At Lutron, we’ve been designing and manufacturing energy-saving light control solutions since 1961.

Our success depends on your success. Join Lutron’s Innovation Leadership Program and you’ll develop the skills and knowledge needed to win in the world of innovation.

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• Hone innovation and product design skills
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Science—Physics, Chemistry, Math

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To learn more about how you can be a part of our future visit www.lutron.com/careers
The Engineering Career and Student Development Center is here to help prepare students for career and professional opportunities and to provide a place where engineering students, faculty, and employers can meet and develop mutual and beneficial relationships.

Planning for your engineering career is key to being prepared when opportunities for internships, co-ops, and jobs arise. The Career Center offers workshops for resume and cover letter writing, career fair preparation, and interview skills. Located in Marston 114, we provide sample resumes, cover letters, and thank-you notes to assist you and provide one-on-one counseling between 8:30-5:00 M-F and evening hours that will be posted on our website.

Throughout the year we hold a variety of corporate information sessions for companies such as ExxonMobil, AbbVie, CDM Smith, Cisco, General Dynamics and Pratt & Whitney. We also work closely with companies to organize networking events, workshops, and plant tours. When you are ready to gain relevant engineering experience, check out our Engineering job board and the UMass Career Service’s CareerConnect searchable job database which includes internship, co-op, and full-time positions.

— Cheryl Brooks  
Director, Career & Student Development  
College of Engineering

Visit our website at: www.engineering.umass.edu/careercenter

“The Engineering Career Center helped me transition from a student to a professional, paving the way for two summer internships and ultimately an exciting job that matches my personality, skill set, and career interests. The Career Center’s friendly student and professional staff were there to guide me every step of the way, from completely re-writing my resume to editing drafts of cover letters and helping me develop and later polish my interview skills. In addition to personal development, they provided numerous opportunities for me to seek jobs and expand my professional network through career fairs, company information sessions, networking events, and weekly emails detailing job opportunities. I can confidently say that the Engineering Career Center gave me an advantage while in school and as I start my professional career, and all UMass Amherst students should capitalize on this amazing resource.”

— Tim Light, Langan Engineering
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College Recruitment Media and the UMass Amherst College of Engineering Career Center would like to thank the above sponsors for making this publication possible.
The Engineering Career Center works closely with the UMass Career Services Center to host around 90 companies at the Engineering, Sciences and Technology Fair in the fall. In the spring, students can attend the Career Blast Campus-Wide Fair and ALANA Fair. Engineering students also have access to other services provided by the UMass Career Services Center, including workshops, mock interviews, and networking events. UMass Career Services maintains an interactive, searchable job board which allows students to search for jobs all over the country as well as international opportunities. The site, called CareerConnect, is found at www.umass.edu/careers. It is easy to use and provides detailed information about employers and their specific positions, information sessions, resume deadlines and on-campus interviews.

How to Log In to CareerConnect:

The UMass Amherst CareerConnect job and internship database is now easier to log onto and use!

- Go to: www.umass.edu/careers
- Click on the CareerConnect button on the right-hand side of the page
- On the next screen enter your UMass Net ID and password
- First-time users must complete the profile page

For assistance, contact UMass Career Services at 413-545-2224

We would like to say a special thank you to New England Wire Products for their support.

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Are you up to the challenge?

Learn more at cisco.com/careers.
As you progress through your college career, it is important to develop your professional skills and to participate in career-related events. The following is a suggested timeline of specific activities and tasks that will help you to reach your engineering career goals.

**READ YOUR EMAIL** from the Engineering Career Center. We will send you information about specific jobs, fairs, networking events and workshops on a regular basis.

### First Year
- Attend company information sessions to learn more about the various engineering careers and begin to build relationships with recruiters.
- Access and develop your skills in critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, and teamwork through both academic and extracurricular activities. Take initiative to start a project and see it through to completion.
- Begin your resume—attend a resume workshop.
- Begin building a network of support through friends, mentors, upperclassmen, staff, and faculty.
- Work hard in your academic classes—companies often base internship offers on student grades.
- Plan a related work experience for the summer between your first and second year. While a research position or an internship would be ideal, other experiences can also be useful. For example, if you are a civil engineer, look for a construction or landscaping job. If you are a mechanical engineer, jobs in manufacturing or at the hardware store could prove helpful.

### Second Year
- Update your resume—add any relevant experience or soft skills that you gained over the previous semester or summer.
- Attend company information sessions to learn more about what companies in your field of interest are doing.
- Attend the Engineering Career Fair in the fall and the Campus-Wide Fair in the spring.
- Attend various workshops on resume writing, dress for success, interview preparation or career fair preparation to hone your skills.
- Join and participate in engineering student societies or other student organizations or community service.
- Check out the National Science Foundation’s website: [www.nsf.gov/crssprgm/reu/](http://www.nsf.gov/crssprgm/reu/). Make a list of Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) program sites you are interested in and plan to apply (note deadlines!).
- Ask faculty for letters of recommendation for REU applications.
- Explore internship opportunities through the College of Engineering Career Center job board and the UMass Career Services job board called CareerConnect.

### Third Year
- Update your resume.
- Attend various workshops EARLY in the semester so that you will be prepared for the career fairs.
- Attend the Engineering Career Fair in the fall and the Campus-Wide Fair in the spring.
- Attend company information sessions and begin thinking about the type of work you would be doing for a company, the company culture, ability to gain and utilize a variety of skills, as well as the company locations.
- Check out the National Science Foundation’s website: [www.nsf.gov/crssprgm/reu/](http://www.nsf.gov/crssprgm/reu/). Make a list of REU sites you are interested in and plan to apply (note deadlines!)
- Ask faculty for letters of recommendation for REU applications.
- Explore internship opportunities through the College of Engineering Career Center job board and the UMass Career Services job board called CareerConnect.
- Continue to participate in student societies and organizations—begin to take on leadership roles.
- Attend the Graduate School information session and talk with faculty advisors or College of Engineering Career Center advisors to help make this decision.
- If you decide on graduate school, set up a timeline for studying and taking the GRE, LSAT, or GMAT and for meeting all grad school deadlines.

### Fourth Year
- Polish your resume.
- Attend various workshops to fill any gaps in interviews skills, dressing for success, job-search techniques, etc.
- Attend the Engineering Career Fair in the fall, the Campus-Wide Career Fair in the spring, and all information sessions. Make sure you know what recruiters are looking for and be prepared to present your technical and communication skills at these various events.
- Regularly check the E-recruiting site and the Engineering job board for new listings. Stay open to a variety of job options and company locations.
- Follow up with companies you meet at information sessions, career fairs, or interviews. Make sure you present yourself in a professional manner—through phone conversations, email, thank-you notes, or in person.
- Prepare to take the FE exam before leaving school—many companies require this for employment. The FE is now a computer-based exam that is administered year-round by NCEES (National Council of Examiners for Engineering and Surveying) at NCEES-approved test centers. Advance registration is required and is available at [http://ncees.org/exams](http://ncees.org/exams).
Take Charge of Your Career

Who We Are
ISO New England is an independent, not-for-profit corporation authorized by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to operate New England’s bulk electricity system, oversee the region’s $10 plus billion wholesale electricity markets, and manage the regional power planning process.

What We Offer
ISO New England offers internships, cooperative education assignments, and full-time positions in various engineering and business disciplines. These opportunities provide qualified candidates an excellent platform for professional growth and developing career credentials.

You’ll be involved from day one in meaningful projects that will expand your technical, business, and communication skills. At ISO New England, the outcome of your work has real impact in the lives of millions of people.

Current Students
For internships and co-ops, we recruit students with the following majors:

- Electrical/Power Engineering
- Mechanical Engineering
- Industrial Engineering
- Computer Science
- Information Systems
- Economics
- Accounting, Finance
- Law
- Communications

New Graduates
Find the perfect work environment to apply classroom theory to real-life practice and collaborate with some of the industry’s brightest minds. A state-of-the-art campus conveniently located in Holyoke, Mass., excellent benefits, and dedicated colleagues make ISO New England an ideal place to build a meaningful career.

Learn more about ISO New England by visiting the Careers section of www.iso-ne.com.
GETTING THE MOST OUT OF A CAREER FAIR

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

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

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

Fashions and Accessories

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

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

Stop, Look and Listen

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

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

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

“Create a one-minute ‘commercial’ as a way to sell yourself to an employer. This is a great way to introduce yourself. The goal is to connect your background to the organization’s need. In one minute or less, you need to introduce yourself, demonstrate your knowledge of the company, express enthusiasm and interest and relate your background to the company’s need.”

You’re a Prospector—Start Digging

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

Fair Thee Well

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

A Few Words About Career Fair Etiquette

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

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

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

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

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

www.engineering.umass.edu/careercenter
YOUR 30-SECOND COMMERCIAL

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

Step 1: Research the Employer

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

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

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

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

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

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

   My personal qualities:
   (a) ________________________________________   (b) _______________________________
   (c) ________________________________

Step 2: Develop Your Introduction

Review the sample below. Using the information above, prepare and practice a brief 30-second commercial or introduction to use when meeting employer representatives.

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

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

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

UMass Amherst College of Engineering Career Center
Help steer us there.

Apply today.

From hybrid and electric vehicle components to head-up display and human machine interface technologies – we’re developing advanced systems and products that will steer us toward an automotive society where cars put less drag on the environment and drivers have fewer worries about traffic accidents.
Many people use the classified ads as their sole job search technique. Unfortunately, statistics show that only 10% to 20% of jobs are ever published—which means that 80% to 90% of jobs remain hidden in the job market. For this reason, networking remains the number one job search strategy.

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

Eight Keys to Networking
1. **Be Prepared** First, define what information you need and what you are trying to accomplish by networking. Remember, your purpose in networking is to get to know people who can provide information regarding careers and leads. Some of the many benefits of networking include increased visibility within your field, propelling your professional development, finding suitable mentors, increasing your chances of promotion and perhaps finding your next job.

   Second, know yourself—your education, experience and skills. Practice a concise, one-minute presentation of yourself so that people will know the kinds of areas in which you are interested. Your networking meeting should include the following elements: introduction, self-overview, Q&A, obtaining referrals and closing.

2. **Be Targeted** Identify your network. For some, “I don’t have a professional network. I don’t know anyone,” may be your first reaction. You can start by listing everyone you know who are potential prospects: family members, friends, faculty, neighbors, classmates, alumni, bosses, co-workers and community associates. Attend meetings of organizations in your field of interest and get involved. You never know where you are going to meet someone who could lead you to your next job.

3. **Be Professional** Ask your networking prospects for advice—not for a job. Your networking meetings should be a source of career information, advice and contacts. Start off the encounter with a firm handshake, eye contact and a warm smile. Focus on asking for one thing at a time. Your contacts expect you to represent yourself with your best foot forward.

4. **Be Patient** Heena Noorani, Research Analyst with New York-based Thomson Financial, recommends avoiding the feeling of discouragement if networking does not provide immediate results or instant answers. She advises, “Be prepared for a slow down after you get started. Stay politely persistent with your leads and build momentum. Networking is like gardening: You do not plant the seed, then quickly harvest. Networking requires cultivation that takes time and effort for the process to pay off.”

5. **Be Focused on Quality—Not Quantity** In a large group setting, circulate and meet people, but don’t try to talk to everyone. It’s better to have a few meaningful conversations than 50 hasty introductions. Don’t cling to people you already know; you’re unlikely to build new contacts that way. If you are at a reception, be sure to wear a nametag and collect or exchange business cards so you can later contact the people you meet.

6. **Be Referral-Centered** The person you are networking with may not have a job opening, but he or she may know someone who is hiring. The key is to exchange information and then expand your network by obtaining additional referrals each time you meet someone new. Be sure to mention the person who referred you.

7. **Be Proactive** Stay organized and track your networking meetings. Keep a list of your contacts and update it frequently with the names of any leads given to you. Send a thank-you note or email if appropriate. Ask if you can follow up the conversation with a phone call, or even better, with a more in-depth meeting in the near future.

8. **Be Dedicated to Networking** Most importantly, networking should be ongoing. You will want to stay in touch with contacts over the long haul—not just when you need something. Make networking part of your long-term career plan.

---

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

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

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

Career professionals—and parents—are warning young job seekers that using social networking sites, such as Facebook and Twitter, may be hazardous to your career. After all, do you want your potential employer to see photos of you at last weekend’s party? Certainly, those photos could diminish your prospects of landing a job. However, more job seekers are using social networking to enhance their preparation for interviews, garner an advantage over less-wired peers, and even gain an edge with recruiters.

One example of a constructive use of social networking websites is gathering background information about the recruiters with whom you will interview. By finding out about topics that will interest the recruiter, you may gain an upper hand in the interview process. In addition, stronger connections with a potential employer can be made by talking about the clubs he or she belongs to and even friends you have in common—information that can be discovered on Facebook.

Research on professional sites like LinkedIn can also be used to prepare for site visits. By using the alumni connections available through LinkedIn, you can gain added insight into potential employers. If you are interviewing with a company, search for alumni who are working there. You can have conversations with alumni via LinkedIn that you wouldn’t have in an interview, such as, “do you like it at the company” or “can you negotiate salary?”

Networking Rules

When you seek and maintain professional connections via social networking sites, follow the same etiquette you would if you were networking by phone and in person. Remember that every contact is creating an impression. Online, you might tend to be less formal because you are communicating in a space that you typically share with friends. Just as you would not let your guard down if you were having dinner with a potential employer, you must maintain a positive and professional approach when conversing with networking contacts online. Ask good questions, pay attention to the answers, and be polite—this includes sending at least a brief thank-you note anytime someone gives you advice or assistance.

If It’s OK for Mom, It’s OK for Facebook

The more controversial aspect of the interplay between social networking and job searching is the privacy debate. Some observers, including career counselors, deans, and parents, worry that students put themselves at a disadvantage in the job search by making personal information available on Facebook and Twitter pages. More and more companies are using such websites as a screening tool.

Concern about privacy focuses on two areas: social life and identity/affiliations. Parents and career counselors argue that job-seekers would never show photos of themselves at a party in the middle of an interview, so why would they allow employers to see party photos on a Facebook page? Students often respond that most employers do not even use social networking sites and that employers already know that college students drink.

While it may be true that senior managers are less likely to be on Facebook, young recruiters may be active, and in many cases, employers ask younger employees to conduct online searches of candidates. Why risk losing a career opportunity because of a photo with two drinks in your hand?

It’s easy to deduce that if an employer is comparing two candidates who are closely matched in terms of GPA and experience, and one has questionable photos and text on his or her online profile and the second does not, that the second student will get the job offer.

Identity—Public or Private?

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

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

You would never include religious and political affiliations as well as sexual orientation or transgender identity (GLBT) on your resume, so do you want this information to be available via social networking sites? There are two strategies to consider. One approach is that if you wish to only work for an employer with whom you can be openly religious, political, or GLBT then making that information available on your web page will screen out discriminating employers and make it more likely that you will land with an employer open to your identity and expression.

A second approach though, is to maintain your privacy and keep more options open. Investigate potential employers thoroughly and pay special attention at site visits to evaluate whether the company would be welcoming. This strategy is based on two perspectives shared by many career professionals. First, as a job-seeker, you want to present only your relevant skills and experience throughout the job search; all other information is irrelevant. Second, if you provide information about your identity and affiliations, you may be discriminated against by one person in the process even though the company overall is a good match.

Strategies for Safe and Strategic Social Networking

1. Be aware of what other people can see on your page. Recruiters use these sites or ask their colleagues to do searches on candidates.
2. Determine access intentionally. Some career counselors advocate deactivating your Facebook or Twitter accounts while job searching.
3. Set a standard. If anything appears on your page that you wouldn’t want an interviewer to see, remove the offending content.
4. Use social networking to your advantage. Use these sites to find alumni in the companies that interest you and contact them before you interview in your career center or before a site visit. In addition, use social networking sites and internet searches to learn more about the recruiters who will interview you before the interview.

Written by Harriet L. Schwartz.
EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

INTERNSHIPS, CO-OPS, ACADEMIC RESEARCH

Relevant engineering experience allows you to apply academic concepts in practice and explore possible career options. In addition, the skills and knowledge acquired through experiential learning make you more marketable to companies.

Reports from a variety of sources show that, compared to the average, students who participate in these programs:

• Do better in school
• Are ahead in preparation for their field
• Are viewed as better candidates in job interviews
• Receive more job offers
• Earn higher starting salaries
• Are more likely to get the job with the employer they want after graduation

Other benefits of Internships and Experiential Education Programs include developing transferable skills such as: communication, critical thinking, teamwork, change management, information technology, leadership, self-managed learning, interpersonal diversity, ethics, social responsibility, and technical knowledge.

**Internship**

An internship is a work experience, usually in the summer, related to your major. Most engineering internships are paid and the terms of payment are worked out between the company and the student. The Engineering Career Center and the UMass Career Center regularly post internships on their job boards.

**Co-op**

A co-op is a three to nine month position related to your major. Engineering co-op positions are paid and take place during the school semester. During a co-op you maintain your status as an enrolled UMass Amherst student but do not pay tuition. Once you have accepted a co-op position, you must meet with the field experience coordinator in Goodell 511 to fill out the necessary paperwork.

**Research Experience**

Many students participate in research projects with UMass Amherst engineering professors throughout the semester. These research projects may either be paid or unpaid. In general, faculty look for students with outstanding grades and a demonstrated interest in their specific engineering field when hiring a student.

The National Science Foundation sponsors the Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) program each year. This program supports undergraduate research through projects that are funded through NSF grants. You must be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident to qualify for this program. Last year, approximately 150 academic institutions, national labs and research centers operated a REU program. To search for specific positions, go to: http://www.nsf.gov/crssprgm/reu/.

“The Engineering Career Center helped me grow as a student and a professional, and it was their guidance that helped me get the job that fits my skills and personality perfectly. The Career Center staff helped me fine tune my resume and hone my networking and interviewing skills, giving me a clear advantage while searching for jobs. They provided a strong basis from which to work, hosting many companies for information sessions and sending out job opportunities each week. The Engineering Career Center is one of the most invaluable resources available to the UMass Amherst students, and was a game changer for me as I begin my career.”

— Dan Amichetti, AbbVie

“My internship at IBM could not be better! I love the job, my manager, and all my co-workers. They had me dive immediately into a very interesting project, one that will be extremely challenging yet manageable in the time frame. The internship system is very organized, with weekly events, an assigned mentor, etc.”

— Darius Lisowski ’09 ME
TURNING YOUR INTERNSHIP INTO A FULL-TIME POSITION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

5. **Set Realistic Goals and Expectations**
   Invest actively in the most critical element of your internship—that is, the learning agenda which you set up with your supervisor at the beginning of the assignment.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Written by Lina Melkonian, Executive Director of Development at San José State University, College of Engineering.
CREATING AN EFFECTIVE RESUME

The resume serves as a marketing tool to highlight your relevant experience and skills, as well as your accomplishments. Your resume will not get the job for you, but it will, if effective, result in interviews. Your resume must be concise, easy to read and understand, and use words that are familiar to the reader and have universal appeal. The goals of your resume are to: illustrate achievements, attributes, and expertise to the best possible advantage and minimize any possible weaknesses. Your resume should provide all of the information necessary to allow a prospective employer to identify your transferable skills. When applying to engineering positions you should demonstrate technical acumen, problem-solving skills, a results-oriented mindset, teamwork, and communication skills.

The Top 10 Pitfalls in Resume Writing
1. Too long. Restrict your resume to one page.
2. Typographical, grammatical, or spelling errors. Have at least two people proofread your resume.
3. Hard to read. Keep it simple with clean lines and white space.
4. Too verbose. Say as much as possible with as few words as possible, avoid use of jargon.
5. Not enough information. Give dates describing related work experience, be specific about skills, accomplishments, activities, interests, and memberships.
6. Irrelevant information. Customize each resume to each position you seek (when possible). Of course, include education and work experience, but emphasize relevant experience, skills, accomplishments and activities. Do not include marital status, age, sex, children, height, weight, health, church membership, etc.
7. Obviously generic. Tweak each resume according to the job description. The employer needs to feel that you are interested in that particular position with his or her company.
8. Too fancy. Avoid exotic fonts, colored paper, photographs, binders, and graphics. Electronic resumes should include appropriate industry keywords and use a font size between 10-12 points. Use italics and bold face sparingly.
9. Too static. Make your resume as dynamic as possible. Begin every statement with an action verb. Use active verbs to describe what you have accomplished in past jobs. Take advantage of your rich vocabulary and avoid repeating words, especially the first word in a section.
10. Too modest. The resume showcases your qualifications in competition with the other applicants. Put your best foot forward without misrepresentation, falsification, or arrogance.

The Three Rs

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### Management Skills
- Administered
- Analyzed
- Assigned
- Chaired
- Consolidated
- Contracted
- Coordinated
- Delegated
- Developed
- Directed
- Evaluated
- Executed
- Organized
- Oversaw
- Planned
- Prioritized
- Produced
- Recommended
- Reorganized
- Reviewed
- Scheduled
- Supervised

#### Research Skills
- Spoke
- Translated
- Wrote

#### Financial Skills
- Administered
- Allocated
- Analyzed
- Appraised
- Audited
- Balanced
- Budgeted
- Calculated
- Computed
- Developed
- Managed
- Planned
- Projected
- Researched

#### Communication Skills
- Addressed
- Arbitrated
- Arranged
- Authored
- Co-authored
- Collaborated
- Corresponded
- Developed
- Directed
- Drafted
- Enlisted
- Formulated
- Influenced
- Interpreted
- Lectured
- Reviewed
- Mediated
- Moderated
- Negotiated
- Persuaded
- Promoted
- Proposed
- Publicized
- Reconciled
- Recruited

#### Technical Skills
- Assembled
- Built
- Calculated
- Computed
- Designed
- Devised
- Engineered
- Fabricated
- Maintained
- Operated
- Pinpointed
- Programmed
- Remodeled
- Repaired
- Solved

#### Creative Skills
- Acted
- Conceptualized
- Created
- Customized
- Designed
- Developed
- Directed
- Established
- Fashioned
- Illustrated
- Instituted
- Integrated
- Performed
- Planned
- Proved
- Revised

#### Helping Skills
- Assessed
- Assisted
- Clarified
- Coached
- Counseled
- Demonstrated
- Fulfilled
- Facilitated
- Familiarized
- Guided
- Inspired
- Motivated
- Participated
- Provided
- Referred
- Rehabilitated
- Reinforced
- Represented
- Supported
- Taught
- Trained
- Verified

#### Teaching Skills
- Adapted
- Advised
- Clarified
- Coached
- Communicated
- Conducted
- Coordinated

#### Stronger Verbs for Accomplishments
- Accelerated
- Achieved
- Completed
- Conceived
- Convinced
- Discovered
- Doubled
- Effected
- Eliminated
- Expanding
- Expedited
- Founded
- Improved
- Increased
- Initiated
- Innovated
- Introduced
- Invented
- Launched
- Mastered
- Originated
- Overcame
- Overhauled
- Pioneered
- Reduced
- Resolved
- Revitalized
- Spearheaded
- Strengthened
- Transformed
- Upgraded

*From To Boldly Go: Practical Career Advice for Scientists, by Peter S. Fiske*
THE WORLD DEPENDS ON SENSORS AND CONTROLS

WHO IS SENSATA?
Sensata Technologies in Attleboro, MA is one of the leading suppliers of sensing, electrical, control and power management solutions. We satisfy the world’s growing need for safety, energy efficiency and a clean environment. Sensata’s products are used in planes, homes and automobiles all over the world!

WHO DOES SENSATA HIRE?
We’re looking for students with strong fundamental and “big-picture” skills who can apply their education to Full-Time and Internship roles including:
- Mechanical Design Engineer
- Electrical Design Engineer
- Process Engineer

WHY CHOOSE SENSATA?
- Become a leader in our community
- Get exposure to a variety of high-tech products and processes
- Gain real hands-on experience developing mission critical products
- Be at the center of a multi-disciplined team including: Design, Manufacturing, Quality, and Customer Service

Scan to check out our job board! sensata.theresumator.com
RESUME OUTLINE

NAME
EMAIL ADDRESS
CURRENT ADDRESS
PHONE NUMBER
PERMANENT ADDRESS
PHONE NUMBER

SUMMARY STATEMENT
• A summary statement is a one- or two-sentence description of the skills and qualities that you would bring to the job that would make a recruiter interested in hiring you. It is like an introduction which is supported by the details in the body of your resume. It is a good way to put keywords in the head of the reader, so that they are thinking of them as they read through your resume.
• Avoid self-serving statements such as “...a company where I will be able to advance my career.” Show your interest in the company, not what you hope the company will do for you.

EDUCATION
Institution, Location
Degree, Major, GPA, Date of (anticipated) Graduation
• Traditionally, either education or experience is the first category after Objective/Professional Summary. Which one you choose will depend on where you are in your career and the types of jobs for which you are applying.
• Check with your major department to make sure you have listed degree information correctly.
• It is up to you whether or not to list your GPA. If it is above a 3.0, it is suggested.
• You can include academic honors here or in a separate section.
• List coursework if it is unique for your major and relates to the position for which you are applying, or if you are an underclassman applying for an internship and want to include the engineering courses that you have taken thus far.

EXPERIENCE
Company, Location (mm/yy-mm/yy of total time employed by company)
Title (mm/yy-mm/yy in that position, if you have held more than one position with same company)
• List experience in reverse chronological order.
• Begin each point with an action verb of the appropriate tense.
• Begin with an overall summary of the project you did in context of the problem you were trying to solve. Then, walk through the process you took to solve the problem in a logical, systematic way, making sure that you include any instrumentation, computer software, or standardized methods that you used. What were the results you achieved?
• Quantify wherever possible—“Increased the efficiency of the process by 20%.”
• Make sure your descriptions make sense and have enough detail to be meaningful.
• Make sure to include any communication skills that you used in the project or job such as writing a technical report, giving a presentation, or working in a team.

OTHER
• Use this section to highlight any additional skills, qualifications or experiences. Label this section appropriately (Global Profile, Computer Skills, Certifications, Volunteer Experience, etc.).
• Computer Skills should not contain programs, such as Microsoft Word, that an employer will assume you can use. If you are applying for technology positions and have extensive computer skills, consider placing this section between the Education and Experience sections.
• Volunteer Activities can be listed here or with your experience.
• If you held a leadership position with an organization, consider including your notable duties/accomplishments.
• If necessary, you can list your work authorization in this section.

GENERAL RESUME TIPS
• Spell check, proofread, read backwards, have someone check your resume, etc.
• Don’t include “References available on request.” This is assumed by the employer and wastes valuable space.
• In general, resumes should be kept to one page. Individuals with extensive full-time work experience or multiple degrees can extend their resume beyond the one-page limit. The danger of having a long resume is that the recruiter may not make it past your first page.
• Present your qualifications in the best possible light, but do not exaggerate or mislead. Employers will verify the information with your references and educational institutions.
• Resumes should be tailored to the type of position/industry for which you are applying.
• High school information should start to come off your resume when you enter college and be completely gone by graduation.
• Remember the guidelines for scannable resumes, such as avoid italics and underlines, don’t fold a resume that might get scanned, and use keywords where possible.
• Don’t use smaller than 10 pt. font.
RESUMES—continued

SAMPLE FRESHMAN RESUME

Juan Rodriguez

School Address: 123 Mary Lyon, 151 Orchard Hill Road, Amherst, MA 01003
Permanent Address: 123 Strong St. Gardner, MA 01002
Email: jrodriquez@student.umass.edu
(413) 546-1234

SUMMARY
Hard working electrical engineering student with excellent communication and teamwork skills along with an interest in computer programming and design

EDUCATION
University of Massachusetts Amherst, Amherst, MA
Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering Anticipated May 2018
GPA: 3.4
Abigail Adams Scholarship for Academic Achievement

RELEVANT COURSES
Intro Electrical and Computer Engineering I, II Calculus I, II
Freshman ECE Design Project Physics I, II
Java Programming

ACADEMIC PROJECT
Freshman Design Project, M5 Lab, UMass Fall 2014
- Worked on a team of three students to design a low-cost LED-based lamp to be used by people in developing countries
- Designed the lamp so that it could be recharged by either solar or mechanical power. Measured the output voltage and stored the energy on a ultra-capacitor
- Presented the design to peers and professor

WORK EXPERIENCE
College of Engineering Office of Student Development, UMass Spring 2015
- Assisted with clerical tasks such as filing, answering phones, organizing and data entry
- Greeted faculty, students and parents in a professional manner

YMCA Camp, Gardner, MA Summer 2014
Camp Counselor
- Coordinated and lead the daily activities of 20 children
- Planned camp events with other camp counselors and assessed camper activities

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE
“Not Bread Alone” Soup Kitchen, Amherst, MA Fall 2014
- Helped serve lunch to over 150 low-income individuals and families
- Worked with program director to assist clients

SKILLS
Computer: Microsoft Office, Visual Basic Java
Spoken Languages: Fluent in Spanish

AFFILIATIONS & ACTIVITIES
IEEE
Society of Hispanic Engineers
Intramural Soccer
# SAMPLE SOPHOMORE RESUME

**Danielle Martin**  
School Address: 123 Dickinson, 151 Orchard Hill Road, Amherst, MA 01003  
Permanent Address: 123 Pittsfield, MA 10120  
Email: dmartin@student.umass.edu  
(413) 545-9999

**SUMMARY**  
Motivated sophomore chemical engineering student with excellent communication skills looking to gain relevant analytical experience.

**EDUCATION**  
University of Massachusetts Amherst, Amherst, MA  
Bachelor of Science in Chemical Engineering Anticipated May 2017  
GPA: 3.5  
Abigail Adams Scholarship for Academic Achievement  
Chancellor Scholarship

**RELEVANT COURSES**  

**ACADEMIC PROJECT**  
Chemical Engineering Car Fall 2013, 2014  
- Worked on a team of three students to find a chemical reaction that aided the movement of a car to a specified distance  
- Implemented car construction and research to find reactant ratios to obtain required energy  
- Helped raise money to fund the car by organizing t-shirt sales  
- Entered car into regional competition and won 2nd place out of 35 cars the first year and placed 3rd out of 38 cars the second year

**WORK EXPERIENCE**  
University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA  
Chemical Engineering Department, Student Assistant Spring 2014-Spring 2015  
- Assisted with Open House activities, gave departmental tours and met with potential students  
- Assisted administrative assistant with clerical tasks such as filing, organizing and data entry

Peer Advisor, College of Engineering Residence Academic Program Fall 2014-Spring 2015  
- Lived with and provided guidance to first year engineering students  
- Organized events to connect students with faculty  
- Worked directly with residence assistants and director of RAP program

**LEADERSHIP**  
Sophomore Class Representative, American Institute of Chemical Engineers (AICHE) Fall 2014-Spring 2015  
- Motivated members to attend meetings and participate in events  
- Helped recruit sophomore students to become members of AICHE

**SKILLS**  
Computer: Mathcad, Pro/II, MS Office, C/C++  
Spoken Languages: Fluent in Spanish; Conversant in French

**AFFILIATIONS & ACTIVITIES**  
American Institute of Chemical Engineers  
Alpha Beta Gamma Fraternity  
Horseback Riding
SAMPLE JUNIOR RESUME

Jeffrey Johnson  
123 Amherst Road Apt. 1, Amherst, MA 01002  
Phone: (413) 555-1234  email: jjohnson@student.umass.edu

Summary Statement:
I am a highly motivated leader exhibiting exceptional communication skills, as well as the ability to work with a team. I have a solid technical background in mechanical engineering, with a particular interest in product design and development.

Education:
University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA  
Bachelor of Science, Mechanical Engineering, 3.2 GPA  
Anticipated May 2016

Relevant Coursework:

Relevant Experience:
Academic Projects
Material Design Project  
Spring 2015
• Worked on a team of three to research the mechanical properties of carbon nanotube (CNT) reinforced rubber.  
• Used Instron Universal Testing machines to experimentally examine the tensile behaviors of the CNT reinforced rubber.  
• Wrote a research paper regarding this experiment and presented results to a group of 50 peers and professors.

Design of Mechanical Components  
Fall 2014
• Examined the critical stresses that caused a fracture in a part of a masonry stilt produced by the Marshalltown Company.  
• Developed a solid model of the stilts using Pro/E.  
• Created shear force and bending moment diagrams from free body diagrams to determine maximum bending moments, and wrote a Force and Solid Model Analysis report of the diagrams.  
• Analyzed critical stresses using Ansys Workbench and reinforced the results by hand calculations.  
• Redesigned solid model such that the critical stresses were removed.  
• Wrote a Final Redesign report with teammates that provided a safer design of the component.  
• Presented results and new design with teammates to over 40 peers, professors, and teacher assistants, as well as senior engineers at the Marshalltown Company and Ideaz Inc.

Mechanical Design  
Spring 2014
• Designed and developed a concept to assist golfers planting and setting a golf tee into the ground.  
• Used design concept generating and decision making methods such as a house of quality, customer satisfaction curves, and Pugh’s method to create the best design.  
• Created a solid model of the final design using Pro/E.  
• Built and tested a prototype using the university machine shop.  
• Won second place in a design competition evaluated by mechanical engineers, professors, and teacher assistants.  
• Wrote a paper with teammates discussing the design and development of the product. This report also included failure analysis, reliability, and cost benefit analysis.

Field Experience
Laboratory Technician, Emory University  
Summer 2013
• Researched ocular tumors by performing molecular experiments on mice.  
• Prepared cell cultures and analyzed kinetics of protein production by T cells in immunosuppressive responses to tumors using Reverse Transcription Polymerase Chain Reaction (RT-PCR) methodology.  
• Contributed as an author to a published abstract.

Technical Skills:
Pro/Engineer Wildfire  •  Ansys Workbench  •  Matlab  •  Working knowledge of material testing equipment  •  Microsoft Office  •  Understanding of medical research equipment

Achievements and Community Involvement:
Boy Scouts of America  
2002-2009
• Earned rank of Eagle Scout.  
• Held leadership roles in Troop 9 Newton, MA including Patrol Leader, Senior Patrol Leader, and Junior Assistant Scoutmaster.  
• Led troop to winning spring and fall camporees while serving as Senior Patrol Leader.  
• Organized and managed car washes and dinners to raise funds for the troop.

Interests:
Watching the Boston Red Sox, bowling, golfing, and playing the piano.
# SAMPLE SENIOR RESUME

## Mark Miller
9 Rosemary Street, Ludlow, MA 01928  
781-555-1420 - mmiller@student.umass.edu

### Summary Statement
Motivated civil engineering senior with a solid academic background in civil and environmental engineering principles combined with hands-on experience in water, wastewater, design and construction projects.

### Education
- **University of Massachusetts Amherst**  
  *Anticipated May, 2015*  
  Bachelor of Science, Civil Engineering – 3.1 GPA  
  Honors: Dean’s List  
  Additional Graduate Level Course: Surface Water Quality Monitoring

### Relevant Experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Engineering Intern</strong></td>
<td>Stantec, Westford, MA</td>
<td>Summer and Winter Break 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Worked for a global design and consulting firm on a variety of infrastructure projects for the town of Westford, MA</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Surveyed water mains, sewers and lake as part of a comprehensive study on water and wastewater management</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Designed a pump using AutoCad and created a hydraulic model of a fire hydrant system</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Catalogued files and project data using Excel spreadsheets</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Worked directly with senior engineers, construction workers, and town officials to assess needs and set priorities</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Academic Projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Senior Design Project</strong></td>
<td>Spring 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Worked in a team of three to simulate a full-scale building site assessment, foundation design, cost estimates, scheduling and productivity management</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Used AutoCad to design all structural components</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Presented results of this project to faculty, teaching assistants and over 40 peers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Design of Steel Structures and Design of Reinforced Concrete Structures**  
  *Spring 2014*  
  - Analyzed the forces on various structures including frames, trusses, beams and arches using both conventional and computer methods such as Risa 2D and 3D  
  - Used Geotechnical Engineering software for analyzing and sizing foundations

### Certifications & Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Certification</th>
<th>Dates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Passed the Fundamentals of Engineering Examination</td>
<td>April 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proficient in AutoCAD (2007 version), Microsoft Office, Risa 2D and 3D, Geotechnical Engineering Software</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Experienced with Total Station (surveying)</td>
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### Work Experience

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Dates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adams Coping and Tile</strong>, Westfield, MA</td>
<td></td>
<td>Summer 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Mixed concrete, laid tile, hauled material to and from the site</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Worked efficiently while keeping close communication with customers to meet their changing needs</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- **New England Waterscapes Design**, Lynnfield, MA  
  *Summer 2011, 2012*  
  - Stone masonry during swimming pool and waterfall construction  
  - Installed floating interlocking floors

### Activities
- American Society of Civil Engineers (2011 – Present)  
- Ski and Board Club (Winter 2011 – Present)  
- Baseball, Intramural Softball and Volleyball, drawing/illustration (pencil sketching)
WHAT HAPPENS DURING THE INTERVIEW?

The interviewing process can be scary if you don’t know what to expect. All interviews fit a general pattern. While each interview will differ, all will share three common characteristics: the beginning, middle and conclusion.

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

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

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

It Starts Before You Even Say Hello

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

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

How’s Your Small Talk Vocabulary?

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

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

The Recruiter Has the Floor

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

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

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

It’s Your Turn to Ask Questions

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

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

The Close Counts, Too

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

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

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

Expect the Unexpected

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

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

Evaluations Made by Recruiters

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

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

TEN RULES OF INTERVIEWING

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In Summary

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Behavioral vs. Traditional Interviews**

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

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

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

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

“Describe a major problem you have faced and how you dealt with it.”

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

“What class did you like the most? What did you like about it?”

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

“Can you give me an example?”

“What did you do?”

“What did you say?”

“What were you thinking?”

“How did you feel?”

“What was your role?”

“What was the result?”

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

**How to Prepare for a Behavioral Interview**

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

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

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

**Don’t Forget the Basics**

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

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

1. An invitation to an on-site interview is NOT a guarantee of a job offer. It is a chance to examine whether or not you will be a good match for the job and for the organization.
2. If invited to an on-site interview, respond promptly if you are sincerely interested in this employer. Decline politely if you are not. Never go on an on-site interview for the sake of the trip. Document the name and phone number of the person coordinating your trip. Verify who will be handling trip expenses. Most medium- and large-size companies (as well as many smaller ones) will pay your expenses, but others will not. This is very important, because expenses are handled in various ways: 1) the employer may handle all expenses and travel arrangements; 2) you handle your expenses and arrangements (the employer may assist with this), and the employer will reimburse you later; 3) the employer may offer an on-site interview, but will not pay for your travel.
3. Know yourself and the type of job you are seeking with this employer. Don’t say, “I am willing to consider anything you have.”
4. Thoroughly research the potential employer. Read annual reports, newspaper articles, trade journals, etc. Many companies have websites where you can read their mission statements, find out about long-term goals, read recent press releases, and view corporate photos. Don’t limit your research only to company-controlled information. The Internet can be a valuable investigative tool. You may uncover key information that may influence—positively or negatively—your decision to pursue employment with a given organization.
5. Bring extra copies of your resume; copies of any paperwork you may have forwarded to the employer; names, addresses, phone numbers and email addresses of your references; an updated college transcript; a copy of your best paper as a writing sample; a notebook; a black and/or blue pen for filling out forms and applications; and names and addresses of past employers.
6. Bring extra money and a change of clothes. Also, have the names and phone numbers of those who may be meeting you in case your plans change unexpectedly. Anything can happen and you need to be ready for emergencies.
7. Your role at the interview is to respond to questions, to ask your own questions and to observe. Be ready to meet people who are not part of your formal agenda. Be courteous to everyone regardless of his or her position; you never know who might be watching you and your actions once you arrive in town.
8. Don’t forget your table manners. Plant trips may include several meals or attendance at a reception the night before your “big day.” When ordering food at a restaurant, follow the lead of the employer host. For example, don’t order the three-pound lobster if everyone else is having a more moderately priced entree. If you have the “dining jitters,” some authorities suggest ordering food that is easy to handle, such as a boneless fish fillet or chicken breast.
9. Many employers have a set salary range for entry-level positions and others are more negotiable. Though salary should not be brought up until an offer is extended, it is wise to know your worth in advance. In as much as you are a potential employee, you also represent a valuable skills-set product. You should know what kind of product you have created, its value and what the company is willing to buy. Contact your campus career center to obtain more information on salaries.
10. Soon after the site visit, record your impressions of your performance. Review the business cards of those you met or write the information in your notebook before leaving the facility. You should have the names, titles, addresses and phone numbers of everyone who was involved in your interview so you can determine which individuals you may want to contact with additional questions or follow-up information. A thank-you letter should be written to the person(s) who will be making the hiring decision. Stay in touch with the employer if you want to pursue a career with them.

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

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

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

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FREQUENTLY ASKED ENGINEERING INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Tell me about the most challenging engineering project that you have been involved with during past year.
2. Describe the most significant written technical report or presentation that you had to complete.
3. In your last engineering position, what were some of the things that you spent the most time on, and how much time did you spend on each?
4. What do you enjoy most/least about engineering?
5. What new engineering specialty skills have you developed during the past year?
6. Do you have any patents? If so, tell me about them. If not, is it something you see yourself pursuing and why or why not?
7. Think of a specific engineering project when you answer this question. What could you have done to be more successful in achieving your goal(s)?
8. Describe a time when you confronted a problem that really tested your engineering know-how.
9. What is your overall career objective? Do you see yourself working in engineering ten years from now? If not, what do you think you will be doing?
10. Give me an example of a time in which you were effective in doing away with the “constant emergencies” and “surprises” that engineers often face.
11. Describe a time when as a member of the engineering department, you were instrumental in building a good long-term relationship with another department within the company.
12. Tell me about your greatest success in using the principles of logic to solve an engineering problem in your last job.
13. Give me an example of a time when you applied your ability to use analytical techniques to define problems or design solutions.
14. To what extent has your engineering background required you to be skilled in the analysis of technical reports or information?
15. Describe a time when you used your engineering knowledge to solve a problem for which there appeared to be no answer.
16. Tell me about a time when you became aware of a hazardous workplace condition. How did you handle it?
17. Tell me about your experience in dealing with routine engineering work. How do you keep from getting bored?
18. I expect the engineer that I hire for this position to be precise—detail oriented in everything he or she does. What checks and balances do you use to make sure that you don’t make mistakes?
19. Give me an example of a time when you had to teach a skill to other engineers.
20. Some of the best-engineered ideas are born out of an individual’s ability to challenge, others’ ways of thinking. Tell me about a time when you were successful in doing this.
21. On your last project assignment, what problems did you identify that had been previously overlooked?
22. How has your present or last engineering job changed while you’ve held it?
23. If I offer you a position as an engineer with us, how do you plan to get off to a jackrabbit start?
24. Give me an example of something that you have learned from a mistake that you made on a job at a client site.
25. Tell me about a time when a project team effort that you were involved in failed.
26. For what advice or assistance do fellow engineers turn to you?
27. Tell me about the most challenging technical proposal you’ve ever written.
28. What factors would you consider in building an engineering department from scratch?
29. How do you communicate priority projects with a team of other engineers without making them feel overwhelmed?
30. Describe a specific engineering project that you were responsible for that required a lot of interaction with a variety of people over a long period of time.
31. What do you get out of engineering that you couldn’t get from any other kind of work?
32. Describe a typical day out in the field in your last or present job.
33. What media contacts do you have that would help us market our technical products/services?
34. What step-by-step criteria do you use to make difficult decisions that involve other engineers?
35. To whom did you turn for help the last time that you ran into a major technical problem, and why did you choose that person?
36. Give me two examples of technical decisions that you had to make on your last job.
37. Tell me about a time when you had to make a difficult decision that affected the entire engineering department.
38. In the field of engineering, priorities often change quickly. Give me an example of a time when that happened. How did you handle it?
39. How can you best use your engineering education and prior work experience to help our company grow?
40. How long have you been looking for an engineering spot? Have you had any job offers yet? If so, why are you still looking?
41. Tell me about a time when you had to take disciplinary action with an engineer who reported to you.
42. Tell me about the last time you lost your temper in the field.
43. What personal characteristics do you feel are necessary to be a successful engineer?
44. What single technical skill or ability is your best asset?
45. What kind of hours did you typically work in your most recent engineering job?
46. What kinds of information would you request or require before you felt you could do justice to a project assignment?
47. Describe two specific technical contributions you would expect to make during the first six months on the job if you joined our company.
48. Tell me about a time when you surpassed all expectations by going “above and beyond” for a client.
49. What have you specifically done to make the work of the engineers who report to you easier?
50. How do you feel about the workload in the engineering department on your present or previous job?
QUESTIONS TO ASK EMPLOYERS

1. Please describe the duties of the job for me.
2. What kinds of assignments might I expect the first six months on the job?
3. Are salary adjustments geared to the cost of living or job performance?
4. Does your company encourage further education?
5. How often are performance reviews given?
6. What products (or services) are in the development stage now?
7. Do you have plans for expansion?
8. What are your growth projections for next year?
9. Have you cut your staff in the last three years?
10. How do you feel about creativity and individuality?
11. Do you offer flextime?
12. Is your company environmentally conscious? In what ways?
13. In what ways is a career with your company better than one with your competitors?
14. Is this a new position or am I replacing someone?
15. What is the largest single problem facing your staff (department) now?
16. May I talk with the last person who held this position?
17. What is the usual promotional time frame?
18. Does your company offer either single or dual career-track programs?
19. What do you like best about your job/company?
20. Once the probation period is completed, how much authority will I have over decisions?
21. Has there been much turnover in this job area?
22. Do you fill positions from the outside or promote from within first?
23. What qualities are you looking for in the candidate who fills this position?
24. What skills are especially important for someone in this position?
25. What characteristics do the achievers in this company seem to share?
26. Is there a lot of team/project work?
27. Will I have the opportunity to work on special projects?
28. Where does this position fit into the organizational structure?
29. How much travel, if any, is involved in this position?
30. What is the next course of action? When should I expect to hear from you or should I contact you?

ADVICE FROM THE EXPERTS

INTERVIEWING TIPS FROM ON-CAMPUS RECRUITERS

Research organizations in advance of interviews—Since most on-campus interviews are relatively short, it is important that you use this time to sell yourself to an employer. Don’t waste this opportunity by spending too much time on issues that could have been answered by surfing the company’s website and/or viewing its DVD. Displaying your knowledge about a potential employer will greatly enhance your chances of interview success.

Define your career goals and the opportunities you want—One of the keys to making a successful sale is product knowledge. In the case of job interviews, that product is you. You need to perform a thorough self-evaluation well in advance of your interviews. Know what your strengths, weaknesses, skills and abilities are and be prepared to discuss them during the interview.

Be enthusiastic and sincere during your interviews—It is important for you to convey a genuine sense of interest during the interview. You must appear eager and flexible, but not too rehearsed. Don’t fixate on being nervous. Even seasoned pros can have the “interview jitters.” Above all, never be late for an interview appointment.

Be honest—Don’t claim interest in an employer if you really do not intend to work for that organization. Don’t lie on your resume or during the interview. While you should never draw attention to your weaknesses, don’t attempt to hide a shortcoming by being untruthful. Learn how to deal with perceived (or real) weaknesses before your interviews by talking to a campus career services professional and/or reading books on job interviewing techniques.

Be realistic—Carefully evaluate what an employer has to offer you…and what you have to offer the employer. Don’t accept a position that isn’t suited to you “just because you need a job.” Although most entry-level salaries have been on the rise, do not set your starting salary expectations too high. If a starting salary seems inordinately low, but is for a position that you really want, you might be able to arrange for an early salary review.

Some of this material is adapted from Recruiting Trends by L. Patrick Scheetz, Ph.D., Collegiate Employment Research Institute. © Michigan State University.
Dressing for the Interview

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

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

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

Here are some guidelines:

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

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

Staying Within a Budget

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

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

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

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

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

A Final Check

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

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

Taking a Casual Approach

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

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

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

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

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

Meeting and Greeting

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

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

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

Dining

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

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

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

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

Eating

Follow these simple rules for eating and drinking:

- Start eating with the implement that is farthest away from your plate. You may have two spoons and two forks. The spoon farthest away from your plate is a soup spoon. The fork farthest away is a salad fork unless you have three forks, one being much smaller, which would be a seafood fork for an appetizer. The dessert fork/spoon is usually above the plate. Remember to work from the outside in.
- Dip soup away from you; sip from the side of the spoon.
- Season food only after you have tasted it.
- Bring food to your mouth—not your head to the plate.
- Try to eat at the same pace as everyone else.
- Take responsibility for keeping up the conversation.
- Place napkin on chair seat if excusing yourself for any reason.
- Place napkin beside plate at the end of the meal.
- Push chair under table when excusing yourself.

Never make an issue of the check.

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

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

Uses and Formats
Job search letters—or cover letters, as they are known generically—are a vital part of your search for a professional position. The different types of letters are an opportunity for you to prove your communication and organizational skills to prospective employers.

Follow several basic principles when composing the letters:
• Know your audience and purpose
• Use an active voice, not passive
• Be professional—proofread, check for spelling, grammar, and a professional tone

Uses/types of job search letters:
• Application Letter: when applying to a specific job within a specific company
• Prospecting Letter: when applying to a company without a specific job posted
• Networking Letter: when seeking information from a professional in your field
• Thank-You Letter: when thanking an employer for assisting you in some way; i.e., conducting an interview with you or taking time to speak with you at a career fair
• Acceptance Letter: when formally accepting a job offer
• Withdrawal Letter: when withdrawing your application from consideration
• Rejection Letter: when declining a job offer

Formats include:
• Full Block Format: left justified
• Modified Block Format: left justified, except for return address/date and closing/signature, which are located one tab to right of center
• Letterhead: used with either of the above formats, the heading is formatted to match your resume’s heading

While descriptions and samples follow, remember these tips:
• The immediate purpose of your Application and Prospecting Letters is to draw attention to your resume. The ultimate goal of your letter and resume is to get you an interview.
• Letters should be unique and tailored to each job/company, but you should have a basic letter that can be easily adapted to numerous companies quickly and easily.
• Address each employer by their title and professional name, unless you’ve received permission to call them by their first name.
• Indicate your knowledge and interest in the company by doing your homework on the company’s recent projects and having an understanding of the job description.

EMAIL CORRESPONDENCE

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

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

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

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

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

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

Thank-You Notes

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

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

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

Tips

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

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

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

Written by John Martalo, a freelance writer based in San Diego.
QUALITIES DESIRED IN NEW COLLEGE GRADUATES

By Businesses, Industries and Government Agencies

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

**Adapts Textbook Learning to the Working World**
- Quick learner
- Asks questions
- Analytical; independent thinker
- Willing to continue education and growth
- Committed to excellence

**Open-minded, willing to try new things**

**Knowledge of Computers**
- Established word processing, spreadsheet, database and presentation software skills
- Excellent computer literacy

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

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

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

*Source: Recruiting Trends by L. Patrick Scheetz, Ph.D., Collegiate Employment Research Institute. ©Michigan State University.*
DEALING WITH REJECTION IN THE JOB SEARCH

After meticulously preparing your cover letters and resumes, you send them to carefully selected companies that you are sure would like to hire you. You even get a few job interviews. But all of your return correspondence is the same: “Thanks, but no thanks.” Your self-confidence melts and you begin to question your value to an employer.

Sometimes, we begin to dread the BIG NO so much that we stop pursuing additional interviews, thereby shutting off our pipeline to the future. We confirm that we couldn’t get a job because we stop looking. Remember, fear of rejection doesn’t have to paralyze your job search efforts. Let that fear fuel your determination; make it your ally and you’ll learn a lot.

Eight Guidelines to Ward Off Rejection

1. **Depersonalize the interview.**
   Employers may get as many as 500 resumes for one job opening. How can you, I and the other 498 of us be no good?

2. **Don’t make it all or nothing.**
   Don’t set yourself up for a letdown: “If I don’t get this job, I’m a failure.” Tell yourself, “It could be mine. It’s a good possibility. It’s certainly not an impossibility.”

3. **Don’t blame the interviewer.**
   Realize interviewers aren’t in a hurry to think and behave our way. Blame your turndown on a stone-hearted interviewer who didn’t flatter you with beautiful compliments, and you will learn nothing.

4. **Don’t live in the past.**
   When you dredge up past failures, your nervous system kicks in and you experience all the feelings that go with failure. Unwittingly, you overestimate the dangers facing you and underestimate yourself.

5. **Don’t get mad at the system.**
   Does anything less pleasurable exist than hunting for a job? Still, you must adjust to the world rather than make the world adjust to you. The easiest thing is to conform, to do what 400,000 other people are doing. When you sit down to play bridge or poker or drive a car, do you complain about the rules?

6. **Take the spotlight off yourself.**
   Sell your skills, not yourself. Concentrate on what you’re there for: to find out the interviewer’s problems and to show how you can work together to solve them.

7. **See yourself in the new role.**
   Form a mental picture of the positive self you’d like to become in job interviews, rather than focusing on what scares you. All therapists agree on this: Before a person can effect changes, he must really “see” himself in the new role. Just for fun, play with the idea.

8. **Keep up your sense of humor.**
   Nobody yet has contracted an incurable disease from a job interview.

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

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

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

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

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

Searching for Federal Jobs
Federal agencies now fill their jobs like private industry by allowing applicants to contact the agency directly for job information and applications. However, most of these positions can be accessed through the USAJOBS site. All competitive service positions must be posted on the USAJOBS site, and although agencies are not required to post their excepted service positions on USAJOBS, many do.

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

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

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

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

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

Written by Chris Enstrom, a freelance writer from Nashville, Ind.
INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AND THE JOB SEARCH

Visit UMass Career Services international job board called Going Global at www.umass.edu/careers.

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

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

Role of Employers

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

The employer (through hiring managers, human resources staff or employment agencies) will most likely use some of the above strategies. If not, develop a plan to make sure your credentials are widely circulated. Notify as many people as possible in your field about your job search.

Strong Communication Skills

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

- Provide a well-prepared resume that includes desirable skills and relevant employment experiences.
- Clearly convey your interests and ability to do the job in an interview.
- Understand English when spoken to you and can effectively express your thoughts in English.
- It’s important to be able to positively promote yourself and talk with confidence about your education, relevant skills and related experiences. Self-promotion is rarely easy for anyone. But, it can be especially difficult for individuals from cultures where talking about yourself is considered inappropriate. When interviewing in the United States, however, you are expected to be able to explain your credentials and why you are suitable for the position.
- Be sensitive to the interviewer’s verbal and nonverbal cues. Some international students may not realize when their accent is causing them to be misunderstood. Interviewers are sometimes too embarrassed or impatient to ask for clarification, so be on the lookout for nonverbal cues, such as follow-up questions that don’t match your responses or sudden disinterest on the part of the interviewer. Also, make sure you express proper nonverbal communication; always look directly at the employer in the interview. Interviewers are sometimes too embarrassed or impatient when their accent is causing them to be misunderstood.

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

Career Center

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

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

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

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

1. Should I consider going to graduate school?
   Going to graduate school might be a good idea if you…
   • want to be a professor, lawyer, doctor, or work in any profession that requires a post-secondary education.
   • wish to develop additional expertise in a particular subject or field to maximize your future earning potential and opportunities for career advancement.
   • are deeply interested in a particular subject and wish to study it in-depth—and have the time and financial resources to devote to further education.

   Going to graduate school might not be a good idea if you…
   • are trying to delay your entry into the “real world” with real responsibilities and real bills.
   • are clueless about your career goals.
   • aren’t prepared to devote the time and hard work needed to succeed.
   • want to stay in school longer to avoid a poor job market.

2. Is it better to work first or attend graduate school immediately after I complete my undergraduate degree?
   Work first if…
   • you would like to get some real-world work experience before investing thousands of dollars in a graduate degree.
   • you cannot afford to go to graduate school now, and you haven’t applied for any scholarships, grants, fellowships and assistantships, which could pay for a great deal of your education.

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

3. I am broke. How will I pay for tuition, books, fees and living expenses?
   • Most engineering PhD programs offer students a paid teaching assistantship or research assistantship. However, most engineering Master’s programs do not. Check with individual departments to make sure you know how they handle funding.
   • Student Loans: Even if you’ve taken out loans in the past, another $50,000 - $75,000 may be a sound “investment” in your future.
   • Fellowships/Scholarships: A free education is always the best option. The catch is you need a high GPA, good GRE/GMAT/LSAT/MCAT scores and the commitment to search out every possible source of funding.
   • Teaching/Research Assistantships: Many assistantships include tuition waivers plus a monthly stipend. It’s a great way to get paid for earning an education.
   • Employer Sponsorship: Did you know that some companies actually pay for you to continue your education? The catch is they usually expect you to continue working for them after you complete your degree so they can recoup their investment.

4. What are the pros and cons of going to graduate school full-time vs. part-time?
   Benefits of attending graduate school full-time:
   • you’ll be able to complete your degree sooner.
   • you can totally commit your intellectual, physical and emotional energy to your education.
   • ideal if you want to make a dramatic career change.

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

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

Written by Roslyn J. Bradford.
GUIDELINES FOR WRITING YOUR PERSONAL STATEMENT

STEP 1: Brainstorming
Actions:
- Devote time to reflect on the following questions.
- Discuss them with friends or family members.
- Jot down notes. In some cases write sentences.
- Think about the flip side of each question. For example, why are you really committed to the field of biology despite pressure from your parents to become a lawyer or to get a job?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

STEP 2: Writing Your Personal Statement
Actions:
Incorporate your responses to the above questions. Begin writing your first draft:

1. Develop an outline of your statement prior to writing. It doesn’t have to be detailed. It can be three or four main points in the order you want to make them.

2. Accentuate your strengths and what makes you unique.

3. Explain your weaknesses in positive ways. For example, refer to them not as weaknesses but as areas for improvement or growth.

4. Paint pictures and tell stories about what makes you special. In this way the admissions readers will remember you. The story can be happy or sad. The more feeling you can inject into your statement, the more you will stand out.

5. Find out the specific orientation and philosophy of the graduate program. Adapt and refine your statement to fit. This will make you stand out from other applicants who recycle the same personal statement with each application.

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

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

References
Write for Success: Preparing a Successful Professional School Application, Third Edition, October 2005 by Evelyn W. Jackson, PhD and Harold R. Bardo, PhD. NAAHP, National Association of Advisors for the Health Professions, Inc.


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

Adapted with permission from the Office of Career Services at Rutgers University, New Brunswick Campus.
DEVELOPING A WINNING CURRICULUM VITAE (CV)

A Curriculum Vitae or CV is a professional document that is used for marketing your background for a variety of purposes, mostly within academia or research. It can be multiple pages, but should be focused. Use the following tips to help you get started on your CV.

Common Uses
- Graduate school admission, graduate assistantship or scholarship application
- Teaching, research and upper-level administrative positions in higher education
- School administration positions (superintendent, principal, department head)
- Research and consulting in a variety of settings
- Academic departmental and tenure reviews
- College or university service appointments
- Professional association leadership positions
- Publishing and editorial board reviews
- Speaking engagements
- Grant proposal

[Your CV] can be multiple pages, but should be focused.

Education
Include the following information:
- Name of institution(s) where obtained or working toward a degree, listed in reverse chronological order
- Official name of degree(s) and/or certification(s) obtained or currently working toward
- Add Master’s Thesis, Project and/or Dissertation title(s)
- Name of advisor

Foundational Standards
Found in most standard resumes:
- Heading—name, address, professional email and phone number. A website with professional content (e.g., a portfolio) can be listed in the heading as well. Use the direct URL to the proper page, so the recruiter doesn’t have to search your entire site.
- Objective—should be specific to the position for which you are applying.
- Format—standard margins of one inch, type size from 10-12 points and easy-to-read fonts.
- Content—the organization of your document should be rearranged depending on the potential employer. For example, if your education section speaks more to your qualifications for the desired position, it should appear before your employment experience.
- Experience—highlight paid, unpaid, school and extracurricular experiences that relate to your desired objective.
- Skills—technical/computer, language, leadership, laboratory to name a few.

Additional Sections
Depending on your background, you may want to add additional sections to your resume:
- Teaching Experience and Interests
- Research Experience and Interests
- Related Experience: Internships, Practicum and/or Fieldwork
- Grants Received and Academic Awards
- Special Training
- Scholarships and Fellowships

Written by Veronica Rahim, Career Services Consultant, Center for Career Opportunities, Purdue University, for the 2011-2012 Career Planning Handbook.
Candidates for employment, graduate school, scholarships or any activity for which others will evaluate their talents and abilities will need to request letters of recommendation. The content and quality of these letters, as well as the caliber of the people who write them, are critical to the selection process.

**Selecting People to Serve as References**

Select individuals whom you feel are knowledgeable of your skills, work ethic, talents and future capacity. The selection of your references is critical, as a reference that is ill-informed could sabotage all the great work you have done in a matter of minutes. Choose people who have known you for a minimum of six months. The longer they have known you the better, but they must have had regular contact with you to observe your growth and development. A reference from someone who may have known you several years ago but you have not spoken to in a year or more is not in a position to critique your skills.

If you must choose between several people, select those who know you the best but who also hold a higher rank in their profession. A department head is a better candidate than a graduate assistant or an instructor. Never choose someone on status alone, continue to choose people based on how well they know you and how much they want to assist you in your job search. Do not choose people who are not committed to you or who are not very familiar with your background.

**Try to Meet Face to Face**

Never assume someone will want the responsibility to serve as your reference. Make an appointment to discuss your career goals and purpose of the letter of recommendation. Determine if the person would want the responsibility of serving as your reference, which involves not only writing a letter supporting your skills, but also handling any phone inquiries and responding to other questions which may be posed by a selection committee. Persons who serve as a reference have responsibilities that go beyond the words they put on paper. They should feel strongly about your success and desire to do whatever they can to assist you in reaching your goals. You have come too far to let someone jeopardize your future.

A personal meeting is always best because you can observe your potential reference’s body language to see how interested he or she is in assisting you. A slow response to a question or a neutral facial expression may be this person’s way of trying to show you that he/she doesn’t feel comfortable serving as your reference. Trust your instincts. If you don’t feel that you want to pursue this person as a reference you are not required to inform them of your decision. At any rate, always thank the person and end the meeting on a positive note.

**Help Them Help You**

You must assist your reference-givers so they can do the best job possible. Provide them with a copy of your current resume, transcript, job descriptions for the type of employment you desire or other detailed information related to the purpose of the letter. Provide a one-page summary of any achievements or skills exhibited with the person who will be writing the letter. They may not remember everything you did under their supervision or time spent with you. Finally, provide them with a statement of future goals outlining what you want to accomplish in the next few years.

An employer will interview you and then contact your references to determine consistency in your answers. You should not inflate what you are able to do or what you may have completed in work or school assignments. A reference is looked upon as someone who can confirm your skill and ability level. Any inconsistencies between what you said in your interview and a reference’s response could eliminate you from further consideration. The key is to keep your references informed of what you are going to be discussing with employers so there is a clear understanding of what is valued by the employer.

**What’s the Magic Number?**

Each situation will dictate the appropriate number of references that will be required. The average would be three to five letters of recommendation. Generally, references are people whom you have known professionally; they should not be family or friends. When selecting people as references, choose people who know you well and have the most to say pertaining to the purpose of the letter. One person may be very appropriate for a reference for employment, while another would be best for use in admission to graduate or professional school or a scholarship application.

Encourage your reference to use strong, descriptive words that provide the evidence of your interpersonal skills initiative, leadership, flexibility, conflict resolution, decision-making, judgment, oral and written communication skills, and grasp of your field of study. Education majors are encouraged to request a letter from the cooperating teacher, supervising teacher, professor(s) in your major, and a current or former employer.

**Maintain Professional Courtesy**

Give your reference writers ample time to complete their letters and provide a self-addressed stamped envelope. Make it as easy for them as possible so they don’t have to spend valuable time searching for the proper return address and a stamp. Follow up with your letter writers and let them know the status of your plans and search. They will want to know how you are doing and whether there is anything else they may do to increase your candidacy. You never know when you will need their assistance again, and it is just good manners to keep those who care about you informed of your progress. Finally, many times when two or more candidates are considered equally qualified, a strong letter of reference can play an important role in determining who is selected for the position.

Maintaining a good list of references is part of any professional’s success. Continue to nurture valuable relationships with people who will want to do whatever they can to aid in your success. Your personal success is based on surrounding yourself with positive people who all believe in you. No one makes it alone; we all need a little help from our friends.

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

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