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.

- Immediately join an engineering development team
- Hone innovation and product design skills
- Receive formal mentor support
- Collaborate regularly with business unit managers and directors
- Acquire real-world experience through field assignments
- Foster relationships with Lutron’s global customers

Key opportunities include:
Engineering—Electrical, Mechanical, Computer, Software, Manufacturing, Industrial, Architectural
Science—Physics, Chemistry, Math

Opportunities are also available in sales leadership and field engineering leadership—hiring all majors.

To learn more about how you can be a part of our future visit
www.lutron.com/careers
Table of Contents

Career Services for RIT Students and Alumni .................................................. 2
Network Your Way to a Job .................................................................................. 4
Social Networking Websites ................................................................................. 5
Clean Up Your Social Media Identity ................................................................. 8
Career Fairs .......................................................................................................... 9
Informational Interviews ..................................................................................... 10
Turning Your Internship Into a Full-Time Position ............................................. 11
How to Find the Right Job .................................................................................. 12
Marketing Your Liberal Arts Degree .................................................................. 13
Ten Best Way to Go ONLINE…And Get the Job ............................................... 14
Ten Best Ways to Go OFFLINE...And Get the Job ............................................. 15
Don’t Forget the Small Companies ..................................................................... 16
Federal Jobs: Working for Uncle Sam ................................................................. 17
Transferable Skills ............................................................................................... 18
Resume Writing .................................................................................................... 19
Sample Resumes .................................................................................................. 21
Job Search Correspondence .................................................................................. 23
Sample Letters ...................................................................................................... 24
Developing Your Portfolio .................................................................................... 26
What Happens During the Interview? ................................................................. 27
Ten Rules of Interviewing .................................................................................... 28
Questions Asked by Employers ......................................................................... 29
Are You Ready for a Behavioral Interview? ....................................................... 30
The Site Visit/Interview: One Step Closer ......................................................... 31
Choosing Between Job Offers ............................................................................. 32
The Art of Negotiating .......................................................................................... 33
International Student Job Search ....................................................................... 34
Is Graduate School Right for You? ..................................................................... 35

Advertiser Index

Johns Hopkins University, Carey Business School ............................................. 20
Lutron ..................................................................................................................... Inside Front Cover
MathWorks ............................................................................................................ 36
National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency ........................................................... 3
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Lally School of Management ......................... 33
Rutgers University, Financial Statistics & Risk Management Master’s Program 20
Science, Mathematics And Research for Transformation (SMART) Scholarship for Service Program .......................................................... 36
Universal Instruments ......................................................................................... 10
Verizon ................................................................................................................ Inside Back Cover
Wegmans .............................................................................................................. Inside Back Cover

College Recruitment Media and RIT’s Office of Career Services & Co-op wish to thank the above participating sponsors for making this publication available to students.
Career Services for RIT Students and Alumni

The RIT Office of Career Services and Cooperative Education is driven by a simple mission: to provide effective, high-quality services to RIT students and alumni, empowering and supporting them in the achievement of their career and employment goals. Here we have highlighted key services and resources that are available to you.

Personal Support and Expertise

- **Job Search Advisement.** Career services coordinators in our office support specific academic departments and are available to meet on a one-to-one basis with students and alumni on career and employment matters. These sessions are critical to developing individual job search plans and addressing the many questions and issues that arise during the job search process. Call our office at 585-475-2301 to make an appointment. If you are a student and need an interpreter, make arrangements through https://myaccess.rit.edu/2/.

  Deaf and hard of hearing students and alumni at the Associate, Bachelor and Master’s degree levels, may want to work with staff in the NTID Center on Employment. Contact the Center at: 585-475-6834 (voice); 585-268-4544 (videophone); ntidcoe@rit.edu (email).

- **Career Counseling Services.** Career Counselors are available to work with you through the process of career exploration, whether you are changing majors or identifying new career goals. Depending on your needs, this may include one-on-one counseling, career and personality assessments or interest inventories. Your counselor can also provide you with occupational information and suggest other resources to help you determine occupations you may want to investigate. To make an appointment, call 585-475-2301.

- **Resume Critiques.** We are available to give you feedback on your resume so that you are able to best represent your skills and qualifications.

- **Walk-In Hours.** For quick questions or dealing with pressing issues. Walk in hours are offered in the Office of Career Services & Co-op Monday, Tuesday, Thursday 9:30-11:30 a.m. and 1:30-3:30 p.m. On Wednesday and Friday 9:30-11:30 a.m.

- **Job Opportunities.** We work hard to maintain and expand our working relationships with employers in order to post job openings or on-campus interviews for our students and alumni. These opportunities are accessible through RIT Job Zone, our web-based system. Once you have graduated, you will continue to have access to these job postings—set up a Job Zone alumni account through our site.

- **Graduate School Information.** Information related to selecting and applying to graduate schools is available through the graduate school page on our site. For assistance, make an appointment to meet with our graduate school career services coordinator, responsible for helping applicants through this process. We also host a Graduate School Fair that brings many school representatives to campus every year.

- **Professional Network.** RIT alumni, employers, and friends of the Institute volunteer to provide current students and alumni with career development support, counsel, guidance, reinforcement and constructive examples. The Professional Network is accessible to students and alumni on-line through RIT Job Zone.

Programming and Events

We offer a variety of programs and events that will ultimately help you launch a successful career. Some of our key events include:

- **Career Fairs.** Our office sponsors two major fairs and a number of specialized career fairs throughout the year. Fairs are free and open to RIT students and alumni.

- **Workshops/Info Sessions.** Our staff prepares individuals for their job search through workshops and info sessions. Topics include: job search strategies, resume writing, cover letter writing, interviewing techniques, dress for success, use of social media, how to work a career fair, on-the-job success, alumni-specific programs, and much more.

- **Company Networking Events.** Many companies schedule visits to campus because it is a great opportunity to showcase their company and meet students and alumni. It is an opportunity to learn more about companies and what they look for in candidates.

- **Interview Preparation.** We offer personal advice and ways to practice for interviews. Also available is an online video practice interviewing system that offers simulated interviews for job seekers to practice both verbal and non-verbal communication skills.

Our Mock Interview Program is offered twice a year, and provides the opportunity to conduct a practice interview with volunteers from industry. Receive immediate and valuable feedback that will help you prepare for future interviews.

- **Portfolio Reviews.** We offer programming that brings professionals from the creative industry to campus to provide valuable feedback on your portfolio.
Online Resources
Information and resources can be accessed through the main page of our site at www.rite.edu/oce. Here’s a sampling:

- **Job Zone.** Access job postings, on-campus interview opportunities and career fair information through this section of our site. Set up a search agent that will email you opportunities that match your search criteria. Upload a resume so that potential employers can find you. Network with industry representatives through the Professional Network feature. Job Zone is a resource that you should definitely be tapping into.

- **Other Sites.** Visit the Web-based Tools and Resources page of our site for a complete list of sites that we subscribe to so that you have access to them. Be sure to check out CareerSearch, Vault’s Career Insider, Internships.com, Going Global, and Glass Door. You will also find a list of recommended sites by major, for additional sources of jobs and career information.

- **RIT’s Online Alumni Network.** A site maintained by RIT’s Office of Alumni Relations, primarily for alumni to keep informed of campus events and news and network with other alumni. Students have access within two semesters of graduation. It’s a great resource for identifying alumni that are working at a company, or in a particular city—because this information can help you make valuable contacts that will help you advance your career goals.

Communications and Social Media
Not only do we connect and communicate directly with you via email, but also through a variety of social media: Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, Pinterest.
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.

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.

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.

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?

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.”

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.
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.

“Social Networking Websites” written by Harriet L. Schwartz.
Clean Up Your Social Media Identity

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

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

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

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

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

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

Remove unflattering pictures, videos, and unfavorable comments you’ve posted on social networks. Post a high-quality headshot, the same one across all platforms. Important: Don’t forget to check out photos where friends have tagged you on Facebook. If you’re pictured at a party with a drink in hand, delete the tag. Adjust privacy settings to prevent that from happening again.

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

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

Get LinkedIn
This is the single best social media platform for job seekers because of its professional focus. Some savvy employers are now even requesting LinkedIn profile info as part of the job application process. One of the most powerful aspects of this profile is the recommendations from previous bosses and co-workers. Testimony from others is proof positive of your professionalism.

Make good use of keywords and set up links between all your social media profiles. LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, and Blogspot all rank high in Google searches.

Witness Protection Program
Some job seekers are so concerned about privacy they’ve gone into lockdown mode and blocked all of their profiles. Unfortunately, that makes recruiters wonder what they’re trying to hide. Plus, many of them seek employees with social media skills, so cleaning up what’s out there is usually better than shutting it down.

What Would Your Mother Say?
Many career coaches and recruiters say that the rule of thumb for social media content is: Would you want your mother or employer to see it? No? Then don’t post it.

“Self-censorship is the main key,” says Alexandra Levit, author of Blind Spots: The 10 Business Myths You Can’t Afford to Believe on Your New Path to Success. “Always think before you post, because if there is a single person out there who you don’t want to see your content, I guarantee it will get back to them.”

You may be too close to the situation to judge what’s appropriate or not, so it can be helpful to have a second pair of eyes to look over your profiles. Select someone who’s about the same age as your target employers, experienced in your field, or at least in the hiring process.

Netiquette Tips
Dan Schwabel, a personal branding expert and author of Me 2.0, offers these tips to keep your digital reputation clean:

• Don’t over-promote yourself or people will get turned off.
• Do share industry insights, useful resources, quotes and facts with your audience.
• Don’t send your resume to employers on Facebook.
• Do build a relationship through tweeting before you email blindly.
• Don’t come to an interview without researching the company and the hiring manager online, using LinkedIn first.

Written by Jebra Turner, a former human resources manager, who writes about career issues, and other business topics. She lives in Portland, Ore., and can be reached at www.jebra.com.
Career Fairs

A career fair is an exciting event welcoming organizations to campus to recruit students and alumni. It is your opportunity to investigate career fields and positions; meet representatives from companies for whom you are interested in working; gather information about industries; gain an opportunity for an interview with a company.

What to Expect at the Venue

- A large room, with rows and rows of booths or tables with company reps standing at them.
- It will be crowded, with long lines at some tables, and loud.
- Be prepared to wait—plan your strategy ahead of time so your time is not wasted.
- Some career fairs offer additional, private space for employers to conduct formal interviews with students/alumni at or after the event.

Prepare Before the Fair

- Search RIT Job Zone for a list of participating companies and job descriptions.
- Identify and research companies of interest.
- Update your resume and have it critiqued.
- Submit your resume through the company’s website—show the recruiter you have taken initiative.
- Prepare good questions based on more than information easily found on the company’s website.
- Know yourself and what you have to offer. Prepare your “60-Second Commercial” introduction.
- Anticipate questions and plan responses as you would for any interview.
- Attend career preparation programming offered by Office of Career Services & Co-op prior to the fair.

What to Bring to the Fair

- Your school ID to check in at the fair.
- Copies of resume, possibly a transcript and samples of your work, if appropriate.
- Pen and paper to take notes.
- A padfolio or folder to carry resumes and notes, and to store business cards, company literature.

Strategy During the Fair

- Survey layout of the fair, and prioritize the employers with whom you’d like to speak.
- Start by approaching organizations with a lower priority to gain confidence.
- Pay attention to length of lines, adjust your strategy.
- Start with your “60-second commercial” to introduce yourself.

- Explain why you have an interest in them, and what skills and qualifications you have to offer the company.
- Know your schedule just in case you are asked to interview.
- Ask recruiter what the next step in the process is and how you should follow up with them.

Make a Good First Impression

- Dress for success—interview attire is appropriate.
- Put your cell phone away.
- Approach the recruiter, shake hands, use good eye contact and smile.

Tips From Recruiters

- Don’t ask: “So what does your company do?”
- Don’t ramble or take up too much of the recruiter’s time; be confident and smile.
- Get the representative’s business card if available.
- Make notes immediately after speaking with each company.
- Explore all your options—speak with companies you may not have considered before.
- Being asked to apply through their site is a good thing; you have not wasted your time talking with the recruiter. Many companies are required to track candidates through their site.
- If recruiter works in a different area from the one you’re interested in, you can try to find out how to get in touch with a more appropriate person in the company.
- Don’t expect to be offered a job at the career fair, but you may get an interview.

Follow Up After the Event

- Send the recruiter a thank you note immediately. Use notes about your discussion to personalize it; remind the employer that you talked with them at the career fair, reinforce how your skills and qualifications will be an asset, and reiterate your interest in an interview. Send an additional resume with your thank you note.
- Follow up with a phone call within one week of the event. Restate your interest in the company and position; find out your status and when you might hear about interviews.
- If you do have an interview following the career fair, make sure to send a thank-you note to the interviewer within 48 hours of the interview. Just like any interview, thank them for the opportunity, reiterate your interest in the company and position, and convey how you will be an asset to the company.
- If you forgot to get a recruiter’s name, the Office of Career Services & Co-op collects contact information from those willing to have it shared after the fair.
Working a Career Fair From a Distance

If you are not able to attend a career fair, there are still some ways you can take advantage of the opportunity to connect with representatives, and find out about opportunities.

• Look at the list of participating companies. If they are coming to a fair, they are most likely hiring—a company is in good financial shape or has a bright outlook if they are willing to spend the money to travel to a career fair. Many companies take the time to submit job descriptions prior to their visit to campus, go ahead and apply to them!

• Apply through the company website. Always apply to open-ings through their site. Even if you can come to the career fair, companies want you to submit your resume through their site because it helps them track candidates. So in this way, you are on a level playing field with people who do attend a fair.

• Use the career fair contacts. Check with the Office of Career Services & Co-op—we have a database of thousands of company contacts. Recruiters from a fair, open to being contacted, will be on a list after the fair for follow up.

Remember, no one gets hired just as a result of a career fair conversation—it is just a point of contact that can help move you along in the hiring process. You are just missing out on that initial contact a career fair can offer—but as you can see there are ways you can make up for it.

Informational Interviews

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

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

What motivates professionals to grant informational interviews?

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

How do you set up informational interviews?

One possible approach is to send a letter requesting a brief informational interview (clearly indicating the purpose of the meeting, and communicating the fact that there is no job expectation). Follow this up with a phone call to schedule an appointment. Or, initiate a contact by making cold calls and set up an appointment. The best way to obtain an informational interview is by being referred from one professional to another, a process which becomes easier as your network expands.

How do you prepare for informational interviews?

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

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

Always remember to send a thank-you letter to every person who grants you time and to every individual who refers you to someone.
Turning Your Internship Into a Full-Time Position

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

5. **Set Realistic Goals and Expectations**
   Invest actively in the most critical element of your internship—that is, the learning agenda which you set up with your supervisor at the beginning of the assignment. Your learning agenda should target specific skills and competencies that you wish to acquire and demonstrate. After all, the learning agenda is what distinguishes a short-term job from an internship. It is up to you to establish a correlation between your learning goals and the daily work you are asked to perform. Maintain a journal of your activities and accomplishments in order to monitor your progress. Seek regular reviews from your supervisor to assess your performance and reinforce the fact that you mean business.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Written by Lina Melkonian, Executive Director of Development at San José State University, College of Engineering.
Finding the job you want takes many steps and involves just as many decisions. This checklist is designed to help you along the way and guide you to the appropriate sources. Be sure to discuss your progress with your career advisor.

**Knowing What You Want**
✓ Choose your ideal work environment—large corporation, small business, government agency or nonprofit organization.
✓ Choose your ideal location—urban, suburban or rural.
✓ List your three most useful job skills and know which is your strongest.
✓ Know whether you want to work with people, data or things.
✓ Know whether you enjoy new projects or prefer following a regular routine.
✓ List some of the main career areas that might interest you.
✓ List your favorite leisure time activities.
✓ Know what kind of reward is most important to you in a job—money, security, creative authority, etc.

**Researching Career Options**
✓ Develop a list of career possibilities to research.
✓ Visit your career services library and utilize the Internet to learn about various careers. *The Dictionary of Occupational Titles* and the *Occupational Outlook Handbook* are valuable resources.
✓ Consider whether your desired career requires an advanced degree.
✓ Keep up with current trends in your field through trade publications, news/business magazines and newspapers.
✓ Identify employers interested in interviewing someone with your academic background and experience; create a list of three or more employers in the field you are considering.
✓ Use the Internet to learn more about potential employers and check out salary surveys and hiring trends in your anticipated career field.
✓ Make at least three professional contacts through LinkedIn, friends, relatives or professors to learn more about your field of interest.
✓ Meet with faculty and alumni who work or who have worked in your field to talk about available jobs and the outlook for your field.

**Creating a Resume**
✓ Form a clear job objective.
✓ Know how your skills and experience support your objective.
✓ Use action verbs to highlight your accomplishments.
✓ Limit your resume to one page and make sure it is free of misspelled words and grammatical errors.
✓ Create your resume using a word processing program and have it professionally duplicated on neutral-colored paper, preferably white, light gray or beige. If you are submitting your resume online, be sure to include relevant keywords and avoid italics, bold and underlined passages.
✓ Compose a separate cover letter to accompany each resume and address the letter to a specific person. Avoid sending a letter that begins “Dear Sir/Madam.”

**Preparing for the Interview**
✓ Arrange informational interviews with employees from companies with which you might want to interview. Use your network of acquaintances to schedule these meetings.
✓ Thoroughly research each employer with whom you have an interview—be familiar with product lines, services offered and growth prospects.
✓ Practice your interviewing technique with friends to help prepare for the actual interview.
✓ Using the information you have gathered, formulate questions to ask the employer during the interview.
✓ Arrive on time in professional business attire.
✓ Collect the needed information to write a thank-you letter after each interview.

✓ Participate in a work experience or internship program in your chosen field to learn of the daily requirements of the careers you are considering. Such assignments can lead to permanent job offers following graduation.
✓ Become an active member in one or more professional associations—consult the *Encyclopedia of Associations* for organizations in your field.
✓ Volunteer for a community or charitable organization to gain further work experience. Volunteer positions can and should be included on your resume.
Marketing Your Liberal Arts Degree

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

To be successful, you should combine your long-term vision with short-term specificity. Present yourself to your potential employer as someone who both understands the broad goals of the company and has the ability to grow and contribute in the long run. But most importantly, show how you can excel in that specific job. And this, most likely, will involve some specialized skills. If you’ve taken business courses, had work experiences or done specialized work on a computer in your liberal arts work, point out those strengths.

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

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

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

What Liberal Arts Graduates Are Doing

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

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

Almost 40% of HR managers predict resumes will soon be replaced by social networking profiles. Even today, to get the attention of recruiters, grads have to establish a highly visible online presence. Most students are comfortable using technology to connect with family and friends, but unsure about how to use it in a professional context.

1. Check Out Major Job Boards
Technology is great, so as a job seeker it might seem like a no-brainer to go job hunting on the Internet. “Digital job search is attractive to young people because they’re tech savvy,” said J.T. O’Donnell of CareerHMO.com. But after months of trolling job boards with no response, they wonder “What’s wrong with me?”

Nothing, according to O’Donnell. Estimates are that only 4% to 10% of the people who look for jobs online ever find one. It’s a long-shot. The “underbelly of the job posting world,” she says, “is that many listings are already filled, were just fishing expeditions, or are outright scams.”

2. Online Job Search Engines
A better bet is a search engine that delivers job listings directly to you. O’Donnell recommends linkup.com. “They focus on company websites so there are fewer duplicate, stale or fishy listings. You can also set up alerts to contact you if one of their 22,000+ companies posts a new opening.”

TweetAJob.com, where recruiters tweet jobs, is another engine O’Donnell likes because, “job search success is often just a matter of timing and this is immediate. You can respond quite quickly and be one of the first people in their inbox.”

It may be that Google is now becoming the #1 (unofficial) job search engine. Job hunters can search (or set up automatic alerts) for job titles, companies, cities, states, and get lists of postings that match their terms.

3. Compare Company Cultures Online
Want to get the real scoop on what’s like to work at your dream company? Check out Glassdoor.com, which rates companies similar to how Yelp rates consumer services. “They accept anonymous information on companies,” says O’Donnell, “They post salary ranges for jobs, feedback ratings on leadership and information on the interview process.”

4. Write Your Resume in Digital Format
“Eighty percent of all companies are using a ATS [applicant-tracking system that scans and digitizes], so key words are key,” says O’Donnell. “As recent grads don’t have a lot of professional experience, they probably won’t get selected for an interview.”

There’s a way to get around that. Reverse-engineer several job descriptions, first highlight the repeating keywords (“Microsoft Office Suite,” not “Motivated, self-starter”), then plug them into your resume. Presto… an ATS software-friendly, search-engine-optimized resume!

5. Embrace LinkedIn
Think of LinkedIn as your resume—on steroids. Fill out your profile completely, but don’t stop there. Use LinkedIn to reach specific individuals—the people most likely to hire you or help you get hired. “Search the database just like recruiters do, by job titles, companies and professions. Search for people who are in jobs one, two, or three levels above your target job,” says Martin Yate, author of Knock ‘em Dead, the Ultimate Job Search Guide.

6. Tweet, Tweet
Twitter is a favorite method for recruiters to get a quick look at who you are and how you think. It’s fairly easy to micro-blog, too. Share your career-related news or retweet nuggets of interest to people in your field.

O’Donnell says Twitter is one of her favorite ways to contact hard-to-meet people. “Username, I’d really like to connect with you on Twitter,” she’ll ask. “And they’re likely to do it because it’s only a 140-character commitment. Later, you can tweet, ‘would you mind if I connect with you on LinkedIn?’ It’s low-risk for them so you’ll see a high rate of return.”

7. Email Etiquette
Most job seekers go through two to six exchanges with recruiters between the time they email “We got your resume” and when they sit in the interview chair, according to Tim Sanders, author of Love is the Killer App: How to Win Business and Influence Friends. Stalking a recruiter with too frequent emails should be avoided. Don’t text a recruiter either, he warns. Texting a stranger might come across as overly familiar or even creepy.

8. Broadcast on Facebook
Even though Facebook is usually thought of as a purely social platform, it can be useful during a job search. “I’d do a post to my network of friends, family and other contacts,” says Sanders, “rather than contacting strangers.” For instance: “I am on the hunt to find a job at [company] because of X. Does anyone know anybody at [company]?” That X has to be believable, such as, “I think they make the best products in the industry.”

It’s good to repost a variation of that request every few days. (You’re reaching only about 10% of your friends’ feeds at any time, Sanders says.)

9. A Picture Is Worth a Thousand Words
Your digital footprint often precedes you, so it’s a good idea to periodically review your online identity. Enlist another set of eyes, too, for another perspective.

“I helped my niece with her profile,” says Peggy Klaus, author of BRAG! The Art of Tooting Your Own Horn Without Blowing It. “I opened up her Facebook page and see her in a picture with a hookah. She said, ‘Aunt Peg, it’s only tobacco!’ And I said, ‘I don’t care! To people of my generation, a hookah means pot.’” Klaus recommends a professional pose, conservative attire, possibly taken by a studio photographer.

10. Polish Your Online Image
“Don’t show or say anything online that you wouldn’t want your mother or boss to see,” she warns. “Clean up your email address and privacy settings. Even then be careful what you share. You don’t know who’s standing around looking over who’s shoulder, or what will be forwarded and sent around.”

Watch your grammar and spelling, don’t be silly or edgy, and stay away from political commentary (unless that’s appropriate for the job or industry), Klaus advises. Employers value good written communication skills.

Written by Jebra Turner, a former human resources manager, who writes about career issues, and other business topics. She lives in Portland, Ore., and can be reached at www.jebra.com.
Ten Best Ways to Go OFFLINE... And Get the Job

Richard Belles, author of the legendary job search book, *What Color Is Your Parachute?,* warns that the biggest mistake he sees job hunters make is spending too long looking online and getting nowhere. Experts estimate that only 4% to 10% of online job seekers have any success using that method. What’s a better option? Ask for leads and info from family, friends, professors, and any other folks you run into. That’s how most people find a job.

1. Get From Online to F2F
   If you’ve been spending time searching online, you may have developed virtual friendships with members of industry, special interest or alumni groups. See if you can take those relationships offline. “Maintaining contacts made online is time consuming,” says Vicky Oliver author of 201 Smart Answers to Business Etiquette Questions. “Then I realized that this LinkedIn group I belong to, for the alums of Ivies, was actually meeting in my area, so I attended an event. What a great way to network!”
   If there isn’t a group already meeting, set up one yourself (maybe through MeetUps.com) or invite one person for coffee. Face time can take a relationship to a whole new level.

2. Job Fairs, Conferences and Classes
   Go anywhere groups of people in your field assemble. Because everyone has a common interest, and often their intention is to make connections—conversation will flow naturally. While job fairs catering to your major and career interests are best, it may be worth casting a bigger net. “Say you hear about a medical clinical professional job fair, and maybe you’re looking for a staff account-tant job. Pay your money and show up anyway,” says Kathleen Downs, recruiting manager at Robert Half International in Orlando, Fla. “There will be HR folks there, so bring your resume, dress in interview clothes, and talk to them.” Downs especially recommends this tactic of networking for people who are extroverted and present well.

3. Set Up Informational Interviews
   Spending 20 minutes with someone in the trenches is the best way to research a position, industry or company you’ve targeted. It’s a good way to add contacts to your network too. You can have interesting, meaningful conversations. They’ll also be more likely to want to help you—possibly put in a good word on your behalf or hand-deliver your resume.
   Tap your network of friends and family and keep your request simple. Try some variation of this script: “Do you know anyone who works in sports marketing?” Or, “Do you know anyone who works at Nike?” Or, “Do you know anyone who might know someone who knows such a person?” and finally, “Is it okay for me to contact them and mention you suggested I get in touch?”
   At the end of each informational interview, ask for more leads so you get passed on to others.

4. Be the Total Package
   Tattoos, body piercings, or hipster attire may be your personal image statement, but don’t let your appearance scream so loudly that people can’t hear what you’re saying. “Some girls will come in with a small nose ring, and while I don’t think there’s anything wrong with that—it doesn’t help,” says Downs. “Look as conservative as you can and remove all distractions.”

5. Tell a Story About Yourself
   In addition to discussing general topics of interest, learn how to slip in a bit about your job search: “I’m looking for a staff account-tant job.” Later, practice relaying more detailed, career-related information about yourself. “You need to be specific about your skills and talents,” said Peggy Klaus, author of *Brag! The Art of Tooting Your Own Horn Without Blowing It,* “so you’re able to explain what it is that you do. Prepare and rehearse little stories so it comes off conversationally.”

6. Be a Giver
   Now is a great time to volunteer for a nonprofit or industry group. You’ll get out of the house, feel a sense of accomplishment and pick up some new skills. Maybe best of all: “Nonprofits have people serving on their boards that may be able to help you, and you’d never make their acquaintance otherwise,” says Downs.

7. Put on a Happy Face
   A job search can be stressful, especially if it’s protracted, but “don’t bring your emotional baggage with you,” when you’re out and about, says Klaus. “You may have just had a fight with your girlfriend, but you still have to act as if you’re delighted to be there.”

8. Gyms, Coffee Shops and Bike Paths
   Develop the ability to strike up a casual conversation about things that interest you, such as karaoke, city bikes or house-roasted coffee. (Geeky is good.) The low-risk first step prepares you to engage in step two, which is an information-gathering career-related conversation, and finally, the actual job interview.
   Plus, by meeting people everywhere you go, you can engage innumerable pairs of eyes and ears helping you look for a job, which is what often leads to success. “The best way to find a job is still friends of friends,” says Oliver. “Build a network of connections so that you hear about a job before it’s posted.”

9. Network From Within
   Taking a not-perfect-fit job at a dream company is a great way to network and develop relationships from the inside. “Say you want to be a software developer at Apple, but you’re offered a junior quality control position. Take it and in a few years you may be right where you want to be,” says Tim Sanders, author of *Love is the Killer App: How to Win Business and Influence Friends.* Don’t worry about getting stuck in your first role. If you’re a talented person who makes a good fit with the corporate culture, a smart company will find a way to train and promote you.

10. Rinse and Repeat
    Even after you’re hired, don’t stop adding to your network and nurturing your contacts. In an uncertain world, no job is permanent; we’re all temporary employees.

Written by Jebra Turner, a former human resources manager, who writes about career issues, and other business topics. She lives in Portland, Ore., and can be reached at www.jebra.com.
Don’t Forget the Small Companies

Most students concentrate their job search on Fortune 500 corporations or other large, well-known companies with defined and approachable personnel departments. And in an economic climate that has proved challenging for small business, it would be easy to follow the path of “most students.”

But don’t count out the small companies just yet. Small businesses have been at the forefront of innovation, economic growth and job creation, and there’s no reason to doubt they’ll continue to find themselves in this position in the future.

Generally, any business with 200 or fewer employees is considered a small company. Whether the business has 20 employees or 20,000, the research you do in preparation for an interview opportunity will be the best gauge of the company’s outlook. As we’ve seen, large companies can be just as shaky as small ones, so the questions really come down to: “Is a small company right for you?” and “Are you right for a small company?” There are several things to consider when deciding between working in a large versus a small company.

Is a Small Company Right for You?

Small companies tend to offer an informal atmosphere, an all-for-one camaraderie and require more versatility and dedication on the part of the company and workers. Small companies are usually growing so they are constantly redefining themselves and the positions within them. Look at the following list of small company traits and consider which are advantages and which are disadvantages for you.

- You are given more responsibility and are not limited by job titles or descriptions.
- Your ideas and suggestions will be heard and given more attention.
- Career advancement and salary increases may be rapid in a growing company.
- You have less job security due to the high rate of failure for a small business.
- You have the opportunity to be involved in the creation or growth of something great.
- You may be involved in the entire organization rather than in a narrow department.
- You may be eligible for stock options and profit sharing.
- The environment is less bureaucratic; there are fewer rules and regulations and thus fewer guidelines to help you determine what to do and whether you’re succeeding or failing.
- Successes and faults are more visible.
- Starting salaries and benefits may be more variable.
- A dominant leader can control the entire organization. This can lead either to more “political games” or a healthy, happy atmosphere.
- You must be able to work with everyone in the organization.

Are You Right for a Small Company?

Because most small companies do not have extensive training programs, they look for certain traits in potential employees. You will do well in a small company if you are:

- Self-motivated
- A generalist with many complementary skills
- A good communicator, both oral and written
- Enthusiastic • A risk-taker • A quick learner
- Responsible enough to get things done on your own

There are fewer limitations, and it’s up to you to make the best or worst of that freedom. A small business often has a strong company culture. Learn that company’s culture; it will help you on your way up the corporate ladder.

Finding a Job in a Small Company

One of the biggest hurdles to finding a job in a small business is contacting a hiring manager. Good timing is critical. The sporadic growth of many small companies can mean sporadic job openings, so you need to network. A small business tends to fill its labor needs informally through personal contacts and recommendations from employees. Job hunters must find their way into the organization and approach someone with hiring authority. This means you must take the initiative. Once you have someone’s attention, you must convince him or her that you can do something for the company. How do you find information on small companies? Try these techniques:

- Contact the chamber of commerce in the area you would like to work. Get the names of growing companies in the industry of your choice. Peruse the membership directory.
- Participate in the local chapter of professional trade associations related to your career. Send prospective employers a cover letter and resume, then follow up with a phone call.
- Read trade publications, business journals and area newspapers for leads. Again, follow up.
- Speak with small business lenders such as bankers, venture capitalists and small business investment companies listed in directories at local libraries.

Keep the following differences between large and small companies in mind as you conduct your job search:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Large Company</th>
<th>Small Company</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Centralized Human Resources . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . No HR</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal recruiting program . . . . . No full-time recruiters</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standardized hiring procedures . . . . . No standard hiring procedures</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep resumes on file . . . . Usually won’t keep resumes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview held with</td>
<td>Interview often held with recruiters and managers . . . . . the founder or direct boss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career section on website . . . . . . . . . . . . . Little/no career section on website</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiring done months in advance of starting date . . . . . Hired to begin immediately</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal training programs . . . . . On-the-job training</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Predetermined job categories . . . . . Jobs emerge to fit needs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Always do your homework on the company, and persuade them to hire you through your initiative and original thinking.

If you haven’t graduated yet, offer to work for them as an intern. This will give you experience, and if you do well, there’s a good chance that a job will be waiting for you on graduation day.

Adapted with permission from the Career Resource Manual of the University of California, Davis.
Federal Jobs: Working for Uncle Sam

S
o you want to work for the federal government? You are not alone. Uncle Sam employs approximately 2.7 million civilian workers worldwide. Federal employees receive a generous benefits package, and as of 2012 they earned an average salary of $81,709. As the largest employer in the U.S., the federal government offers a variety of career opportunities unparalleled in the private sector. Federal employees work with (and create) cutting-edge technology. They design 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 don’t associate with your major. It’s not unusual for a biology major, for example, to find a job with Homeland Security or the Department of Defense.

How to Apply

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

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

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

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

What Are Transferable Skills?

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

Your transferable skills are often:

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

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

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

Identifying Transferable Skills

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

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

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

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

Working With People

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

Working With Things

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

Working With Data/Information

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

Easy Steps to Identify Your Transferable Skills

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

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

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

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

“While working for Jones Engineering, I performed 3D modeling and drafting.”

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

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

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

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

Using Transferable Skills in the Job Search

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

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

Additional Tips to Help Identify Your Transferable Skills

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

Written by Rosita Smith.
Resume Writing

A potential employer spends an average of only 30 seconds looking at each resume. To stand out from the competition, it’s essential that your resume be the best possible representation of who you are and what you have to offer.

A resume is a concise summary of your skills and qualifications. Its purpose is to organize relevant facts, which will serve as your personal advertisement. Think of yourself as a product that you’re selling to prospective employers. How you package yourself allows a hiring manager to determine if you are a strong candidate.

Your resume should be well-planned, distinctive, and professional in appearance. A good format and well-written text improve readership. Consistency in date, punctuation, indentation, style and tense is important. Each statement needs to be accurate and not overly inflated. Avoid revealing potentially negative information unnecessarily, or selling your accomplishments short.

For most students and new alumni, a one-page resume is most appropriate. Be concise, but not too concise. Don’t leave off relevant information that will entice a hiring manager to interview you! If a second page is needed, repeat your name at the top just in case the pages get separated. Never go beyond two pages.

Planning Your Resume

Before you can write a persuasive resume, you need to answer the following questions:

- What is the employer looking for in a potential candidate?
- What skills/qualities can you offer an employer?
- What resume format will best highlight your skills and accomplishments?

Contents of a Resume

- **Identifying Information.** Your name, address, phone number and e-mail address are typically included; however you have the option to just include a phone number and e-mail address, to keep your identity safe, especially if you’re applying for jobs online. Add your mailing address if it’s to your advantage (i.e. you live in the same city as the company location). Include your personal website or online portfolio, if applicable.

- **Job Objective.** A brief statement indicating the type of opportunity by title and/or function. Make sure your objective fits the type of job you want. If you’re applying for co-op jobs, add your availability. Do not include “I” statements.

- **Educational Background.** List of colleges and universities attended, dates, degrees, and certificates with emphasis on highest-level achieved and special training pertinent to your job objective. List your major(s) and any minor or concentration. Include a strong GPA and any academic honors. No longer include high school information.

- **Skills Section.** List specific skills and abilities most useful in your career field, separated by subcategory. Examples include computer, technical, laboratory, design, foreign languages.

- **Projects/Labs.** Elaborate on team, individual class projects or labs that demonstrate how you used your knowledge and skills in a team or work setting. Emphasize leadership roles.

- **Experience or Work History.** Indicate dates of employment (month/year), name of employer, city and state, title of each position. Describe major duties, responsibilities, skills, notable achievements and/or results. Use action verbs and eliminate pronouns like “I”, “me”, and “my”. You may want to have one section for related work experience and a separate section for other experience. Employment relevant to your job objective should be elaborated on; unrelated experience should be mentioned briefly.

- **Activities or Interests.** Mention extracurricular activities, professional memberships and affiliations, community activities, or hobbies. Be sure to note leadership roles.

- **Optional Categories.** Military record, licenses/certifications, publications, research projects, other experiences (e.g., volunteer, travel).

Resume Formats

The two most common formats are Reverse Chronological and Functional. Choose the resume format that most effectively markets your skills and experiences.

1. **Reverse Chronological Format**

This format typifies about 80% of all resumes. It is most appropriate for the typical student, new graduate, or someone with a very logical career path. Education and job history are described in descending order, with the most recent events first. It tends to emphasize job titles and organizations, as well as a job history related to field of study.

2. **Functional Format**

This format goes beyond simply outlining experience and education. It is appropriate for a more seasoned individual or career changer. The key focus is the section on “transferable skills.” Group your work accomplishments, responsibilities, and duties according to functional skill areas such as “Computer,” “Technical,” “Project Planning,” “Managerial,” “Sales,” “Communication,” and “Design.” Choose your skill headings according to your job objective and briefly describe, using action statements, the work you did in each of the broad categories you identify. In fact, you may draw upon volunteer positions, education and other life experiences for many of the skills you wish to note. Work history and job titles are not emphasized in this format.

Tips for Designing Your Resume

- Standard serif (Times New Roman, Palatino) and sans serif (Arial, Helvetica) fonts work best. Avoid ornate fonts. You can use two different fonts—sans serif for the headings and standard serif for the rest of your text.

- Font size is also important; sizes between 9 and 10 points work best. If your font is too large, it looks amateurish.

- Avoid using italics and underlining. Use bold for emphasis.
Resume Writing continued from page 19

- Use vertical or horizontal lines sparingly, leave at least a quarter-inch of space around the line.
- Avoid shading, shadowing, and boxes.
- If you are using bullets to organize information—use bullets, not cute symbols, like check marks or asterisks.
- The print version of your resume should be printed on light-colored paper (easily photocopied).
- Position your name at the top of the page on its own line; followed by your contact information; followed by your website URL (if applicable).
- Play up your name—a little larger, bolded.
- Can add subtle color.
- Don’t overdo it—italics, bold, caps, four different font sizes, etc.

Resume Review
After you have written a draft of your resume, have someone give you feedback. Your career services coordinator in the Office of Career Services & Co-op is available to look over your resume with you. It is also a good idea to get someone in your field to review it for an industry perspective.
Peter A. Franz, Jr.

Current Address
5 Notre Dame Dr.
Rochester, NY 14623
Cell Phone (555) 555-5555

Email Address
paf1234@rit.edu

Permanent Address
304 Walnut Street
Rome, NY 13440
Phone (555) 555-5555

Objective
To obtain a rewarding full-time Electrical Engineering design position.

Education
Rochester Institute of Technology
Rochester, NY
Bachelor of Science: Electrical Engineering
GPA: 3.0-3.04

Projects
RIT Senior Design – September 20xx – March 20xx
Worked on an electrical sub-group design team to design and produce an RF module capable of remotely relaying info for motion or data collection. Responsible for interfacing with multiple sub-groups to plan and ensure that all protocols, connectors, sizes, etc. are compatible.

Electrophysiology Implantable Defibrillator – Designed and simulated an implantable defibrillator in MATLAB. Parameters included size of electrode, distance from fiber, initial battery capacity, stimulation frequency and duty-cycle. Given restrictions for functionality, calculated the necessary values to create an action potential.

Skills

Experience
Impact Technologies Co-op – September 20xx – February 20xx
Worked in a multidisciplinary team to transition the oil quality sensor to a new generation. Implemented Electrochemical Impedance Spectroscopy to sense fluid oxidation and water ingress which can lead to mechanical failure in gearboxes as well as any oil lubricated system. Focused on firmware and hardware testing. Used Eagle 5.3 to design and layout a debug interface board. Utilized applicable noise mitigation techniques to improve data quality.

Welch Allyn Co-op – September 20xx – November 20xx
Tested and calibrated the Welch Allyn Microtymp 2.5 with a B&K Sound Sensor, with FFT add-on. Diagnosed issues with the software and communicated with the programmers to solve issues. Assembled prototypes, performed tests, researched and analyzed data. Worked with Flip 2.4.6, Freescale Code Warrior, VB Calvin, and RS232 Interface Program to manually test, calibrate, and update firmware on the Microtyp 2.5.

Activities
RIT Engineering House – Member from September 20xx – Present
RIT Men’s Division III Varsity Tennis – Member from Fall 20xx – Spring 20xx
RIT Disc Golf Club, Intramurals: Dodgeball, Ultimate Frisbee, Volleyball, Soccer, Softball

Ivy G. Smith

New Media Designer / Interface Enthusiast

Email Address
ivysmith@gmail.com

(555) XXX XXXX

EDUCATION
Rochester Institute of Technology
Rochester, NY
BFA New Media Design & Imaging
Expected May 20XX
GPA 3.8

Washington College
Chesterstown, MD
January 20XX - May 20XX
Commercial Art
GPA 3.4

TECHNICAL SKILLS
Adobe Creative Suite
Photoshop, Illustrator, After Effects, Flash, InDesign

3D Modeling & Animating
Maxon Cinema 4D

Front-End Web Design & Development
JavaScript 3.0, HTML5, CSS3, PHP, MySQL

SOFTWARE
Microsoft Excel, Word, Outlook

EXPERIENCE
New Media Club, 20XX - 20XX
New Media Design mentor, 20XX - 20XX
Flash In The Can attendee, 20XX, 20XX

Portefolio
www.ivygsmith.com

EXPERIENCE
Kids On Campus, RIT - Rochester, NY
Instructor, May 20XX - August 20XX
Taught middle school children the basics of working with Flash, including the fundamentals of animation, using the drawing tools, tweening objects, and an introduction to ActionScript 3.0

Mosaically, Inc - Rochester, NY
Interface Designer, March - August 20XX
Designed the interface for a photo-editing Silverlight application; worked with clients to create custom photo mosaics

PORTFOLIO
www.ivygsmith.com

INTERESTS
New Media Club, 20XX - 20XX
New Media Design mentor, 20XX - 20XX
Flash In The Can attendee, 20XX, 20XX
Digital illustration, photography, travel, video games, water sports
Sample Resume—Functional

**JOHN A. SMITH**  
57 Memorial Drive | Rochester, NY 14623 | (555) 555-5555 | E-Mail: JAS1234@gmail.edu

**OBJECTIVE:**  
To obtain a full-time position in Marketing Research and Product Development

**EDUCATION:**  
Rochester Institute of Technology, Rochester NY  
Master of Business Administration, received May 20xx  
Concentration: Marketing and Information Systems  
Dean’s List: 20xx-20xx GPA: 3.67  
Kent State University, Kent OH  
Bachelor of Science in Business Management, May 20xx  
Honors: James Madison Scholarship Recipient

**PROFESSIONAL SKILLS:**  
Marketing/Market Research  
- Identified market trends for food products  
- Monitored competition in other regional stores  
- Assisted in advertising and promotion campaigns  
- Assisted with development of corporate sales flyers and proposals for sales representatives  
- Assisted with creation, implementation and analysis of customer satisfaction surveys

Product Development  
- Provided recommendations on price of product in cooperation with Marketing Research Department  
- Identified channels of distribution, such as wholesalers, retailers or direct sales to the public  
- Worked with Marketing Research Department and advertising agency to position product

Communication  
- Provided academic and personal counseling to undergraduate students  
- Conducted group presentations for 30-40 undergraduate students related to college life skills  
- Completed weekly incident and emergency reports  
- Collaborated with Residence Hall Staff at monthly planning meetings

Computer  
- Windows and MAC proficiency  
- MS Word, MS Excel, MS Access, MS PowerPoint, Mintab  
- Adobe Photoshop, HTML, Dreamweaver

MEMBERSHIPS/ACTIVITIES:  
- American Marketing Association, Student Member (20xx - present)  
- RIT Lowenthal Group, Ambassador (20xx - present)  
- Enjoy reading, hiking and rock climbing

**EMPLOYMENT HISTORY:**  
Curtice Burns Food, Inc Rochester, NY  
Marketing Assistant (5/20xx - 11/20xx)

Kent State University Kent, OH  
Resident Assistant (9/20xx - 5/20xx)

Food Service Staff (8/20xx - 5/20xx)

REFERENCES: Available upon request

Sample Resume—Experienced Alumnus

James R. Alumnus  
123 Happy Valley Road, Rochester, NY 14623, 555-555-5555 | jra1111@rit.edu

**OBJECTIVE:**  
Seeking a position as a project manager utilizing twelve years of software development experience. Available May 20XX, willing to relocate.

**PROFILE:**  
- Twelve years of system development spanning several fields including Development, Quality Assurance, and Product Support  
- Four years of technical project management experience  
- Overall experience spans project management, personnel management, personnel development, Internet Technologies, NT, COM, Client / Server Architecture (two tier and three tier), and distributed control systems  
- Energy & approach and strong communicator with a great understanding of people, managing through different approaches

**COMPANY SKILLS:**  
- Programming Languages: Java, C++, C, SQL, HTML, Javascript, Visual Basic, Prolog, LISP, TCL, Assembly  
- Operating Systems: Windows 95/NT/CE, SUNOS, IRIX, LINUX, DOS, MACOS, VMS  
- Specialized Computing: ODIC, Java-Rmi, OLE, TCP/IP  
- Software: Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, StarOffice  
- Databases: MS-SQL & 5.7, Oracle7-8, Sybase, Paradox, DBase, MS-Access  
- Technical Training: Microsoft Developer Studio C++, Developer Conference, 20XX  
- In-house COM, ATL, MFC training classes  
- Self-Employed  
- Independent consultant providing Content Management solutions using the open source web application server ‘Z’ Object Publishing Environment. Provided Internet and intranet Content Management solutions for clients.  
- Developed an application that provided a maintainable web application that allows customers the ability to create and maintain their own web sites.  
- Provided proposals, solutions, training sessions, and documentation pertaining to the customized application. Technologies used: ZOPE and Python, Java Script, and HTML

**EXPERIENCE:**  
ZOPE CONSULTANT, July 20XX – Present  
Self-Employed  
- Independent consultant providing Content Management solutions using the open source web application server ‘Z’ Object Publishing Environment. Provided Internet and intranet Content Management solutions for clients.  
- Developed an application that provided a maintainable web application that allows customers the ability to create and maintain their own web sites.  
- Provided proposals, solutions, training sessions, and documentation pertaining to the customized application. Technologies used: ZOPE and Python, Java Script, and HTML  
- Windows and MAC proficiency  
- MS Word, MS Excel, MS Access, MS PowerPoint, Mintab  
- Adobe Photoshop, HTML, Dreamweaver  
- Windows and MAC proficiency  
- MS Word, MS Excel, MS Access, MS PowerPoint, Mintab  
- Adobe Photoshop, HTML, Dreamweaver

MEMBERSHIPS/ACTIVITIES:  
- American Marketing Association, Student Member (20xx - present)  
- RIT Lowenthal Group, Ambassador (20xx - present)  
- Enjoy reading, hiking and rock climbing

**EMPLOYMENT HISTORY:**  
Curtice Burns Food, Inc Rochester, NY  
Marketing Assistant (5/20xx - 11/20xx)

Kent State University Kent, OH  
Resident Assistant (9/20xx - 5/20xx)

Food Service Staff (8/20xx - 5/20xx)
Job Search Correspondence

Hot Tips:

- A cover letter should accompany each resume.
- Cover letters should highlight your experiences and stress previous accomplishments.
- Cover letters should not just repeat information verbatim from your resume!
- Always personalize your correspondence by sending it to a specific person within the organization. Do research to get a name—call the company, look in trade journals, etc.
- Pay attention to spelling, grammar, accuracy and neatness!
- Be decisive—use active rather than passive verbs.
- Send a networking letter to generate an informational interview with an individual in the field in which you are interested.
- Research the organization before writing the cover or networking letter—target every letter to a specific position or type of work.
- Don’t overuse the word “I” in your letters.
- Close your cover and networking letters by indicating when you will call to set up an interview. If you say you’re going to call, make sure you do call.
- Use professional, high quality paper for your resume and cover letter.
- A thank-you letter should be sent to all interviewers within 48 hours of the interview.
- Use an acceptance letter to formally accept a job offer and confirm the terms of your employment.
- If you accept a job offer, send all other prospective employers a withdrawal letter to notify them you’ve accepted another position.
- Send a rejection letter to decline a job offer that does not fit your career objectives and interests.
- Keep a record and copy of each letter you send.

Cover Letters

A cover letter should always be included when mailing your resume to an employer. An effective cover letter makes the employer want to talk to you in person. Your purpose in writing the letter is to attract the attention of the employer in a positive way. Certain information, such as that following, should be included in cover letters. Remember, however, that your letters represent you. BE ORIGINAL!

- **First Paragraph**—explains why you are writing the letter. State your purpose; identify the position you are applying for (if known) or the type of position you are seeking, and how you learned of the opening. If you are responding to an advertisement, state the name and date of the publication where you found the ad. If a well-respected person referred you to the organization, mention the person’s name and connection.
- **Middle Paragraph(s)**—describe your interest in the position. Here you should tell the employer why you are a strong candidate. Highlight relevant achievements, skills and/or experience, mentioning the most interesting points on your resume, and supporting them with examples. Explain how you intend to help the employer and contribute to the organization. Refer the reader to the enclosed resume.
- **Closing Paragraph**—should be an action-oriented paragraph. You should state how and when you will contact the employer to arrange a mutually convenient time to interview. Also be sure to state how and when they may best contact you. Do not assume an employer will contact you once you have sent your cover letter and resume. It is your responsibility to follow up. Finally, thank the individual and mention that you are looking forward to meeting them.

Some additional cover letter hints:
- Each cover letter should be typed individually on 8.5” x 11” good quality paper.
- The letter should conform to good business letter style.
- Address the letter to a specific person.
- Personally sign each cover letter.
- The letter should contain absolutely no errors in spelling or grammar.

Follow-Up Letter/Thank-You Note

A follow-up letter is written to thank the person who interviewed you. The letter also serves to remind the interviewer of who you are and in what position you are interested.

- Thank the interviewer for the opportunity to be interviewed.
- Mention the date and place of your interview.
- Refer to details of your conversation.
- Restate your interest in, and strongest qualifications for the position.

Letter to Accept an Offer

This letter is written to confirm your acceptance of an offer.

- Accept offer in first sentence.
- Restate the position, starting salary, and starting date.
- Express gratitude and enthusiasm.
- Indicate arrangements you will be making.

Letter to Decline an Offer

This letter is written when you have decided to turn down an offer.

- Decline the offer; be truthful, but tactful.
- Leave a good impression.

If you would like additional help with any of your job search correspondence, make an appointment to see your career services coordinator at the Office of Career Services & Co-op.

Following are samples of the letters outlined above. Use these as guides, but REMEMBER YOUR LETTERS MUST REFLECT YOU—BE ORIGINAL!
Sample Cover Letter—Letter of Application

8 Central Park Street
Sometown, NY 14788
(555) 555-5555

November 5, 20xx

Emily Smith
ABC Corporation
1 Industry Plaza
Anytown, NY 12096

Dear Ms. Smith:

Please accept this letter as application for the Cost Accounting Supervisor position currently available with your company, as advertised in the Democrat & Chronicle (Sunday, November 4th). My resume follows for your review and consideration.

I offer a solid financial background and database management systems education, as well as extensive practical experience in financial applications of automated systems. My experience also includes monthly cost analysis/reporting and interface with accounting and administrative management. I am confident that with my abilities/strengths I can make an immediate and valued contribution to ABC Corporation.

I look forward to hearing from you in the near future to schedule an interview at your convenience. I hope to learn more about your company’s plans and goals and how I might contribute to its continued success.

Best regards,

James Sharpe

jsharpe@rit.edu

JS
enclosure

Sample Letter of Inquiry

123 Ascot Lane
Blacksburg, NY 14606
(555) 555-5555
abcd@rit.edu

December 22, 20xx

Mr. Robert Burns
Vice President, Template Division
MEGATEK Corporation
9845 Technical Way
Bigtown, NY 14596

Dear Mr. Burns:

Recently I learned of your company through RIT’s Office of Career Services and I visited your web site to learn more about your business and projects. In May 20xx I will graduate with a Master of Science degree in Mechanical Engineering and would be particularly interested in a software engineering position with MEGATEK.

As a graduate student, I am one of six members on a software development team where we are writing a computer aided aircraft design program for NASA. My responsibilities include designing, coding, and testing of a graphical portion of the program which requires the use of GIARO for graphics input and output. I have a strong background in computer aided design, software development, and engineering, and believe that these skills would benefit the designing and manufacturing aspects of Template software. Enclosed is my resume which further outlines my qualifications.

I am very interested in working for MEGATEK, and would appreciate an opportunity to discuss possible position(s) with you. I will call you in a week to answer any questions you may have and to see if you would like to schedule an interview. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

William Stevens

William Stevens

Enclosure
Dear Ms. Smith:

I enjoyed meeting you yesterday and appreciate all the time you set aside for me. I remain very interested in a marketing and sales position with Fashion Specialties. Thank you for the tour of your flagship Syracuse store. I appreciated the chance to meet with your enthusiastic management team. They provided valuable information regarding the operation of Fashion Specialties, increasing my desire to work for your corporation. You need someone who can take the initiative to generate new accounts and become an immediate contributor to your Sales and Marketing Division. I believe my experience with XYZ Corporation has provided me with the customer service background necessary to achieve these goals.

If I can supply any further information, please feel free to contact me at (555) 555-5555 or _______@gmail.com.

Sincerely,

Kevin G. Casper

Kevin G. Casper
Whether you are a designer, illustrator, photographer, or artist it is important for you to have an effective way to show your work and talent to potential employers or clients. The portfolio is a crucial part of the hiring process. It may not only get you an interview, but it also may clinch a job offer.

Although creating a strong portfolio may seem like a daunting process, it doesn’t have to be. Here are some steps to help you create a compelling portfolio:

1. Selecting Samples
The first step is deciding which pieces to include—the goal is to select items that best represent your core strengths and industry experience while showcasing your creativity, technical ability and range.

- Use feedback from faculty or creative industry professionals to select your best work
- The pieces should be of high quality
- Show your range, but do not include everything you have ever done
- Select pieces that are relevant to the employer or gallery you are approaching based on research
- Include a piece in different stages to show progression of ideas and problem solving
- Be sure you have permission to share any work that belongs to clients or employers.

2. Organizing Items
If properly organized, your portfolio will demonstrate to clients how your skills will meet their needs and how they can profit from hiring you.

- Use consistent graphic theme—color, type, size
- Create a title page with your personal contact information
- Develop a sequence for your work starting with your strongest work but don’t forget the final image leaves a lasting impression
- Include a caption with each piece (include project title, your role, technology/process)

3. Portfolio Format
Printed
Traditionally the contents of a portfolio have been presented using color copies, photos or print outs of scanned work. This method of showcasing your work is being replaced or at least supplemented by digital formats, but in some cases it may make sense to have a physical portfolio.

There is always the option of creating a unique portfolio book or case that matches your career goals. Keep in mind, that some of this out-of-box thinking could annoy because it is either cumbersome, not as inventive as you think, or is a real mismatch for the job or agency.

Online
All artists and designers should be using technology to showcase their work. Your online portfolio holds the advantage of showcasing your talent 24/7, enabling potential clients to find you with a search. Make sure it clearly conveys who you are and the services you offer, and provides complete contact information.

Your visitors will want to know about the person behind the work. A brief professional biography gives clients a snapshot of your qualifications, experience and expertise. Do not include personal stuff!

The first thing they should see (without scrolling) is:

- What you do (Ex: Motion Graphic Designer, Photographer, Illustrator, Interior Designer)
- Big image of your work—start off with something strong—it may be the only image they see, so pick a good one!

Your online portfolio should have:

- Simple design/format—it should not distract from your work
- Your name, contact info and a link to printer-friendly resume
- A short description of each piece (title, client name with their permission, your role in the project, date, and any software or special skills used
- BIG images (start at 800 x 600)
- Scrolling through the work is preferred. You risk irritating visitors by showing too many samples or requiring clicking
- Attention to detail—spell and grammar check all text!
- No errors/dysfunction. Ask someone to take it for a test drive. Make sure your online portfolio can be accessed using a variety of platforms and browsers before directing anyone to your site. See if it is intuitive.

Find the Right Online Solution
You can create a unique portfolio and you don’t have to be a web designer. Find technology that you feel comfortable with (for example, blogs are a great free option, just use the ability to upload photos and write captions).

Some Resources to Consider

- Portfolio Hosting Sites: Behance, Coroflot, Cargo Collective, Carbonmade.com, deviantART, Slideshow Pro, Weebly.com
- Blogs like WordPress, or photo sharing sites like Flickr
- University hosting—if you are an active student you may have the ability to upload your work and have it hosted on campus servers
- Web site hosting company—a domain name and hosting can be pretty inexpensive and the company may provide templates to get you started
- Professional associations often offer members the ability to add and promote their work on their site.

Showing Your Work

Be prepared to show your work in different formats—laptop or tablet (with fully charged battery), printed pieces, and/or online. Never bring a flash drive or disc and assume the interviewer will be comfortable inserting them into their computer.

When presenting your portfolio, allow your work to speak for itself. There’s no need to explain each work as the interviewer goes through it, unless prompted. Be prepared to answer questions about your work. Be ready to talk about budget, time frame and any problems you faced and solved. If you are a fine artist, you might talk about the evolution of a concept or how one piece relates to others. It doesn’t hurt to rehearse!

Do not depart without leaving a resume, business card (optional), and a sample for them to remember you by. “Leave-bahinds” should complement the work in your portfolio and be interesting enough so that the client will keep them. Be creative, your imagination is your most important asset as a creative professional.
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?
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.

8. **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.

9. **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.

10. **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.

**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.
Questions Asked by Employers

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

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

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

Career Goals
38. Do you prefer to work under supervision or on your own?
39. What kind of boss do you prefer?
40. Would you be successful working with a team?
41. Do you prefer large or small organizations? Why?
42. What other types of positions are you considering?
43. How do you feel about working in a structured environment?
44. Are you able to work on several assignments at once?
45. How do you feel about working overtime?
46. How do you feel about travel?
47. How do you feel about the possibility of relocating?
48. Are you willing to work flextime?

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

Behavioral vs. Traditional Interviews

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“Can you give me an example?”
“What did you do?”
“What did you say?”
“What were you thinking?”
“How did you feel?”
“What was your role?”
“What was the result?”

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

How to Prepare For a Behavioral Interview

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

The interviewer will find out if your story is built on a weak foundation.
✓ Be specific. Don’t generalize about several events; give a detailed accounting of one event.

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

The interviewer might then probe: “How did you feel when you confronted this person?” “Exactly what was the nature of the project?” “What was 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

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

1. An invitation to an on-site interview is NOT a guarantee of a job offer. It is a chance to examine whether or not you will be a good match for the job and for the organization.

2. If invited to an on-site interview, respond promptly if you are sincerely interested in this employer. Decline politely if you are not. Never go on an on-site interview for the sake of the trip. Document the name and phone number of the person coordinating your trip. Verify who will be handling trip expenses. Most medium- and large-size companies (as well as many smaller ones) will pay your expenses, but others will not. This is very important, because expenses are handled in various ways: 1) the employer may handle all expenses and travel arrangements; 2) you handle your expenses and arrangements (the employer may assist with this), and the employer will reimburse you later; 3) the employer may offer an on-site interview, but will not pay for your travel.

3. Know yourself and the type of job you are seeking with this employer. Don’t say, “I am willing to consider anything you have.”

4. Thoroughly research the potential employer. Read annual reports, newspaper articles, trade journals, etc. Many companies have websites where you can read their mission statements, find out about long-term goals, read recent press releases, and view corporate photos. Don’t limit your research only to company-controlled information. The Internet can be a valuable investigative tool. You may uncover key information that may influence—positively or negatively—your decision to pursue employment with a given organization.

5. Bring extra copies of your resume; copies of any paperwork you may have forwarded to the employer; names, addresses, phone numbers and email addresses of your references; an updated college transcript; a copy of your best paper as a writing sample; a notebook; a black and/or blue pen for filling out forms and applications; and names and addresses of past employers.

6. Bring extra money and a change of clothes. Also, have the names and phone numbers of those who may be meeting you in case your plans change unexpectedly. Anything can happen and you need to be ready for emergencies.

7. Your role at the interview is to respond to questions, to ask your own questions and to observe. Be ready to meet people who are not part of your formal agenda. Be courteous to everyone regardless of his or her position; you never know who might be watching you and your actions once you arrive in town.

8. Don’t forget your table manners. Plant trips may include several meals or attendance at a reception the night before your “big day.” When ordering food at a restaurant, follow the lead of the employer host. For example, don’t order the three-pound lobster if everyone else is having a more moderately priced entree. If you have the “dining jitters,” some authorities suggest ordering food that is easy to handle, such as a boneless fish fillet or chicken breast.

9. Many employers have a set salary range for entry-level positions and others are more negotiable. Though salary should not be brought up until an offer is extended, it is wise to know your worth in advance. In as much as you are a potential employee, you also represent a valuable skills-set product. You should know what kind of product you have created, its value and what the company is willing to buy. Contact your campus career center to obtain more information on salaries.

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

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

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

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

Written by Roseanne R. Bensley, Career Services, New Mexico State University.
Choosing Between Job Offers

Congratulations! You’ve successfully managed your second interviews and have been offered a job! Perhaps you’ve even received offers from more than one employer. Whether it’s one offer or more, your euphoria is sometimes quickly replaced by anxiety about the decisions which lie ahead. You may be wondering, “Is this the ‘right’ job for me?” or “Am I going to be happy in this job, or should I just take it because I need a job, period?” Careful evaluation of your job offer and some serious thought as to how well the position and organization meet your needs can enable you to make the best choice for yourself. One of our staff members can help you sort out your options.

In evaluating your job offer, there are three critical questions you should address:

1. **How closely does the offer match your career goal?** Think back to when you started your job search. What was important to you? What factors regarding a job, organization and work environment were on your “wish list”? Have they changed? How well does this position fit these factors? Below are some factors you may want to consider in evaluating your offer. Some of these may not be important to you, and there may be other factors not listed which are extremely important to your decision.

   - Nature of the work
   - Organizational culture
   - Level of autonomy
   - Travel
   - Salary
   - Mentoring
   - Lifestyles of employees
   - Stability of organization
   - Quality of higher management
   - Support for continuing education/advanced degree
   - Level of responsibility
   - Location
   - Work hours
   - Benefits
   - Variety of work
   - Stability of industry
   - Advancement opportunities
   - Training and development opportunities
   - Opportunities to learn and grow in job/company
   - Transferability of skills/experience from job
   - Prestige of job or organization

2. **Do you need additional information about the offer (or anything) in order to make a decision?** It is not unusual to discover, as you’re weighing different factors about the offer, that you have additional questions, lack some factual data, or simply need a better sense of what the job and organization are like. If this is the case, STOP! Don’t go any further in your deliberations until you address these issues. You may need to call one of your interviewers and ask additional questions, or contact an alum who works for the organization. If you need a better understanding of what it would be like during a day on the job, call the employer (if they are local) and ask to spend an afternoon observing an entry-level employee in the job you’re considering. Most employers will be willing to accommodate you. If you have other questions or concerns which impact your decision, you should discuss them with a representative from our office.

3. **Are there issues you may want to negotiate, which would bring the offer closer to your goal?** Perhaps the issues which concern you about the offer can be changed. If the job seems ideal except for location, then you might want to raise the issue with the employer. Some start dates are non-negotiable because training classes must begin together. In some instances, however, the start date can be adjusted.

Written by Virginia Lacy. Adapted with permission from Northwestern University’s Career Services Guide; © 1998 Virginia Lacy.
The Art of Negotiating

An area of the job search that often receives little attention is the art of negotiating. Once you have been offered a job, you have the opportunity to discuss the terms of your employment. Negotiations may be uncomfortable or unsatisfying because we tend to approach them with a winner-take-all attitude that is counterproductive to the concept of negotiations.

Negotiating with your potential employer can make your job one that best meets your own needs as well as those of your employer. To ensure successful negotiations, it is important to understand the basic components. The definition of negotiation as it relates to employment is: a series of communications (either oral or in writing) that reach a satisfying conclusion for all concerned parties, most often between the new employee and the hiring organization.

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

Research

Gather as much factual information as you can to back up the case you want to make. For example, if most entering employees cannot negotiate salary, you may be jeopardizing the offer by focusing on that aspect of the package. Turn your attention to other parts of the offer such as their health plan, dental plan, retirement package, the type of schedule you prefer, etc.

Psychological Preparation

Chances are that you will not know the person with whom you will be negotiating. If you are lucky enough to be acquainted, spend some time reviewing what you know about this person’s communication style and decision-making behavior.

In most cases, however, this person will be a stranger. Since most people find the unknown a bit scary, you’ll want to ask yourself what approach to negotiating you find most comfortable. How will you psyche yourself up to feel confident enough to ask for what you want? How will you respond to counteroffers? What are your alternatives? What’s your bottom line? In short, plan your strategy.

Be sure you know exactly what you want. This does not mean you will get exactly that, but having the information clear in your head will help you determine what you are willing to concede. Unless you know what you want, you won’t be able to tell somebody else. Clarity improves communication, which is the conduit for effective negotiations.

Practice

Rehearse the presentation in advance using another person as the employer. If you make mistakes in rehearsal, chances are that you will not repeat them during the actual negotiations. A friend can critique your reasoning and help you prepare for questions. If this all seems like a lot of work, remember that if something is worth negotiating for, it is worth preparing for.

Dollars and Sense

Always begin by expressing genuine interest in the position and the organization, emphasizing the areas of agreement but allowing “wiggle room” to compromise on other areas. Be prepared to support your points of disagreement, outlining the parts you would like to alter, your suggestions on how this can be done and why it would serve the company’s best interests to accommodate your request.

Be prepared to defend your proposal. Back up your reasons for wanting to change the offer with meaningful, work-related skills and positive benefits to the employer. Requesting a salary increase because you are a fast learner or have a high GPA are usually not justifiable reasons in the eyes of the employer. Meaningful work experience or internships that have demonstrated or tested your professional skills are things that will make an employer stop and take notice.

It is sometimes more comfortable for job-seekers to make this initial request in writing and plan to meet later to hash out the differences. You will need to be fairly direct and assertive at this point even though you may feel extremely vulnerable. Keep in mind that the employer has chosen you from a pool of qualified applicants, so you are not as powerless as you think.

Sometimes the employer will bristle at the suggestion that there is room to negotiate. Stand firm, but encourage the employer to think about it for a day or two at which time you will discuss the details of your proposal with him/her. Do not rush the process because you are uncomfortable. The employer may be counting on this discomfort and use it to derail the negotiations. Remember, this is a series of volleys and lobs, trade-offs and compromises that occur over a period of time. It is a process—not a singular event!

Once you have reached a conclusion with which you are both relatively comfortable, present in writing your interpretation of the agreement so that if there is any question, it will be addressed immediately. Negotiation, by definition, implies that each side will give. Do not perceive it as an ultimatum.

If the employer chooses not to grant any of your requests—and realistically, he or she can do that—you will still have the option of accepting the original offer provided you have maintained a positive, productive and friendly atmosphere during your exchanges. You can always re-enter negotiations after you have demonstrated your worth to the organization.

Money Isn’t Everything

There are many things you can negotiate besides salary. For example, benefits can add thousands of dollars to the compensation package. Benefits can range from paid personal leave to discounts on the company’s products and services. They constitute more than just icing on the cake; they may be better than the cake itself. Traditional benefits packages include health insurance, paid vacation and personal/sick days. Companies may offer such benefits as child care, elder care or use of the company jet for family emergencies. Other lucrative benefits could include disability and life insurance and a variety of retirement plans. Some organizations offer investment and stock options as well as relocation reimbursement and tuition credits for continued education.

Written by Lily Maestas, Counseling and Career Services, University of California, Santa Barbara.
International Student Job Search

Graduation day is fast approaching and you and your classmates are competing for the best jobs! You may feel at a disadvantage if you are neither a U.S. citizen nor a permanent resident. The following is an overview of practical issues related to employment in the U.S., as well as tips to help you in your job search.

Immigration Issues

Optional Practical Training (OPT) authorization permits foreign students completing bachelor’s, master’s or doctorate degrees in F-1 student status to be employed for a period of one year in order to gain practical work experience related to their field of study. (Exception: STEM Extension. Students with certain majors in Science, Technology, Engineering or Math may be able to obtain an additional 17 months of OPT in addition to the initial 12 months. Contact RIT’s International Student Services to confirm your eligibility. Please participate in an OPT information session prior to seeing one of the international advisors if you have any questions regarding your eligibility for Optional Practical Training.)

In order to receive Optional Practical Training permission, you must apply to the U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services through the international student advisors. You should apply during the 90 days before you complete your degree requirements. (It is now possible to apply for OPT during the 60 day grace period following graduation, but it is still recommended that you apply before graduation since OPT must begin no later than 60 days after graduation and the processing time could be up to 90 days.)

You must complete your application for an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) and submit your application to RIT International Student Services. It can take two or three months for the card to be issued. It is important to apply well in advance of the time that you will need the card, as you cannot begin employment until you actually have the card.

Please see one of the international student advisors if you have any questions regarding your eligibility for Optional Practical Training.

If, after graduation and OPT, you plan to reside in the U.S. on either a temporary or permanent basis, you will want to obtain a temporary working permit (H-1B). Immigration law refers to H-1B workers as workers in “specialty occupations.” Specialty occupations include most jobs for which a bachelor’s degree in a specific field is a prerequisite for employment. In order to obtain H-1B status, you must first have an offer of employment. There are then specific steps, which the employer must take. You may be in H-1B status for up to six years.

Students who wish to continue their studies and obtain a higher degree may do so by gaining admission to another program or university and notifying the “new” international student advisor who will process the proper forms. For further information, contact the International Student Advisors by phone at 585-475-6943 or on the mezzanine level of the Student Alumni Union. Their website is: www.rit.edu/iss.

Tips for the International Student’s Job Search

- Research the demand for your degree and skills-set. Your job search will be easier if you have highly marketable skills or extensive experience. Be flexible—you may need to relocate in order to find the job you want. Learn all you can about your targeted career field.
- Use all available resources in your job search. These include: college on-campus recruiting, campus or community job fairs, job postings on national job posting Internet sites, company website postings, job postings in newspapers and trade publications, professional associations, resume searches on national on-line services, employee referrals, regional and national conferences, employment agencies, networking through your own contacts.
- Develop strong communication skills. Provide a well-prepared resume that includes desirable skills and relevant work experiences. Clearly convey your interests and ability to do the job in an interview. Be sensitive to interviewer’s verbal and non-verbal cues—make sure you are being understood. Make sure you express proper non-verbal communication—always look directly at the employer in order to portray confidence and honesty. If your English language skills need some work, get involved with campus and community activities, to allow you to practice speaking English.
- Interact with other international students who have successfully found employment in the U.S., and get advice from them.
- Work with the Office of Career Services & Co-op here at RIT. Attend sessions on job search strategies and related topics. Work with your career services coordinator 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.
- Target multi-national companies because they may value your versatile language skills and may have facilities in your home country.
- Start your job search early, and create and follow a detailed plan of action that will lead you to a great job!
Is Graduate School Right for You?

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

1. Should I consider going to graduate school?

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

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

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

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

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

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

   **Family:** You’ve likely borrowed from them in the past; maybe you’re lucky enough for it to still be a viable option.
   **Student Loans:** Even if you’ve taken out loans in the past, another $50,000 - $75,000 may be a sound “investment” in your future.

   **Fellowships/Scholarships:** A free education is always the best option. The catch is you need a high GPA, good GRE/GMAT/LSAT/MCAT scores and the commitment to search out every possible source of funding.
   **Teaching/Research Assistantships:** Many assistantships include tuition waivers plus a monthly stipend. It’s a great way to get paid for earning an education.
   **Employer Sponsorship:** Did you know that some companies actually pay for you to continue your education? The catch is they usually expect you to continue working for them after you complete your degree so they can recoup their investment.

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

   **Benefits of attending graduate school full-time:**
   - you’ll be able to complete your degree sooner.
   - you can totally commit your intellectual, physical and emotional energy to your education.
   - ideal if you want to make a dramatic career change.

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

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

   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.
LAUNCH YOUR CAREER WITH THE MAKERS OF MATLAB AND SIMULINK

MathWorks is the company that develops MATLAB® and Simulink® – the software that transforms the way engineers and scientists think and work.

We hire smart people who want to make a difference.

Find opportunities in:
Computer Science • Mechanical Engineering • Electrical Engineering

Apply today:
mathworks.com/jobs/grads
We believe in the power of technology to solve just about anything. And we’ve put our sharpest minds to the task. Our solutions are empowering individuals, businesses, and communities everywhere. Join our team and you’ll create an inspiring future with the company that meets every day with one question: “What do we want to build next?” That’s the kind of work we do. And you can be a part of it.

Opportunities currently exist for:
- CUSTOMER SERVICE REPRESENTATIVES
- RETAIL SALES REPRESENTATIVES

Enjoy benefits worthy of the name Total Rewards including:
- Medical, dental and vision from day one
- Award-winning training
- Generous tuition assistance program
- Company matching 401(k)
- Paid vacation and holidays

Visit verizon.com/jobs for more information and to apply today.

Verizon is an equal opportunity and affirmative action employer M/F/Disability/Vet.