
- Paper that matches the résumé has been used for the cover letter and envelopes.
- Versions of the résumé are also saved in a word processing format for easy updating.
- Electronic versions of the résumé are saved in **PDF** format for email and electronic upload.



# Jimmy Zitbolli

My Favorite College ✦ Campus Box 1111 ✦ Gettysburg, PA 12345-6789 ✦ [zitbolli@myfavorite.edu](mailto:zitbolli@myfavorite.edu)

## Education:

Bachelor of Arts, My Favorite College, Gettysburg, PA,

Major: Digital Arts      Minor: Marketing

Specialization: Information Systems

May 2008

GPA: 3.95

## Experience:

*Director of Marketing*, Web Solutions Inc., Gettysburg, PA

Summer 2007

- Organized and attended NRA and Comdex 02 trade shows.
- Sold Web site service to Central Pennsylvania companies.
- Designed various Web sites.
- Coordinated seminars discussing the Internet.

*Advertising Specialist and Consultant*, Gettysburg College, Gettysburg, PA

Nov. 2006 - present

- Directed marketing for the 2006 Gettysburg Tennis Team.
- Created 2006 and 2007 Career Fair posters.
- Designed and maintained Web sites for various college departments.
- Coordinated 2007 Summer Business School Abroad Program.

*Kitchen Positions*, Restaurant Industry, NJ

2000-2006

Seasonally employed as a chef to finance education:

- Catering Chef, The Manor, West Orange, New Jersey, summers 2005, 2006
- Assistant Chef, La Primavera, West Orange, New Jersey, 2002, 2003, 2004
- Prep Cook, Il Tulapanos, Cedar Grove, New Jersey, summers 2000, 2001

## Achievements & Activities:

**President and Founder:** Managerial Events Committee, Gettysburg College

- Led committee in organizing and implementing First Annual Career Development Conference attended by more than 20 of North America's top companies, including Johnson & Johnson, Oracle, Silicon Graphics, New York Life, Utility Partners, and Bank of America.
- Established organization as a member of Students In Free Enterprise (SIFE).

**Fund Raiser:** Personally raised more \$1,200 in food for the Red Cross.

**Vice President of Communications:** American Marketing Association, Gettysburg College chapter.

**Representative:** Student Government Association.

**Computer Skills:** Windows XT, Microsoft Office, Firefox, HTML/Web Publishing, Macintosh Leopard, iLife, iWork, Visual Basic, Adobe Photoshop, Systems Development, Corel Draw, Macromedia Director, Dun & Bradstreet Marketplace

## Honors

- Gettysburg College Honor Roll, Fall 2006
- Citizen Scholarship, Gettysburg College, Fall 2005
- John Bishop Scholarship, Gettysburg College, Fall 2007

References: Available upon Request

## Sample Résumé

More samples and tips are available at

[http://www.quintcareers.com/cover\\_letters.html](http://www.quintcareers.com/cover_letters.html)

## References

There are several options for providing information about those who have agreed to serve as your references.

- ✓ A list of references (with the same heading as your résumé) should go on a separate sheet of paper. In creating a list, include names, titles, full mailing addresses, email addresses, and telephone numbers.
- ✓ Consider listing a brief explanation at the end of each reference to identify the relationship you had with that person. For example; Current Supervisor or Undergraduate Advisor. This is not always evident to the prospective employer.
- ✓ Do not automatically submit references with every résumé. To protect the privacy of your references, only submit them when requested. You may choose to put a statement at the bottom of your résumé which states “References available upon request”
- ✓ Save a copy in a word processing program for easy updating.
- ✓ Save a copy as a pdf for digital uploading or email.
- ✓ Discuss the type of position that you will be seeking and your career goals. If there are skills or information that you hope he or she would include in the reference, you might mention these.
- ✓ Share with your references the descriptions of specific positions for which you are being considered just in case they are contacted by telephone.
- ✓ Don’t wait until the last minute. Give each reference at least two weeks notice to write a letter or prepare for a reference check via phone.
- ✓ Give faculty ample time to write letters. Remember that they are asked by many students to write letters of recommendation.

**To get started, make a list of potential references before preparing your official list.**

### Some suggestions related to selecting and working with your references:

- ✓ Ask for permission to use the individual as a reference. Do not assume that the person will be willing to recommend you. This courtesy is appreciated and may avoid later embarrassment or a negative letter of reference. “Would you be comfortable giving me a strong recommendation?” opens the subject. Be prepared to hear a “no” or deal with some reservations.
- ✓ Give the person a copy of your current résumé. In many cases, a person may know you in only one context (the classroom, a member of a professional organization or on the job). The reference may be stronger if the person has a more complete knowledge of your other accomplishments.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Title</u>
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# Jimmy Zitbolli

1234 Pine Street Box # 1111 Gettysburg, PA 12345-6789 ✖ Cell Phone: (555)123-4567 ✖ [zitbolli@myfavorite.edu](mailto:zitbolli@myfavorite.edu)

## REFERENCES

**Mrs. Susan Fisk**, Catering Director  
The Manor  
555 West North St.  
West Orange, NJ, 54321  
(555) 123-4567

**Mr. Stan Mitchell**, Director of Athletic Programs  
My Favorite University  
1234 Main Street  
Gettysburg, PA 12345  
(555) 555-5555  
[smitchell@favoriteuniv.edu](mailto:smitchell@favoriteuniv.edu)

**Mr. John Sample**, CEO  
Web Solutions, Inc.  
1000 Fisk Street  
Gettysburg, PA 12345  
(555) 765-4321 Ext. 8910  
[jsample@websolutions.com](mailto:jsample@websolutions.com)

Sample Reference Page

# Writing Your Curriculum Vitae

In certain instances, you will need a curriculum vitae instead of a résumé. A curriculum vitae (CV) is a summary of your educational and academic background. Its purpose is to outline your credentials for academic, education, scientific, or research positions, as well as fellowships or grants. Other countries around the world also use CVs instead of résumés. Its length can range from 2-4 pages.

**Note:** Each field (science, math, business, education, etc.) has a different standard for CVs. Ask the faculty in your department for feedback on your CV.

A main difference between a résumé and CV is length, as the recommended résumé length is one page. Also, job descriptions typically are not bulleted in a CV like they are in résumés. A more subtle but equally important distinction is that whereas the goal of a résumé is to construct a professional identity, the goal of a CV is quite specifically to construct a *scholarly* identity. Thus, your CV will need to be very specific in reflecting your abilities as a teacher, researcher, and publishing scholar within your discipline.

What to include on your CV:

- Applicant information
- Education
- Dissertation Title and Advisor
- Awards/Honors/Patents
- Grants/Fellowships
- Research Experience
- Teaching Experience
- Publications and Presentations
- Related Professional Experience
- Related Professional Experience
- Languages
- Other – Memberships, Associations, Conferences, and References

## Applicant Information

Your name should appear on the top of each page. On the first page include your name, address, phone number, fax number, and email address. Page numbers should appear on all pages except for the first. When including your email address consider this communication with an employer to be professional. It is advised to avoid “nick names” or “cute” automatic responses. This also applies to phone messages.

## Education

In reverse chronological order list all of your degrees from college on, with the name of the institution and the date they were awarded. List the date you expect to receive the degree for the program you are currently in. It is standard to list the name of your advisor and your thesis title.

***From this point you have more latitude in shaping the organization of your CV. You should be guided by your strengths, requirements for the job, and conventions of your discipline.***

## Honors and Awards (Grants, Fellowships, Patents, Etc.)

Place Honors/Awards near the top of the CV (unless you have few, then put later or omit). This is a good place to list research-related and dissertation-supported grants, fellowships, awards, and patents. Scientists may create a separate section for “Research Grants”, which would probably come later in the CV.

## Research Experience

Scientists will briefly describe their postdoctoral, doctoral, and possibly undergraduate research. You should include both substance and techniques employed if relevant. List names of the institution, professor, project, and dates. Along with descriptions noting any contribution you made. Some scientists append a “Statement of Research Interests”.

## Teaching Experience

Where you place this section depends on the target institution (i.e. a small teaching college) as well as your strengths as a candidate. The basic information should include: Where, What, When you have taught and your title(s) for each teaching position.

## Publications and Presentations

Where you place this section depends on the strength of your publication record. If substantial, it may come first. If too lengthy or short it can come at the end of the CV or have an additional page. Some candidates will subdivide this category into:

- Publications (if you have enough, you can separate this into Books, Abstracts, Reviews, Other Publications, etc.). Use the standard bibliographic form for your discipline (i.e. APA, MLA, Chicago, etc.) when listing publications.
- Papers and Presentations. Include dates/locations with titles of your presentations.

Avoid listing published abstracts with papers. List abstracts as a separate section. Otherwise, it gives the impression of “padding.”

## Related Professional Experience

Use this category for any experience that is related to teaching, research, and administration. Consider such experiences as conference organizing, tutoring, and committee work.

## Languages

Accurately evaluate and represent your knowledge level of a language. Is it native, fluent, proficient or a working knowledge?

## Optional Sections

- Memberships or Professional Organizations
- Scholarly Associations
- Travel or Study Abroad

## References

Most academics tend to operate within small informal networks. The names of references will convey significant information to most readers. Most applicants will list their references at the end of their CV.

Include:

- Full Name
- Title
- Institutional Address
- Email address
- Telephone
- Fax Number

Three references are expected. However, you may add more if their evaluations would add significant information. ***\*\*Make sure your references know that they are listed. Give each reference a copy of your CV before submitting their name on your CV\*\****

## Final Consideration

One of the most important things to remember when working on your curriculum vitae is that there is not one standard format. There are different emphases in each discipline. A good CV is one that emphasizes the points that are considered to be most important in your discipline and conforms to standard conventions within your discipline.

Sources:

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/641/01/>

<http://graduate.dartmouth.edu/careers/services/vita.html>

Many international positions will require a CV instead of a résumé.

Be sure to follow application instructions exactly.

# Writing A Cover Letter

The résumé never travels alone. Each time you submit your résumé to an employer you should enclose a cover letter which explains why you are submitting the résumé. Keep in mind that cover letters are not generic and should be written specifically for each job application. Making each letter specific to each job is the key to creating interest in your candidacy.

The cover letter is your opportunity to summarize your qualifications and highlight your most appropriate skills or background in relation to a particular position without simply reiterating the information on your résumé. There are two types of cover letters:

**1. Application Letter**—This letter is written when you know of a specific opening and want to apply for the position. Its purpose is to get your enclosed résumé read and generate an interview. Your strategy is to demonstrate that your qualifications fit the requirements of the position. Study the position description carefully and link each of the described job dimensions with your skills and experience. Structure your application letter with three sections:

- **The opening (1 paragraph):** Tell why you are writing, the name of the position or field, how you heard about the opening (company website, newspaper ad, referral, etc.) and why you are interested in this particular company, location, or type of work. This paragraph should also include a statement emphasizing your enthusiasm and fit for the position.
- **The body (usually 1–2 paragraphs):** Sell yourself. Outline your strongest qualifications that match the position requirements. Provide evidence of your related experience and accomplishments by providing specific examples. Make referrals to your enclosed résumé. Convince the employer that you have the personal qualities and motivation to perform well. Indicate any knowledge you may have of the organization that demonstrates you have done research and are familiar with their operation.
- **The closing (1 paragraph):** Close by showing interest in further discussing your qualifications (an interview), providing your phone number and email address, and showing appreciation for being considered.

**2. Inquiry Letter** — This letter is written when you are asking an employer for information about possible job or internship openings. Its purpose is also to get your résumé read and generate interviews. Structure this letter similarly to the application letter, but instead of using position information, focus on broader occupational and/or organizational dimensions to show how your qualifications match the work environment.

## Cover Letter Rules

- ✓ **Print on good quality résumé paper.** Use the same type of paper that your résumé is printed on.
- ✓ **Address to a specific name and title.** If you are uncertain whom to address, try finding it online, look at reference materials in the Career Services Center or check a company database such as CareerSearch or eRecruiting. You can also call the organization's human resources department to ask for information.
- ✓ **Writing style should be direct, powerful, and error free.** Edit to eliminate extraneous words and to check grammar, spelling, and punctuation. In addition to stating your purpose, the letter tells the reader how well you communicate.
- ✓ **The cover letter should be no more than one page.** Keep the letter concise.
- ✓ **Use appropriate language.** Repeat terms that the employer uses. Avoid jargon and the passive voice. Use action verbs and the active voice. Do not try to be cute or too aggressive. Be employer focused—tell the employer what you have to offer, not what you hope to gain from them or the position.
- ✓ **Always be positive** by stressing your base accomplishments and skills as well as your future value.
- ✓ **Be sure to keep copies of all correspondence.** It is possible that you will need to refer to it in the future.

## Sample Cover Letter

Date

Name

Title

Organization

Address

City, State, Zip Code

Dear Dr./Mr./Ms. Last Name:

I am writing in reply to the posted advertisement regarding the position of Graduate Student Advisor for the Master of Arts in Liberal Studies degree program.

I have been awarded the degree of Master of Arts from \_\_\_\_\_ University so I understand the need for academic advisement and program planning in a nontraditional higher education environment. I have also experienced, first-hand, the comforting effect of being able to contact an adviser who genuinely cares for the success of students.

During my career as a director of marketing, I was elected Chairman of the Executive Board which sat as the company's representative to the apprenticeship advisory board. In this capacity I was able to be an effective advisor to marketing interns who were experiencing scholastic problems which threatened their future in the industry; especially to older apprentices who were seeking a career change and had problems adjusting to the obligations of work, school and family life.

I believe my educational background in nontraditional post-graduate education and my work related duties of counseling and advising students enrolled in learning programs qualifies me for consideration for the position of Graduate Student Advisor. I look forward to discussing how my skills can be of value to \_\_\_\_\_ as it prepares students for their future.

Sincerely,

Your Signature

Your Typed Name

# Job and Internship Search Strategies

## Preparation

### Self-Assessment

One of the most important aspects of preparing for a job or internship search is first knowing yourself. Not only do you need to know what skills and characteristics you have to offer an employer, you should know what type of job or internship will suit your interests and values. Use the check lists on this page to select your career-related interests, skills, and values.

### Interests:

- Arts & Entertainment
- Athletics
- Cinema & Photography
- Computers/Technology
- Designing
- Editing
- Environment
- Healthcare
- Helping Others
- Organizing
- Public Speaking
- Researching
- Sciences
- Selling products or services
- Teaching/training others
- TV & Radio
- Working with numbers
- Working with people
- Writing
- Others: \_\_\_\_\_

### Skills:

- Active Listening
- Adaptability/flexibility
- Communication
- Creativity
- Critical Thinking
- Decision Making
- Detail-oriented
- Information Gathering
- Initiative
- Instructing
- Interpersonal

### Skills continued:

- Management
- Math
- Organizing
- Persuasion
- Planning
- Problem Solving
- Public Speaking
- Teamwork
- Technology
- Time Management
- Work Ethic
- Writing
- Others: \_\_\_\_\_

### Values and Preferences:

- Challenge
- High salary
- Independence
- Job security
- Leadership
- Make a difference
- Opportunity to advance
- Prestige
- Physical work
- Room for creativity
- Routine
- Rural work setting
- Supportive boss
- Traditional work hours
- Urban work setting
- Variety
- Work alone
- Work/life balance
- Work with others
- Others: \_\_\_\_\_

### Need Help Assessing your Skills?

Contact the Career Services Office for information about interest inventories and formal personality assessments available. The more you know about yourself and your strengths, the more effective the language of your résumé will be.

## Check Your Online Image

Does the information you have posted online project a professional image? Before starting your job search and submitting résumés, check it out. Examine content on social networking sites, blogs, and other internet accessible information about you. Clean up any unprofessional information or pictures. Consider making some profiles private so that employers cannot access them by doing a simple search.

Consider adding a LinkedIn® profile to your online presence. Connect with other professionals through this business-oriented social networking site to promote your experience, connections, and professional image.

## Résumés and Cover Letters

Before you begin applying for jobs and networking, make sure your résumé is ready to be sent to employers. You can bring your résumé and cover letter, written for a specific opportunity, into Career Services to be reviewed.

## Elevator Speech

The opportunity to network can happen anywhere from a job fair to the grocery store so be prepared with a 30 to 60 second pitch that may include your educational background, experience or skill highlights, career goals, and interest in your field. For example, “Hi, my name is Denise Jones and I will be graduating this May with a degree in Accounting. I’ve really enjoyed my internships at XYZ accounting and another smaller accounting firm, Scott and Smith, LLP, where I have a proven knack for tax auditing. I am very interested in your organization and would love the chance to talk with you more about it.”

To avoid sounding “canned” or phony, consider introducing yourself first and then placing different parts of your elevator speech in the conversation where they feel the most natural and appropriate.

## Research

Researching specific companies and positions is vital to your search for the most appropriate job and workplace. Here are resources for finding information about occupations, organizations, etc. If you need additional help with research, visit the Career Services Office.

## Occupational Outlook Handbook

<http://www.bls.gov/oco>

Provides career information on most job titles, including required training and education, earnings, job outlook, job description, and working conditions.

**ONET** <http://online.onetcenter.org/find>

Review occupational information, jobs related to your skills, work requirements, and occupations related to those in which you have an interest.

## Other Resources

Also be sure to review specific company websites, trade journal articles, press releases, and other publicly available materials.

## What to research

(adapted from [www.distinctiveweb.com/research.htm](http://www.distinctiveweb.com/research.htm))

- What is the age of the company/organization?
- What is their location? How long have they been established there?
- How many locations are there?
- What are the services and/or products they sell?
- What is the size of the company/organization?
- How many employees do they have?
- What are their sales? Assets? Earnings?
- What has their growth pattern been like?
- What are the various divisions and subsidiaries?
- Who are their competitors?
- What are the names of key executives?
- What is the general reputation of the company/organization?
- Is the company publicly or privately owned?
- How successful is the company? What have been their major achievements?
- Have there been any major issues or events in their recent history?
- What are the objectives and philosophy of the company/organization?
- What is their forecast of anticipated growth?



## Finding Jobs & Internships

Now that you have completed all of the preparation, it is time to find the positions you would like to apply for. Keep in mind that the search process requires a considerable amount of work and can take months. By using a multifaceted approach, your chances of securing a position considerably increase. So, consider techniques for finding opportunities in open *and* hidden markets.

### Open Job Market

The open job market refers to advertised positions. Here are ways to search for jobs in the open market:

- Search online job and internship databases.
- Attend recruiting events (ex; Career Expo, Teacher Job Fair).
- Check for on-campus recruiter visits on the Career Services webpage.
- Look through classified ads in newspapers.
- Go to a staffing agency like Demand Staff.

### Hidden Job Market

While the most popular method is to search the open market, many positions are NOT advertised; they are in the hidden job market. Finding these jobs involves networking. Networking is using your current contacts and generating new ones in order to locate opportunities. You network all the time and probably don't even know it. You are networking when you:

- Attend professional or trade association meetings
- Talk with your professors and alumni
- Volunteer for a local church function
- Visit with other members of your social clubs or religious groups
- Talk with your friends and classmates
- Talk to your neighbors
- Strike up a conversation with someone else waiting at the doctor's office

Keep in mind that you never know the connections someone might have, so networking is extremely important to discover opportunities.

For more ideas on networking, including setting up informational interviews, see "Networking" pages 29-30.

## International Job Searching

Finding work outside the United States can be a long and complicated process. Make sure you do plenty of research before applying for jobs abroad so you know each country's requirements. Paperwork, documentation, and citizenship requirements vary depending on individual country politics and labor laws. In most cases, you will need a special type of visa known as a work permit. Be aware there are fees associated with acquiring work permits, passports, and visas. Specific country information can be found at [www.workpermit.com](http://www.workpermit.com)

While you can use the same job search techniques as you would in the U.S., many people use placement programs to find work abroad. In addition to helping you find opportunities, placement programs and international organizations will often assist you with the application process for visas and work permits. Some resources to begin with include:

Search Associates [www.searchassociates.com](http://www.searchassociates.com)

Interexchange [www.interexchange.org](http://www.interexchange.org)

BUNAC [www.bunac.org](http://www.bunac.org)

Consider talking about study and work abroad programs with faculty in your chosen field. They may be aware of other resources for study/work abroad programs that will give you the opportunity to use your specific job skills.

Also, pay close attention to the job qualifications and application requirements. Résumés are not always used abroad, so make sure you also have a curriculum vitae (CV) prepared in case the employer asks for one. See page 18 for information on creating a CV.



## Applying for Positions

Before applying for a job or internship, be sure you know and can communicate your knowledge, skills, and experience that are relevant to the position you are applying for. Here are some other helpful hints when applying for jobs:

- **Proofread!** Be sure that there are absolutely no spelling, punctuation, or grammatical errors on any application documents. It is a good idea to have at least two other people look over your materials. It is possible for an employer not to interview an otherwise qualified candidate because of proofing errors in their résumé and/or cover letter!
  - **Follow Directions.** Send all documents mentioned in the application instructions. Leaving anything out reflects lack of attention to detail.
  - **Cover Letters are not optional.** A cover letter should always accompany your résumé, even if the application instructions do not request a cover letter. It demonstrates business etiquette while portraying to the employer the purpose of your résumé.
  - **Use PDF – Not Docx.** When sending documents to an employer or recruiter, save them in PDF form so that no formatting issues occur such as shifted margins or unaccepted fonts.
  - **Use professional etiquette.** Correspondence with employers should always be professional. Address them as Mr., Ms., or Dr. Do not use internet slang or smiley faces and always use proper spelling and grammar.
  - **E-mail Signature** At the end of each e-mail, include a professional signature that includes your first and last name and contact information. You can also include positions held (ex; Howard Payne University, Class of 2011 President) and your LinkedIn.com URL.
  - **Use a professional subject line.** Be sure to include the job title or job code if you are applying for a specific job via e-mail. If you are inquiring about the possibility of openings, state this in the subject line. You must have relevant information in the subject line to avoid it getting thrown out as junk mail.
  - **Keep Records.** As with networking, keep track of all correspondences, applications, dates applied, etc. involved in your job or internship search.
  - **Use appropriate voicemail and e-mail.** Once you begin networking and/or applying for positions, make sure your voicemail message is professional and avoid ring back tones. Also make sure your email address is appropriate and professional-sounding. Avoid nick-names and suggestive catch phrases.
  - **Follow Up!** Following up with contacts, recruiters, employers, etc. is vital. It demonstrates a sense of professionalism, courtesy, and perseverance. You should follow up with hiring personnel within two weeks of sending in application materials and within 24 hours of an interview.
- Thank you letters* can be typed, handwritten, or e-mailed. Hard copy letters are the most formal and are always appropriate after an interview.
- Handwritten letters* are more personal, and can be appropriate for brief notes to people you met during an interview or who may have helped you in other ways.
- E-mail* is appropriate when that has been your method of contact with the person you want to thank, if your contact has expressed a preference for email, or if you want to send a quick thank you to be followed up by hard copy. Thank you letters, phone calls, or some type of correspondence should take place after:
1. A job interview
  2. An informal interview
  3. A contact has helped you/provided you with information
  4. Someone was extremely helpful to you at a career fair
  5. You visit a contact at their work site
  6. Anyone you wish to express thanks to and/or develop a relationship with
- **Interview preparation.** Practice responding to typical interview questions, do a mock interview at Career Services, and get interview attire appropriate for the field to which you are applying.
  - **Be persistent.** The process of finding and securing jobs and internships can be frustrating and you may have to deal with rejections. Know that this is typical, and that with hard work and persistence you will eventually get something.

# Professional Dress

There are different levels of professional dress that you should consider when attending events such as job fairs, networking events, your job, or internship, and job interviews. Remember that your appearance creates a first and lasting impression, so you want your image to convey credibility, integrity, and professionalism.

## LEVELS OF DRESS

<b>PROFESSIONAL</b>		
	<b>Women</b>	<b>Men</b>
<b>Business Casual</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Khaki pants, dress pants, or knee-length (or longer) skirt</li> <li>• Collared shirt or twin set shirts</li> <li>• Closed-toe shoes (open-toed shoes may be acceptable-check with company first)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Khaki pants or slacks</li> <li>• Collared shirt (button or polo) tucked in</li> <li>• Dress shoes</li> </ul>
<b>General Professional</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dress pant or knee-length (or longer) skirt</li> <li>• Collared, button-up shirt or jacket/blazer</li> <li>• Closed toe shoes</li> <li>• Pantyhose/stockings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dress slacks</li> <li>• Long sleeved, collared, button-up shirt with tie</li> <li>• Dress shoes with dark socks</li> <li>• Belt</li> </ul>
<b>Business professional</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pant or skirt suit (skirts must be knee-length or longer)</li> <li>• Closed-toe heels less than 2-3" or flats (professional-looking flats—not ballet flats)</li> <li>• Pantyhose/stockings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business suit</li> <li>• Long sleeved, collared, button-up shirt with tie</li> <li>• Dress shoes with dark socks</li> <li>• Belt</li> </ul>
<b>NOT PROFESSIONAL</b>		
<b>Casual</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jeans or shorts</li> <li>• T-shirts or sleeveless tops</li> <li>• Tight or revealing tops or bottoms</li> <li>• Open-toed shoes, flip flops, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jeans or shorts</li> <li>• T-shirts or sleeveless tops</li> <li>• Open-toed shoes, flip flops, etc.</li> </ul>

## Choosing the Appropriate Level of Dress

Now that you know the different levels of dress, here's the breakdown of what to wear in various professional settings.

<u>Event</u>	<u>Level of Dress</u>
<b>Job/Internship Fairs</b>	<p>Business professional!</p> <p>This is your chance to make a good first impression with employers. Showing up in khakis or jeans shows that you may not know how to be professional or take your work seriously.</p>
<b>Networking Events</b>	<p>These types of events typically call for general professional or business professional attire. You can check with the organization coordinating the event for appropriate dress guidelines, but you are probably safe with general professional dress.</p>
<b>Interviews</b>	<p>Business professional is highly recommended for job interviews. This is true even for employers for which you would not have to wear suits for everyday work. See page 37 for more information on interview attire.</p>
<b>Internship</b>	<p>The level of dress you wear to your internship will depend on the organization. Check with your supervisor to determine whether you should wear business casual, general professional, or business professional.</p> <p>You will also get an idea of what current employees wear during your interview for the internship. Try to dress as professional as, or more than them. It is very important, especially as an intern, to prove your credibility and that can partially be accomplished through your attire.</p>
<b>Job</b>	<p>Similar to internship attire, the level of dress you wear to work will depend upon your employer. You can check with your supervisor about the dress code. Generally, you may wear clothes similar or more professional than your co-workers.</p>
<b>Professional Development Conferences</b>	<p>The attire worn at conferences varies depending on the organization. Conference announcements often reveal the dress code, or you can contact the organization coordinating the conference. If you are a presenter at the conference, you should wear general professional to business professional attire for your presentation and for events where you will be networking with attendees in your role as a presenter.</p>

## Professional Dress Tips

- **Invest in at least one high quality, well-fitted suit.** Between job interviews, job fairs, networking events, etc., you are going to need it. If buying multiple suits isn't an option, consider wearing different colored shirts (and ties for men) with the suit to change its appearance.
- **Good Grooming is ESSENTIAL!** Your personal hygiene and appearance contribute highly to first impressions. Things like bad breath, body odor, wrinkled clothing, dirty nails, unruly hair, etc., may make you appear sloppy, in general. They may also believe you are sloppy in your work and overall attitude as well.
- **Better Safe than Sorry.** It is better to dress more professionally than required than to under-dress.
- **Get a professional bag or briefcase.** This isn't required for all professions, of course, but it will affect your appearance if you carry a formal-looking black bag or briefcase as opposed to a floral patterned tote or tattered folder.
- **If you think your clothes might be too tight or revealing — they probably are.** Tight or revealing clothing is not professional and should always be avoided. Try on clothes in advance. Make sure you have time to change your mind and find another outfit before the day of your event or interview.
- **Wear comfortable shoes.** If you stand for two hours at a networking event or walk around a job fair for an hour, you will want to make sure your feet aren't aching after 10 minutes. Some interviews also involve a tour of a facility or office building. You will want to be able to focus on the interview and networking instead of hurting feet. If you purchase new shoes for an interview or event, wear them at least once prior to the event and "break them in."
- **Use cologne/perfume sparingly in a work setting.**
- **Loud colors and styles of clothing can be distracting.**

### Ladies:

- Avoid too much makeup, jewelry, and accessories.
- Avoid high heels that are more than 2–3" tall.
- Beware of gaping button-up shirts. Try on clothes before an event. Wear a camisole if necessary.

### Men:

- Facial hair should be neat and trimmed.
- Some jobs/industries do not allow any facial hair. If in doubt, check with the HR department before your interview.
- Do not wear ties or pants that are too short.
- Wear dark colored socks that reach mid-calf with dress shoes.

**The goal is to be noticed  
because of your achievements  
and what you have to offer as an  
employee.**

**Take a little extra time to get  
your clothing right so employers  
can focus on you without  
distracting wardrobe issues  
getting in the way.**



# Networking

## Networking

### What is Networking?

Networking is the process of developing professional relationships. These relationships allow you to get to know people who can help you with your career needs while also getting yourself known. This is a strategy that takes time and effort, but the results are worth the investment.

### Why should I do it?

#### ✦ **Networking is the most effective job search method!**

Studies show that as much as 85% of jobs are found through some form of networking. Networking gets you outside of your present circle and in touch with people who may be able to help you tap into new opportunities.

#### ✦ **People who make contacts through networking have a better success rate** because employers are more likely to hire them through personal referral rather than a blind contact.

#### ✦ **Note:** Even though someone may not be employed in the field that you are specifically interested in, they may know someone who is. They may have some valuable life experience to share with you as well.

### Why would anyone want to network with me?

#### ✦ **People like to help people**, especially by talking about themselves, their jobs, and contacts. and you may be able to help them in some way—if not now, perhaps in the future. **Just remember, you are asking for information when you network, not a job.** Keep in mind that networking often eventually leads to job opportunities.

### Reasons to Network

- To explore career options
- To get information about a career field, industry, or organization
- to discover job opportunities

- To get to know people in your chosen field or industry
- To let people know who you are and what you want to do

### How Do I Get Started?

Before you contact anyone, think about why you are contacting them and what you want to say. Are you looking for information about different careers so you can choose your career path? Are you looking for people working in a specific company or career field to find job opportunities?

When you have a clear idea of your purpose, you will be able to develop an effective message about who you are and what you want to accomplish. Make sure you clearly tell everyone you speak with what information you are looking for and how they can help you. You may want to begin by sending an email to introduce yourself, then follow up with a phone call.

### Who Can I Contact?

*Anyone you know or can get to know!* Potential networking contacts include:

- Family
- Faculty and staff at Howard Payne University
- Classmates
- Friends and Neighbors
- Current and past employers
- Internship supervisors
- Alumni
- Members of professional associations
- Local business owners and professionals

Keep in mind that some of these contacts may be able to help you directly. Others may be able to refer you to someone else who can help. As you talk to more people, you will discover more opportunities.

### **What do I say?**

Start with an introductory email. In the email, introduce yourself in a clear and concise way and then quickly let the person know why you are contacting him or her. If someone referred you, use that individual's name in your introduction. In an introductory email **DO NOT** ask if they have jobs/internships, and **DO NOT** attach your résumé. If you want maximum impact, you must first establish a relationship with this person.

Ideally, you want to arrange a time to meet with the person directly (or by phone or email, depending on the circumstances) so you can ask them detailed questions and gain useful information.

### **Example Introduction:**

“Mr. Smith, my name is Jane Student and I am a classmate of your daughter, Susan. She suggested I contact you. I am considering public relations as a career and I am trying to learn more about the field and the type of opportunities that are available. Susan told me that you work for the public relations firm of Lynnfield and Jones and have a great deal of experience in PR. I would like to sit down with you and talk at your convenience to get your advice. Thank you for your time and I look forward to hearing from you.”

**CAUTION:** *Be prepared to ask your questions when you call. They may want to talk right away.*

### **Informational Interviewing**

A specific networking technique called informational interviewing gives you the chance to find out about career paths and job opportunities while developing contacts with key people and learning to sell your skills in a non-threatening environment.

#### **Steps to a successful informational interview:**

- Prepare your questions and a brief introduction of yourself in advance.
- Dress professionally and take copies of your résumé, your list of questions, and any other materials you may want to present
- *Turn off* your cell phone before the interview
- Maintain good posture and eye contact
- Take notes during the meeting
- Be attentive and enthusiastic
- End on time
- Ask for other contacts they can recommend.
- Thank the contact for his/her time and information
- Follow up with a thank you note within 24 hours.

### **What Do I Ask?**

Here is a list of sample questions to get you started.

#### **Personal Background:**

- Before graduation, what did you think your career was going to be?
- How did you get into this type of work?
- Could you describe the progression of your career?

#### **Preparation:**

- What credentials, education degrees, licenses, etc. are required for entry into this kind of work?
- What kind of prior experiences are absolutely essential?
- How did you prepare yourself for this work?

### **Present Job:**

- What is a typical day/week like for you?
- What skills or talents are essential for effectiveness in this job?
- What are the toughest problems/decisions you must deal with?
- What do you find most rewarding about the work itself?
- What do you like least about it?

### **Hiring Decisions:**

- If you were to hire someone to work with you today, what factors would be most important in your hiring decisions and why?
- If I became an applicant for this type of work, who should I contact in your organization or in another firm?

### **Supply and Demand:**

- How do people find out about jobs in your agency (company, division, etc.)?
- What types of employers hire people in your line of work? Where are they located?
- Is turnover high? Do people normally move to other companies, or do they move up within the company?

### **Life-Style:**

- What type of life-style do people in your position lead?
- What obligation does your work place upon you outside of the ordinary work week?
- How many hours do you work in the average week?
- How much flexibility do you have in terms of dress, hours of work, vacation, schedule, etc.?

Shadow a Professional  
Take advantage of your  
break by shadowing a  
professional in a field of  
interest.

### **Career Future:**

- Where do you see yourself in five years?
- What other kinds of work do you feel that you could do?
- What sorts of changes are occurring in your field?

### **Professional Development:**

- Where are the best programs of advanced study? Formal degree programs, corporate training programs, continued education?
- What are the professional journals in your field? Which ones do you recommend?
- What forms of professional development are offered through your company?

### **Advice to Job Seekers:**

- What kinds of experience, paid employment and otherwise would you most strongly recommend?
- If you had to do it all over again, what would you do differently?
- Where would you recommend I look for work in this field?
- What would be your advice to individuals preparing for this type of work?
- Can you suggest anyone else whom I could contact for additional information? May I have permission to use your name when I call or contact them?

## Intentional Networking

Here are just a few additional ways you can build your personal career network:

- **Attend career events**—These events are tailor-made for networking. Don't let these valuable opportunities slip past you.
- **Get Involved**—Organizations are a great way to get to know others and let them get to know you.
- **Contact HPU Alumni**—Alumni are a great resource and are always glad to talk to students from their alma mater! Contact them through the Office of Alumni Relations.
- **Join Professional Organizations**—These groups often provide networking opportunities, ideas for best practice in your field, relevant resources, and job postings.

## Hints for Successful Informational Interviews

### Before the Interview:

- **Begin networking early.** Don't wait until your senior year. In fact, those seeking a major may want to start networking to help make a more informed decision.
- Remember, you will be **meeting primarily to gather up-to-date information** about an area of interest. You are NOT asking the person for a job.
- **Always make an appointment.** This puts your conversation in a professional context and helps reduce interruptions.
- **Prepare for interviews in advance** by doing research on the field, company, etc. Prepare questions in advance so you are ready.
- **Learn the names of your contacts.** Be sure to use the names of contacts in conversations and correspondence.

### During the Interview:

- **Dress professionally** and take copies of your résumé, your list of questions, and any other materials you may want to present.
- Be prepared to **take the lead in the conversation.** Remember, *you* are the interviewer in this situation.
- Maintain **good posture** and **eye contact.**
- **Take notes.**
- **Respect the person's time.** Plan a reasonable agenda. A half hour is considered reasonable.
- **Be attentive and enthusiastic.**
- **Turn off your phone** and *do not check it* for email, texts, tweets, etc. during the interview. Doing so indicates that you are not fully engaged in the interview and are wasting the person's time.
- **Use caution when name dropping.** Don't name drop with employers unless you really know the person and have permission to use their name as a referral source.
- Ask for other contacts they can recommend.

### After the Interview:

- Be sure to **send a thank you letter** following each interview.
- **Make sure you follow through** with any commitments you made during the meeting (or after).
- **Always reciprocate.** When asked for help from others, be prepared to return the favor.
- **Keep supporters informed** of your progress and successes.
- **Keep in touch with your contacts.** Inform them of job interviews and offers.



# Professional Etiquette

Communicating with peers, faculty, and staff at college, supervisors and colleagues at internships or jobs, or the general public is something you do every day. Understanding communication etiquette can help you become a more professional member of Howard Payne University and society. Here are some basic tips for effective professional communication.

## First Impressions

Good grooming is essential since a person's first impression of you is your appearance.

Appropriate attire is also essential and can leave a lasting impression. See page 26 for more information about professional attire.

Some people may be offended by piercings and tattoos. If in doubt, cover them.

## Handshakes

- Always have a firm handshake. A floppy or half-handshake portrays lack of confidence. Too firm a handshake can be perceived as aggressive.
- Maintain eye contact and smile while shaking hands. This reinforces your confidence and friendliness.
- Introduce yourself and say, "it's nice to meet you."

## Mind Your Manners

- Remember the basics: say please and thank you, use Mr., Ms, or Dr. when addressing people, open doors for others, etc.

## Social Etiquette

- Be sociable but avoid gossip and controversial issues such as religion, politics, etc.
- Be prepared to talk about current events or issues — especially if you are at a networking event.
- Do not show up late to appointments or be a no-show.
- Ask questions and show sincere interest.
- Politely excuse yourself if you must leave a conversation.



## Email Etiquette

- Use a professional-sounding email address. Your school email is fine unless you are about to graduate. HPU deletes email accounts after students graduate so you may want to get another account that will not expire.
- Think of professional email as an electronic business letter.
- Use proper spelling, grammar, and punctuation.
- Use professional tone and language in the body of the email AND the subject line.
- ALWAYS include a subject line that gives the reader an idea of the content of your message. This will help prevent your message from being deleted or sent to a junk mail folder.
- Address superiors and those you might not know as Mr., Ms., Dr., or Professor unless they have made it obvious that it is acceptable to address them in a more informal manner.
- DO NOT use emoticons, slang, or abbreviated words.
- Proofread all emails before sending them out.

## Social Networking

- You can create a professional online presence using LinkedIn.com.
- Keep in mind that some employers screen candidates using sites like Facebook, Twitter, etc. Make sure your online profiles are appropriate.
- If you have the option, you may want to set your social networking profiles to private.

## Phone Etiquette

- Know who you want to talk to and what you want to say before placing a call.
- Identify yourself and why you are calling when you place a call.
- Use a welcoming tone. It also sometimes helps to smile while you are talking.
- Be polite. How you treat the caller will determine their impression of you.
- If you receive a phone message, return the call within 24 hours.
- Do not chew gum or eat while talking on the phone.
- Excuse yourself for a minute if you have to sneeze, cough, or blow your nose.



## Cell Phone Etiquette

- Do NOT text or talk on your cell while in a meeting or appointment. This is rude and sends the message that the person on your cell is more important to you than the person meeting with you.
- Turn your ringer off when in class, at a job interview, in a meeting, etc.
- Make sure your voicemail message is professional and avoid ring back tones.

## Dining Etiquette

- Wait until your host begins eating to start eating.
- When passing a dish or condiment, always offer it to everyone else first, and pass to the right.
- Chew with your mouth closed and do not talk with food in your mouth.
- If you must leave the table, politely excuse yourself and place your napkin on your chair.
- For more dining etiquette tips, visit:  
[www.diningetiquette.org](http://www.diningetiquette.org)



Did you know that about 85% of jobs are not posted and you have to network to find them?

# Successful Interviewing

The interview is your opportunity to match your individual talents and interests to the needs of the employer. Your goal in the interview is not merely to convince the employer you are the person for the job. You should also use the interview to acquire insight and information which will assist you in evaluating whether this is the position for you. Throughout the exchange of information that takes place, the interviewer is looking for an answer to the question, “Why should I hire you?” It is important that your responses to his or her questions focus on answering that question.

Preparing for the interview is almost as important as the interview itself. The key to successful interviewing is knowing who you are and knowing the organization with which you are interviewing. To prepare for any interview, you should:

1. Do a self-evaluation.
2. Research the organization.
3. Prepare responses to questions you might be asked and review questions you can ask the interviewer.

## Self Evaluation

In order to articulate your qualifications for the job, you must have a clear understanding of what you have to offer an employer and what you are seeking in a position. To begin your self-evaluation, assess your skills, interests, and values. Define these in relation to your career interests by prioritizing them according to their importance to you. Your list should include, but not be limited to: what you like to do in your spare time, work experiences you have enjoyed, successes you have had in school or in jobs you have held, the types of people with whom you enjoy working, the work environment you prefer, and how much value you place on monetary rewards.

Once you have gathered this information, apply it to what you know about the career field you plan to enter. Are there any obvious discrepancies between what you do well, what you like to do, and what is important to you and expectations for the type of position you are seeking? If so, before the interview is the time to deal with these differences. Career Services can help you with the evaluation process and even guide you to some career assessment tools that you may find helpful in identifying these key qualities about yourself and

putting them into a career perspective.

If you have not already done so, carefully prepare a statement of your short-range career objective. Be prepared to discuss this objective as it relates to what you know about yourself, to the job for which you are interviewing, and to your future career goals.

As you proceed through your interviews, you will find many of the questions you are asked relate to how well you can assess yourself - skills, interests, strengths, weaknesses, and experiences you have had. Spending a little time at the beginning of your job search to evaluate these factors will pay off later.

## Research

It is important to research the company, industry, organization, or school prior to the interview. You should acquire as much information as possible about the prospective employer. Such research should be aimed at understanding the organization and the position for which you are applying. This will enable you to ask intelligent questions and to emphasize your assets during the actual interview. Career Services staff can help you locate information about specific career fields and employers.

The following resources will also help you in your search:

- The company’s/organization’s website.
- Company brochures (annual reports and recruiting brochures).
- Standard and Poor’s Register ([www.standardandpoors.com](http://www.standardandpoors.com))
- Hoover’s Handbook of American Companies.
- Business magazines that profile small and large companies. For example; Forbes, Fast Company, Business Week.
- Quintessential Careers [www.quintcareers.com](http://www.quintcareers.com).
- Company profile websites such as [www.manta.com](http://www.manta.com).

In addition to the Career Services office and online resources, you may write to the organization itself for information and/or talk with current or former employees. If news about the organization has appeared in recent business publications it will be helpful for you to be informed of this prior to the interview.

## Job Interviewing General Tips

- Visit the location of the interview ahead of time if possible so you can plan your travel needs accordingly.
- Arrive at an interview 10 minutes early.
- If for some reason you are running late for an interview, call the organization.
- Do not smoke before an interview.
- DO NOT chew gum. (Small mints are okay!)
- Turn off your cell phone or simply do not bring it into the interview at all.
- Be friendly with everyone you meet at the organization.
- Greet your interviewers formally (ex. Mr. Jones or Dr. Smith).
- Ask someone ahead of time if you are unsure how to pronounce an interviewer's name or if you are unsure of their professional title (ex. Mr./Dr.).
- Offer a firm handshake.
- Maintain good posture and eye contact.
- Be sure to smile.
- Demonstrate self-confidence and positive energy but do not be overly confident.
- Speak loudly enough for everyone in the interview to hear you and clearly enunciate your words.
- Avoid slang and pause words such as "um", "like", "know what I mean", etc. Do not bring up controversial issues or personal/family problems, or tell jokes.
- Do not give simple yes or no answers; elaborate and **give examples** whenever possible.
- Do not lie or exaggerate your abilities or experiences.
- Do not speak negatively about past employers or colleagues.
- Show appropriate interest- do not appear desperate for the job.
- Feel free to **take notes** during and after the interview so you remember details.
- At the end, show your appreciation for being interviewed and **ask what the next steps are.**
- Get business cards from each interviewer.
- Write **thank you letters** or emails to each interviewer within 24 hours.



## Things to Take to the Interview

Many students spend time preparing for their interview, think about what they are going to wear, and practice interview questions; but have you thought about what you should take with you to an interview? Here is a short checklist:

- Directions to the interview, parking
- Instructions and the phone number
- Portfolio/pad-folio, paper and pen
- Extra résumés
- Sample work or professional portfolio
- List of questions for the interviewer
- List of references
- Mints
- Bottled water
- Professional bag, tote or briefcase
- Positive attitude and a smile!

## Interview Attire

Your first impression during a job interview is based on your overall appearance. Choose clothes that project an image appropriate to the position you want. Do some research to learn the company's standards; then dress as though you were representing them. Neatness counts. Make sure you check for missing buttons, tiny rips in your clothing, or run down heels. People equate how neatly you dress with how neatly you work.

In the traditional business world, conservative suits in neutral colors (black, gray, navy, etc) are the unofficial uniform. In a creative field, more casual and colorful clothing may be acceptable. Be aware of how people in your chosen field typically dress and choose accordingly. When in doubt, dress on the conservative side.

### MEN'S ATTIRE

- Solid-colored suits are best: medium to dark blue, black, gray, and subtle pinstripes work well.
- Wear a good quality necktie with a conservative pattern.
- Clean, polished dark dress shoes (brown or black) and dark socks are a must; no boots.
- Hair should be clean, neat and relatively short. Be prepared to get your hair cut at least a week in advance so you and your hair can get used to the cut.
- Beards and mustaches are acceptable only if they are fully grown-in and neatly groomed.
- Make sure your hands and nails are clean.
- Men should not wear earrings to an interview.
- Limit jewelry to a watch and/or wedding band.
- Your clothes should fit well and be pressed.
- Do not wear a strong-scented cologne or aftershave.



## WOMEN'S ATTIRE

- Neutral colors are best; black, blues, grays and beiges. Pastels do not look professional.
- Skirts should be knee length or below. If you are going to wear a skirt that is shorter, be sure to sit down while trying it on. Most skirts will “ride” up, so you want to make sure that a skirt that looks presentable while you are standing, doesn't suddenly shrink when you are asked to have a seat.
- Avoid clothes that are too tight or revealing.
- Make sure your button-down shirt doesn't gap between buttons when you sit down.
- Avoid blouses, shirts, etc. that have excessive ruffles and bows.
- Always wear stockings, even on a scorching summer day. Bare legs are not acceptable. It's a good idea to bring a spare pair in case you get a run.
- Stockings should be opaque in flesh tone or neutral colors. Brightly colored or textured hose detract from a professional appearance.
- Hairstyles should be clean and neat. There is no one appropriate length; however, if your hair is long make sure to wear it in such a way that you do not have to constantly pull it away from your face.
- Professional shoes are a must. Closed toe and low heels are suggested; boots should be avoided altogether.
- Nails should be clean and neat. Light-colored polish may be acceptable, but clear polish is preferred.
- Do not wear excessive jewelry or anything that dangles or clinks. Only wear two earrings to the interview, and stick with the classics - gold, silver or pearl.
- Use make-up that enhances your features but does not overpower them. Avoid very dark or very bright colors.
- Do not use strong perfumes that will overpower your interviewer; stick to a light scent or none at all.

## COMMONLY ASKED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

There are a number of questions commonly asked by interviewers during an initial employment interview. By being aware of some of these questions and by considering your responses, you will be better prepared to offer well thought-out and concise replies. This will also help you and the interviewer feel more at ease and will facilitate the interviewing process.

To assist you in preparing for your interview, we have listed some common interview questions. It is best to think in terms of why the recruiter is asking the following questions:

□ **What are your career plans?** The interviewer really wants to know how your future plans relate to those of the organization. This question also allows the interviewer to assess whether this job fits your short range goals and your future career goal. Try to emphasize how you will contribute to the company as part of your plan.

□ **Why are you interested in our organization?** In asking this question, the employer is hoping to determine how much research you have done about the organization. You must be able to articulate career plans which are compatible with the organization with which you are interviewing. Discuss what you have learned in researching the organization. Prove your interest.

□ **How did you choose your major and/or your college?** This question gives the employer a chance to assess your decision making process. You should stress the thought and research that went into making your decision. The employer is interested in how you conducted this research as well as the end result.

□ **Tell me about yourself.** The employer will want enough information about you as a person to enable him/her to make a comparison of profiles of successful company employees. She/he also wants to know what motivates you, how you will work with others, your enthusiasm, drive, and other JOB-RELATED traits. Be sure to stress the positive attributes, and confine your answer to career-related information.

□ **What are your greatest strengths?** This question enables the employer to determine what your self image is. Concentrate on strengths related to the work environment. Here is your opportunity to prove that you have the most important strength required for the position. Point out all the strengths you have acquired through

your past jobs and campus/community activities. You need to be able to relate these strengths to the employer's needs, so give this careful consideration.

□ **What are your main weaknesses?** Briefly mention a weakness which you have overcome or are in the process of overcoming. Do not dwell on negatives and avoid mention of a weakness which might be debilitating in the position for which you are being considered. An example of an appropriate response would be "being organized hasn't always been my strongest trait, but I have implemented a calendar and folder system that really helps."

□ **Behavior-based questions.** The employer is looking for you to tell a story and provide examples when a behavior-based question is asked. This type of question typically begins with "Tell me about a time when..." An easy way to craft your answer is to use the STAR Method: describe the Situation, the Task or goal, what Action you took, and the Result. Be careful your answers aren't too long; keep them to about 1 or 2 minutes.

## QUESTIONS FOR INTERVIEW PREPARATION

1. What are your long range career goals, when and why did you establish these goals, and how are you preparing yourself to achieve them?
2. What specific goals, other than those related to your occupation, have you established for your-self for the next ten years?
3. Why are you interested in working for our organization?
4. What are the most important rewards you expect in your career?
5. What are your greatest strengths?
6. How would you describe yourself?
7. How do you like to spend your free time?
8. How did your college experience prepare you for a career?
9. What books, magazines, newspapers, or journals do you read?
10. Why should I hire you?
11. What qualifications do you have that make you think you will be successful?
12. Why do you think you would like this particular job?
13. In what ways do you think that you can make a contribution to our company?
14. What do you think determines a person's progress in an organization?
15. Describe the relationship that should exist between a supervisor and subordinates.

16. What two or three accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction and why?
17. Do you feel that you have the best scholastic record of which you are capable?
18. Why did you choose your field of study?
19. If you could do so, how would you plan your academic study differently? Why?
20. Describe your most rewarding (college) experience?
21. Do you have plans for continued study? An advanced degree?
22. What have you learned from participation in extracurricular activities?
23. In what kind of work environment are you most comfortable?
24. May we contact your previous employers for reference information?
25. What characteristics do you think are necessary for success in this field?
26. What two or three things are most important to you in your job?
27. Describe what you consider to be the ideal job.
28. Do you prefer working by yourself or with others?
29. What have you done that shows initiative or willingness to work?
30. What criteria are you using to evaluate the company for which you hope to work?
31. What kind of supervisor do you prefer? What kind of colleagues do you prefer to work with?
32. Do you have a geographic preference? What is it? Why?
33. What salary expectations do you have for this position?
34. Tell me about a time when you worked successfully in a team.
35. What do you know about our company?
36. How do you feel about travel?
37. What major problem have you encountered and how did you deal with it?
38. What type of person do you find most difficult to deal with?
39. What have you learned from your mistakes?
40. What have you learned from other jobs that you have held?
41. Tell me about yourself.
42. What motivates you on the job?
43. What has been your most creative project?
44. What was the most embarrassing thing that has ever happened to you?
45. What is your greatest weakness?

**Please Note:** It is not always easy to accentuate the positive without appearing boastful. By focusing on factual answers in a sincere manner, you can avoid the appearance of conceit.

This list is not comprehensive. Many other types of questions can and will be asked. Your knowledge of yourself, the company, your preparation and your verbal abilities will help you to respond more effectively.

## HANDLING INAPPROPRIATE QUESTIONS

It is not appropriate for the interviewer to ask personal questions unrelated to the qualifications of the job for which you are interviewing. Such inappropriate (illegal) questions could include: "What does your spouse do?", "Will being married or having children interfere with your ability to travel and relocate?", "Are you planning on getting married (having children) soon?". There are many more examples of discriminatory questions. Every candidate needs to make a personal decision on how to respond to these inquiries. There are three ways to answer an illegal question:

1. Alert the interviewer to an illegal question.
2. Simply answer the illegal question.
3. Determine the underlying concern and address it in your answer. For example: Are you planning on having (or do you already have) children? The underlying concern could be your ability to perform certain aspects of the position, such as traveling. Your response should address this concern. "I understand there is a significant amount of travel required for this position and my personal life shall not interfere with my ability to perform all aspects of this position effectively."

Regardless of the method you choose, this situation should be handled tactfully and politely. However, if you feel that there was discrimination and you were turned down for a job based upon your response to an illegal question, the necessary legal steps can be taken after the interview. It will then be up to the interviewer to prove that discrimination did not take place.

## QUESTIONS TO ASK AT AN INTERVIEW

At some point in the interview, the interviewer will ask if you have any questions. You should have some prepared in advance so that you will not be taken by surprise. Avoid asking questions to which you would know the answer if you had read the company's materials or questions that are very technical in nature.

The interview is a two-way exchange of information. Questions that you might ask the interviewer are as equally important in this encounter as those you answer. You need to learn as much as you can about the position and the organization for which you might work.

It is best to avoid asking about salary or benefits during the first interview. If you absolutely must know the salary, ask in terms of a range you might expect. Most employers view excessive interest in financial matters to be inappropriate in the first contact.

Here are some sample questions you may want to ask in addition to any specific questions you have about the job description:

1. How would you describe the work environment?
2. What are the characteristics of a successful person in your organization?
3. How would you describe the organization's personality and management style?
4. What are your expectations for new hires?
5. What are the typical first year assignments.
6. What is the overall structure of the department where the position is located.?
7. What are the company's strengths and weaknesses?
8. What do you like most about the organization for which you work? What do you like least?
9. Would you describe your training program for me? ...OR... What type of training will I receive? (If you are applying for a management trainee position, you should have covered this in your research and need not ask unless you want more detailed information.)
10. How would you describe the differences between your organization and others similar to it?
11. What are your organization's promotion policies?
12. How is an employee evaluated and promoted?

13. If I were to accept this position, what would be my opportunity for advancement or personal growth?

14. What is the retention rate of people in the position for which I am interviewing?

15. What are your policies or expectations regarding continuing education for your employees?

16. What are the challenging facets of the job?

17. What are the toughest problems/decisions that the person in this position will have to deal with?

18. What are the organization's plans for future growth?

19. What industry trends will affect this company?

20. How is this firm stronger than the competition?

## FOLLOW UP

Immediately following an interview you should send a thank you letter or e-mail to each person who interviewed you (within 24 hours is best). Thank you letters are considered a professional courtesy; use them to show your appreciation as well as make additional positive impressions on the interviewers. Letters may be sent via email or by U.S. mail. With this mind, be aware the employers can receive dozens of emails a day. A neatly handwritten note can demonstrate extra effort and help you to stand out.

### WHAT TO INCLUDE

The opening remark should show your appreciation for being interviewed. Include the position for which you interviewed and the date of the interview.

Mention something specific that person brought up in the interview; making individualized connections shows that you were paying attention and are interested in what that person says.

Restate your interest in the position and confidence in your ability to do the job. Mention specific skills or experiences that are a good fit.

Include any information that was requested at the interview and offer to provide additional information if needed.

**Contact Career Services to schedule a mock interview to practice your interview skills.**

## Sample Follow-Up Letter

45 Franklin St.  
Watkins Glen, NY 14891

May 26, 2010

Ms. Jane Doe  
Director of Personnel  
XYZ Company  
123 Seneca St.  
Anytown, TX 12345

Dear Ms. Doe:

Thank you for taking the time to interview me yesterday for the Project Coordinator position. Our conversations confirmed to me that this job is exactly the type of quality experience in which I am interested.

I was especially impressed to learn that the Project Coordinator plays a significant role in working with outside constituents. As I mentioned in our interview, I have extensive experience in communicating with various departments and community members. My interpersonal skills would be of benefit to you in creating and developing relationships with clients outside of the organization.

I would like to express my sincere interest in working for XYZ Company. If there is any further information you would find helpful in making a decision regarding my employment, please feel free to contact me at (607) 123-4567. I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Sincerely,

*Your Signature Here*

Suzie Sample

# Salary Negotiation

Salary negotiation is the process in which you tactfully and professionally discuss your pay during the final stages of the application/hiring process. It can be a tricky process to navigate, so read these tips before approaching an employer with particular salary or benefit requests:

## **Avoid Salary Talk Until You've Been Offered the Position.**

You have more bargaining power if you are the final candidate. If salary comes up earlier in the interviewing process, try to avoid giving specific numbers. For example, you could say something like, "I would hope for a competitive salary for this area and job title that also matches my experience, ability, and passion for helping people."

## **Research!**

Before you do anything else, research average salaries for particular job titles and geographic locations. A couple of salary research sites include [www.salary.com](http://www.salary.com) and [www.payscale.com](http://www.payscale.com).

## **Use Your Experience**

The more experience you have, the more bargaining power you have. During salary negotiations, be ready to emphasize your related employment, internship, volunteer, and extracurricular experiences. Also, consider transferable skills that you've gained in unrelated experience (ex. leadership, interpersonal, budgeting, or technology skills).

## **Be Realistic**

Approach negotiations with a realistic salary expectation, not your ultimate salary goal. Also, if you are an entry level candidate, you cannot expect to start out with the same salary as someone who has been in the field for 10+ years.

## **Leave Personal Reasons Out**

When determining suitable salaries, employers do not take into consideration that you have student loans to pay off, a car payment, five kids to feed, a mortgage... you get the picture. Stick to professional, positive reasons why you are worth the negotiated salary.

## **Prepare Your Pitch**

It is vital to be prepared for a salary negotiation conversation. You've got to sell yourself, be realistic, and show that you've done your research. For example, you might be prepared with something like, "I've researched average salaries for entry level marketing assistants in this region and discovered that they fall between \$36,000 and \$39,000. Based on my employment and internship experiences that we've discussed, in addition to my motivation and creativity, I was hoping for a salary in that range."

## **Be Prepared with a Minimum Expected Salary**

Go into salary negotiations with a minimum acceptable salary. And while this is a wise strategy to begin with, consider being flexible with the offered salary if additional benefits make the overall package worth it (see next bullet). The alternative is being prepared to walk away from a job offer.

## **Consider ALL Benefits**

*A benefits package not only includes your salary, but your time off, medical insurance, retirement options, and work/life balance (employer flexibility).* Salary negotiation can involve some of these other kinds of benefits such as relocation assistance, vacation days, bonuses, and performance raises. Also consider potential professional development opportunities, trainings, education assistance, etc.

## **Be Prepared to Hear "No"**

It's possible that your request for increased salary or other benefits gets rejected. Many companies have strict salary policies or salary caps, so there truly might not be any flexibility with your salary.

## **Get it in Writing**

After you've been offered a position, especially if you were able to negotiate a higher salary, ask the employer for an acceptance letter.

**Take the Chance!** You'll never know if you don't ask! Many people are excited to have a job offer and eager to accept, but you should take the time to ask if there is any room for negotiation regarding the salary.

# Graduate School Decisions

## SHOULD I GO TO GRADUATE SCHOOL?

Should I go to graduate school right away or wait awhile and then apply? How do I decide which school is best for me?

These are probably two of the most frequently asked questions people present to us. The answer is a personal one for each of you. Graduate education can increase earning potential as well as provide the specialized training required to enter numerous professional areas, but it is not for everyone. Before deciding on a graduate program, self-assessment is essential. Clear goals and objectives are imperative. Consider these factors when deciding whether or when to attend graduate school:

**GOALS:** How defined are your goals? Have you talked with people in your field to explore what you might be doing after graduate school?

**EXPERIENCE:** Do you have any "hands-on" experience? Have you completed an internship or worked in your chosen field? Related work is recommended prior to graduate school to enable you to gain experience and understanding of your field.

**EMPLOYABILITY:** What is the probability of finding employment in the field with and without an advanced degree? Is the additional schooling essential to your entry into the field?

**OPPORTUNITY:** Do you truly understand what you will gain by pursuing an advanced degree? Have you compared your expectations of what graduate school will do for you with what it has done for alumni of the graduate program?

**HOMEWORK:** Are you excited by the idea of studying the particular field you have in mind? Do you like intensive study?

**MOTIVATION:** Are you simply looking for a way to put off career decisions, the job search, and adult responsibilities?

**PREPARATION:** You generally need a solid grade point average (B or 3.00) or a series of prerequisite classes before entering graduate school. Are you prepared? What graduate entrance exams are needed? Are your scores competitive?

**COST:** Calculate the academic and personal expenses of another degree. Can you afford this? Have you identified ways to finance such a decision? Also, consider the cost of deferred income for this period. How much potential income will you lose now and in

the future by delaying your entry to the workforce?

Adapted from The Bagley Center, Plymouth State College <http://www.plymouth.edu/career/gradindex.html>

## CHOOSING A SPECIALIZATION AND RESEARCHING PROGRAMS

Will the graduate program have what you are looking for? Does a particular program provide you the professional development opportunities you want? How will a specific program enhance your future career possibilities? Use this list of questions to assist you in that evaluation process.

### PROGRAM FEATURES

- How flexible is the program? Are there opportunities to take elective courses?
- Can you minor in an area of key importance to you?
- Does the program offer opportunities for practical experience?
- What is the emphasis of the program? Is it on practice or research?
- Is the program in a geographic area you like (urban/rural/ size/ etc.)?
- What is the average time to complete the (1) class work, (2) research, and (3) dissertation?

### FACULTY

- What is the student-faculty ratio?
- What is the background/reputation of the faculty who teach in the program?
- Are there faculty members with research areas similar to your interests?
- How accessible and available are the faculty to students?
- How are advisors assigned?
- What is the faculty turnover rate?

### FINANCIAL AID

- What are the criteria and process for selecting Teaching Assistants (TAs), Graduate Assistants (GAs), Resident Assistants (RAs), Research Assistants (REs), and Fellows?
- How reliable is your financial support from year to year?
- Is this process coordinated by the program or the graduate admissions office?

## STUDENTS

- Will you have a good sized cohort?
- Is the student body diverse geographically, socially, economically?
- What is the ratio of full-time and part-time students in the program?
- Is the retention rate good? Do most students who begin the program finish completely?
- Are there organizations for students and opportunities to socialize outside of class?
- May I meet some currently enrolled students (either in person or via e-mail)?

## FACILITIES

- How comprehensive are the labs and other learning facilities?
- How current, diverse, and expansive are library holdings in your program and research area?
- Are there specialized research facilities available for graduate student use?

## PLACEMENT

- What types of positions do graduates of the program secure after graduation?
  - Where are these positions typically geographically?
  - What is the placement rate for new graduates within the first year after graduation?
  - How helpful is the program in helping you to secure employment? What services are available?
- Adapted from Career Services and Leadership Education Office, St. Lawrence University, 2003.*

## ADDITIONAL APPLICATION CONSIDERATIONS

### APPLICATION FORMS AND INFORMATION

- Many applications are now available on-line or through a simple email request.
- Confirm application deadlines; pay particular attention to rolling or modified-rolling admissions.
- Follow instructions carefully and accurately while completing all requested information.
- Tailor your communications to the specific aspects of the graduate program.
- Complete forms online, or if it must be handwritten, use a pen, keeping in mind that a neat and attractive appearance is important.

- Include **all** requested documents and materials: résumé, fees, personal statement, writing sample, etc.
- Always make copies for your records before sending.
- Contact the graduate admissions office to confirm that all of your application materials have been received.

## MEETING APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Requirements vary from one field to another and from one institution to another. Read each program's requirements carefully; the importance of this cannot be overemphasized!

## TRANSCRIPTS

In regard to academics, grade point averages are important but are not examined in isolation; the rigor of the courses you have taken, your course load, and the reputation of the undergraduate institution you have attended are also considered.

To obtain an official copy of your transcript, contact the Registrar's Office at 325-649-8011 or online at <http://www.hputx.edu/s/668/howardpayne.aspx?sid=668&gid=1&pgid=1166>

Allow the Registrar's Office several working days to process your transcripts for graduate school referral. If you are a transfer student, be sure to check with each graduate program to determine if you must also obtain transcripts directly from your previous institution(s) of study.

## RÉSUMÉS

A résumé is an important summary of the experiences and education that have prepared you for graduate school. It is also a statement of your professional interests and commitments to date. Be sure to include this with your application materials. If you need assistance developing your résumé, be sure to visit the Career Services Office.

## Graduate Entrance Exams

**GRADUATE RECORD EXAM (GRE)** is the most common entrance exam and provides admissions committees with a common evaluation criteria for all applicants. As a computer-adaptive test, the GRE is offered at designated test centers across the country. **The GRE test length, question content, and scoring scale has changed as of August 1, 2011. For detailed information on these changes visit [http://www.ets.org/gre/revised\\_general/know](http://www.ets.org/gre/revised_general/know).**

Each test includes the following: (1) Verbal Reasoning sections – two 30 minute sections; includes text completion, sentence equivalence, and reading comprehension; (2) Quantitative sections – two 35 minute sections; includes basic math skills and concepts such as algebra and geometry, word problems, and numeric entry questions; (3) Analytical Writing section – one 45 minute “present your perspective” essay and one 30 minute “analyze and argument” essay.

Some graduate programs may also request that you complete a Subject Test of the GRE. Topics may include: Biochemistry, Cell Biology, Molecular Biology and Genetics, Biology, Chemistry, Computer Science, Literature in English, Mathematics, Physics, Psychology. Subject tests are given on designated test Saturdays at colleges across the country. If you are hoping to enroll in graduate school the fall after you graduate, you should take the GRE before the end of November of your senior year. Information booklets for the GRE General and Subject Tests are available at Career Services.

**To register:** Students should visit [www.ets.org/gre/](http://www.ets.org/gre/) or call 1-800-GRE-CALL to schedule a test date; be sure to take the test well in advance of any application deadlines. August is not too early to schedule a November test!

### **GRADUATE MANAGEMENT ADMISSIONS TEST**

**(GMAT)** is the entrance exam required by most business schools across the country. Also a computer adaptive test, the GMAT is offered at test centers across the country.

**To register:** Students should visit [www.mba.com/mba/thegmat](http://www.mba.com/mba/thegmat) or call 1-800-GMAT-NOW to schedule a test date; be sure to take the test well in advance of any application deadlines.

The three sections of the GMAT include:

- (1) Verbal – 75 minutes; includes reading comprehension, sentence correction and critical reasoning;
- (2) Quantitative – 75 minutes; includes data sufficiency and problem solving;
- (3) Analytical Writing – 60 minutes; “Analysis of an Argument” essay – 30 minutes and “Analysis of an Issue” essay – 30 minutes.

**LAW SCHOOL ADMISSIONS TEST (LSAT)** is the entrance exam required by every law school across the country. Candidates are evaluated in four areas: Logic Games, Logical Reasoning, Reading Comprehension, and an Analytical Writing Sample. The exam is scored on a scale of 120 – 180. The multiple-choice sections may be given in any order, but the writing sample is always administered last. While applicants may take the exam in June, October, December or February of each year, it is recommended that you take the LSAT by December of your senior year.

**To register:** Registration for this exam is available online at [www.lsac.org](http://www.lsac.org).

### **MEDICAL COLLEGE ADMISSIONS TEST**

**(MCAT)** is required by nearly all US medical schools. This full day paper and pencil exam is offered each April and August and it is recommended that you take the exam in April of your junior year if you plan to attend medical school immediately following your HPU graduation. Applicants will be tested in four areas:

- (1) Physical Sciences – 100 minutes;
  - (2) Verbal Reasoning – 85 minutes;
  - (3) Writing Sample – 30 minutes;
  - (4) Biological Sciences – 100 minutes.
- Scores for each section range from 1 – 15 with the exception of the Writing Sample which is given a letter score.

**To register:** Registration is available online at [www.aamc.org](http://www.aamc.org).

## LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

Choosing people to write recommendations can be difficult, and most graduate schools require two or three letters. To begin the process of choosing references, identify likely candidates from among those you know through your classes, extracurricular activities, jobs, internships, and research experiences. Once identified, ask them if they can serve as a positive reference.

A good reference will meet several of the following criteria: he/she has a high opinion of you, knows institutions to which you are applying as well as the kind of study you are pursuing, has taught or worked with a large number of students and can make a favorable comparison of you with peers, is known by the admissions committee and is regarded as someone whose judgment should be given weight, and has strong written communication skills.

A note about confidential vs. non-confidential letters: Whether a letter is confidential or not is a decision made by **you**, the student. Confidential means you have waived your right to review what is written in that letter. Even after 10 years, if you ask to see this confidential letter, that request will be denied. Even if a prospective reference has a preference for the kind of letter s/he will write, this is ultimately your decision. Note: many schools require the confidential format and these letters tend to carry more “weight.”

### **GIVE THE WRITER:**

- A statement of your career goals, why you are interested in them, and how this graduate program will help you attain these goals.
- A list of activities that have supported this career/program choice (e.g. summer experience, research experience).
- Academic credentials-approximate grade point average, GRE scores, relevant course work and grades.
- Refresh the writer's memory about your experience with him/her (courses, etc.).
- Mention any facts that may support your case (you had mono when you got a "D" in Organic).
- A copy of your personal statement for graduate study.
- Extracurricular activities not directly relevant to your application.

An envelope stamped and addressed for each program. If a recommendation form is provided, enclose it in the envelope.

A list of all programs to which she/he is to write, **AND THE DEADLINES FOR EACH.** Plan ahead and ask for your recommendations well before the deadlines. In addition, you may need to follow up to insure that your recommendation letters have been sent.

A copy of your transcript.

## APPLICATION ESSAYS

An essay for an application, often referred to as a personal statement or statement of purpose, should essentially contain your interests and goals in relation to that particular program. Some institutions will pose specific questions, while others may instruct you to simply submit a personal statement. Usually it includes a certain amount of personal history, but, unless an institution specifically requests autobiographical information, you do not have to supply any. Your aim should be a clear, succinct statement showing that you have a definite sense of what you want to do and enthusiasm for the field of study you have chosen. The Career Services staff can assist you by critiquing your essay. Additionally, you should consider having your essays critiqued at the HPU Peer Tutoring Center (TAC 304). Don't underestimate the time needed to prepare an effective statement! Before writing anything, stop and consider what your reader might be looking for; the general directions or other parts of the application may give you an indication of this. Admissions committees may be trying to evaluate a number of things from your statement, including the following:

- Motivation and commitment to a field of study
- Expectations with regard to the program and career opportunities
- Writing ability
- Major areas of interest
- Research and/or work experience
- Educational background
- Immediate and long term goals
- Reasons for deciding to pursue graduate education in a particular field and at a particular institution
- Maturity
- Personal uniqueness-what you would add to the diversity of the entering class

If you are not given specific questions to answer, there are two main approaches to organizing an essay. You can outline the points you want to cover and then expand on them, or you can put your ideas down on paper as they come to you, going over them, eliminating certain sentences, and moving others around until you achieve a logical sequence. Use the approach you feel most comfortable with. Either way, you want your essay to be clear, specific, and detailed, yet concise.

Think of your responses in terms of how your background, skills, abilities, goals, etc. match the characteristics and opportunities of the graduate program. Additionally, recognize that this statement is an opportunity to demonstrate your written communication skills, motivation, energy level, creativity, commitment, and depth of response to the application questions. Most important, take the time to have others review your statement.

#### **ESSAY RESOURCES ON THE INTERNET**

**About Grad Schools** [<http://gradschool.about.com/msubessay.htm>]: An excellent and comprehensive list of web sites related to developing an effective essay for graduate admissions in a variety of fields.

**Admissions Essays** [<http://www.admissionsessays.com/>]: The premier personal statement development service on the Web. It provides all the necessary guidance to help clients produce memorable, striking, and effective personal statements and admissions essays to help them get into the schools of their choice. View sample essays from various academic disciplines.

**University of Wisconsin - Madison: Tips on Writing Application Essays** [<http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/apessay.html>]: Let these tips help you get started writing this all important aspect of your graduate school application.

### **FINANCING YOUR GRADUATE EDUCATION**

Most graduate students find it is necessary to draw upon several sources of financial assistance during their studies. There are three basic types: grants and fellowships, work programs, and loans. Funding sources to explore are: the federal government, state governments, educational institutions, foundations, corporations, etc. Unlike financial assistance awarded to undergraduate students, graduate students face a more selective and competitive scholarship process.

The more common awards include the following:

**1. Fellowships, Grants and Scholarships:** This is the most desirable type of financial assistance and therefore, the most competitive. Fellowships may be supported by the federal government, special interest groups, or within a given school. Check the graduate catalog for a complete listing of these programs. There are also a number of directories that can assist you with this search process, such as [www.finaid.org/otheraid/grad.phtml](http://www.finaid.org/otheraid/grad.phtml).

**2. Research Assistantship:** Typically these are coordinated directly by the graduate program and are extremely competitive; there is often a separate application process. In exchange for your work on someone's research project, you may be awarded tuition assistance or a living stipend. There is also potential that this work may count toward or help complete your thesis.

**3. Teaching Assistantship:** Also coordinated by the graduate program, this assistantship requires that you must teach something, usually a laboratory or first-year level course, in exchange for tuition assistance, living stipend or other award. Work expectations vary among departments, but 15 hours per week is usually required.

**4. Administrative/Professional Assistantships:** Similar to research and teaching assistantships, you work for the college in exchange for room, board, tuition assistance, and/or a stipend. There is typically a separate application process for these types of assistantships.

**5. Resident Assistantship:** If you have experience as a Resident Assistant, then this may be a viable strategy for you. Institutions may hire you as a resident assistant or residence director and in exchange for your service to the department, you are typically compensated with room, board, a stipend, and/or tuition assistance.

**8. Loans:** Borrowing money for further study is always an important decision. Make sure you have checked with your undergraduate financial aid office to determine what your borrowing eligibility may be. If money is not available when you first enroll, it may be available later. Also, don't enroll in a program that you are not interested in simply because it gives you more money than a program that will more closely align with your personal and professional goals.

*Peterson's Guide to Graduate and Professional Programs*

## WEBSITES FOR THE GRADUATE ADMISSIONS PROCESS

### GENERAL RESEARCH

#### **All About Grad School**

[[www.allaboutgradschool.com](http://www.allaboutgradschool.com)] - Provides a comprehensive geographic directory of graduate schools in the United States along with test preparation information & recommended books.

**College Source Online** [[www.collegesource.org](http://www.collegesource.org)] - This website will give you access to complete graduate catalogs for institutions across the country. Very useful to search for programs by topic.

**Eurograduate** [[www.eurograduate.com](http://www.eurograduate.com)] - This is a site for identifying graduate program opportunities across Europe.

**GradSchools** [[www.gradschools.com](http://www.gradschools.com)] - The most comprehensive online source of graduate school information.

**Grad Profiles** [[www.gradprofiles.com](http://www.gradprofiles.com)] - Features in-depth graduate and professional school profiles with information about programs of study, degree requirements, facilities, expenses, financial aid, faculty research and much more.

**Petersons Guide** [[www.petersons.com](http://www.petersons.com)] - Just like their *Guide to Four Year Colleges*, this site will let you search for graduate programs in nearly every discipline imaginable. Hard copy companions can be found in the Career Resource Center.

**US News & World Reports** [[www.usnews.com/edu/grad/rankings/rankindex\\_brief.php](http://www.usnews.com/edu/grad/rankings/rankindex_brief.php)] - Provides career outlook information, admission tips, and graduate test information; also provides information on graduate programs in business, law, medicine, engineering, education, health, library science, Ph.D.'s, the arts, and public affairs.

### LAW SCHOOL

**Law School Admissions Council** [[www.lsac.org](http://www.lsac.org)] - The site to visit if you are considering law school; valuable information about the LSAT, selecting a school, law school admissions process, and much more.

**LawSchool** [[www.lawschool.com](http://www.lawschool.com)] - A site jam packed with news and events in law school today. Definitely check this site out to see what's happening at the schools to which you are thinking about applying. You will also find law school rankings on this site.

#### **Boston College Online Law School Locator**

[[www.bc.edu/offices/careers/gradschool/law/lawlocator.html](http://www.bc.edu/offices/careers/gradschool/law/lawlocator.html)] - The Locator can help you identify

schools where your scores and grades are most competitive for admission and help you gauge your chances of admission at a particular school.

#### **Princeton Review Law School Information**

[[www.princetonreview.com/law](http://www.princetonreview.com/law)] - Get the latest information on selecting and applying to law school, the LSATs, financial aid, making a successful transition to law school and other related resources.

### BUSINESS PROGRAMS

**MBA.com** [[WWW.MBA.COM](http://WWW.MBA.COM)] - **The site** to visit if you are considering business school; valuable information on the GMAT exam, selecting MBA programs, and financing your graduate studies. From the Graduate Management Admissions Council.

#### **Princeton Review Business School Information**

[[www.princetonreview.com/business](http://www.princetonreview.com/business)] - Get the latest information on selecting and applying to business school, the GMATs, financial aid, making a successful transition to law school and other related resources.

### MEDICAL PROGRAMS

#### **Association of American Medical Colleges**

[[www.aamc.org](http://www.aamc.org)] - **The site** to visit if you are considering medical school; valuable information on the MCAT, applying to and financing med school, application timelines, and more.

#### **Princeton Review Medical School Information**

[[www.princetonreview.com/medical](http://www.princetonreview.com/medical)] - Get the latest information on selecting and applying to medical school, the MCATs, financial aid, making a successful transition to medical school and other related resources.

### FINANCIAL AID

**FastWeb** [[www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com)] - FastWeb lets students create a personalized profile that can be matched against expansive databases of colleges and scholarships. As the oldest and most popular free online scholarship matching service, this database has over 600,000 scholarships totaling more than \$1 billion. FastWeb also notifies students when new scholarships are added and application deadlines are approaching.

#### **FinAid: The Smart Guide to Financial Aid**

[[www.finaid.org](http://www.finaid.org)] - This award-winning site has grown into the most comprehensive annotated collection of information about student financial aid on the web.

#### **Student Loan** [[www.estudentloan.com](http://www.estudentloan.com)] -

eStudentLoan provides a comparison marketplace where students can match their specific needs with lender programs.

# GRADUATE SCHOOL APPLICATION RECORD

See sample application record below.

	<b>PROGRAM 1</b>	<b>PROGRAM 2</b>	<b>PROGRAM 3</b>
<b>SCHOOL</b>			
<b>APPLICATION</b>			
Deadline / Fee			
School Visit/Interview Date			
Application Sent Date			
<b>TRANSCRIPTS</b>			
Date Requested			
Date School Received			
<b>TEST SCORES</b>			
Date Exam is Scheduled			
Date Requested			
Date Received by School			
<b>RECOMMENDATION 1</b>			
Name			
Date Requested			
Date Completed and Sent to School or Credential File			
Date Received by School			
<b>RECOMMENDATION 2</b>			
Name			
Date Requested			
Date Completed and Sent to School or Credential File			
Date Received by School			
<b>RECOMMENDATION 3</b>			
Name			
Date Requested			
Date Completed and Sent to School or Credential File			
Date Received by School			

## APPLYING FOR GRADUATE SCHOOL TIMELINE

### Junior Year, Fall and Spring:

- Try to define your career goals and determine if grad school is required or beneficial in helping to meet those goals.
- Research interest areas, institutions, and degree programs.
- Get to know your professors and advisor. They are a great source of career-related information.
- You may need to ask them for a letter of recommendation later.
- Register and prepare for appropriate graduate admission test. You may choose to take your exam during the spring of your junior year through the fall of your senior year. Note that some exams are only offered certain times each year.
- Investigate scholarships, assistantships, fellowships, and grants.
- Speak with alumni, faculty, parents, and friends about their graduate experiences.

### Summer before Senior Year:

- Request applications and financial aid materials.
- Visit institutions of interest if possible.
- Narrow your list of schools.
- Check application deadlines and rolling admission policies.
- Study sample test questions for the appropriate entrance exam, enroll in a test prep course if needed.
- Register for a summer or fall graduate admission test.
- Begin writing your application essay (personal statement).
- For medical, dental, osteopathy, podiatry, or law school, you may need to register for a national application, or data assembly service.

### Senior Year, Fall:

- Obtain letters of recommendation.
- Take graduate admission test (if you have not already done so).
- Send in completed application(s).
- Have transcripts and letters of recommendation mailed.
- Confirm that graduate programs have received all application materials.
- Apply for assistantships, fellowships, grants, etc.

- Register for Graduate and Professional School Financial Aid Service (GPSFAS) if required.
- Consider visiting select institutions during winter break.

### Senior Year, Spring:

- Check with all institutions before the deadline to make sure your file is complete.
- Keep track of acceptances, waiting list placements, and rejections.
- Visit institutions that accept you (if you haven't already).
- Evaluate all offers of admission and financial aid before making final decision.
- Send deposit to institution of your choice.
- Notify other institutions that accepted you of your decision so that they may admit students on their waiting list.
- Send thank-you notes to people who wrote your recommendation letters, informing them of your success.

### Upon graduation:

Forward an updated transcript to the institution you will attend in the fall.

