



Dear graduating student:

Soon you will hear those words you've longed to hear... "*Congratulations, you did it!*" Many friends, family, and acquaintances will acknowledge your hard work in achieving your goal and will wish you the best for your future. The Career Services Center will join those voices in acknowledging your accomplishment; however, we will add one more comment. How can we help you from here?

Your academic training is over for now, and your new "life" begins. What do you think the next step for you should be? Should you go to work? Where? Will you instead elect to apply for graduate or professional school? The world is full of possibilities, so many it's hard to know which direction to take. Should you set your goals to work for an employer in one of the "big glass buildings"? Maybe you should work for a non-profit organization, helping solve some of society's problems. Of course, there are the Fortune 500 private-sector corporations. Should you go where the big money is? What about the public sector, the federal government, state government, or local government? There could be job security with government agencies. Should you take a job with a new up-and-coming company; it could be a good move to get in on the "ground floor." What about a well-established organization? It would be less of a risk with a company that's been around for a while. Should you immediately apply for your dream job, or should you pace yourself, starting at the entry-level, working your way up the ladder? Is the starting wage more important than work hours or a retirement package?

The questions are relentless. When, where, why? It's enough to drive you crazy. If you accept an offer and are scheduled to start next week, what do you do if a much better offer comes along? Once you've accepted a job, started work and have worked for a week; what do you do when another job you wanted even more is offered? What do you do? How long do you believe the average employer actually expects you to work before you accept another position?

Congratulations, you've accepted a job, doing what you had hoped to do. The money is good, and the benefit package is one of the best; however, you are treated poorly and are very unhappy. What can you do about it? Maybe you've been with your company for two years but can't seem to get a raise—what should you do?

The UAA Career Services Center is here to help you answer those tough questions we sometimes face. We are here for you as students and we'll be here for you as alum. We make no promises except one: We'll do everything we can to help you enter and succeed in your career.

Good Luck!

Michael E. Reeves, MBA, CCM
Director
UAA Career Services Center

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CAREER MANAGEMENT GUIDE

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University of
Alaska Anchorage



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Using the Career Services Center

The Career Services Center is open to registered students or alumni of the University of Alaska Anchorage, Matsu College, Kenai Peninsula College, or a UAA satellite office such as Homer, Elmendorf AFB, Eagle River, or Fort Richardson. Students holding a current student ID card may use the center at no cost. Some fees may apply to alumni and non-students. The Career Services Center is open weekdays 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. with the exception of staff meetings.

Student Services

- Career Counseling
- Resume Review
- Resume Assistance
- Mock Interview With Critique
- All Video Workshops
- Career Fairs
- On-Campus Recruiting Activities
- CSC Software Privileges
- Full Library/Lab Usage
- Full Access to the CSC's Website
- Student Internships
- Career Magazines
- Handouts for Career-Related Assistance
- Alaska Career Information System (AKCIS)

**The Career Services Center is open weekdays
8 a.m. to 5 p.m. with the exception of staff meetings.**



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go from here?

>>here.
careersandcolleges.com

- Grad schools and programs
- Career guidance
- Scholarships and financial aid
- Student loans
- Test prep resources
- Articles and advice
- And much more

The resource for all your advanced education
and career planning needs.

A Closer Look at CSC Services

Career Counseling

All registered students or Alumni Association alumni of the University of Alaska Anchorage, Matsu College, Kenai Peninsula College, or a UAA satellite office such as Homer, Elmendorf AFB, Eagle River, or Fort Richardson may use the UAA Career Services Center for career counseling. Non-students and non-registered alumni are required to pay a fee for career counseling.

Career counseling appointments are about an hour long. Career counseling may include the use of the Myers-Briggs or Strong Interest indicators. These tests can be taken for \$10 each at the Career Services Center. The tests do not require an appointment and can take about 30 minutes to 90 minutes to complete. The results can be evaluated and discussed with the Career Counselor. Initial career counseling assistance can be derived from the use of the Alaska Career Information System (AKCIS).

Appointments for career counseling are made through the CSC front desk. Only authorized time slots are available for career counseling appointments. Appointments can be made by phone or in person.

Resource Library

The CSC Resource Library is open weekdays 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. unless it has been reserved for a workshop or presentation. The library consists of over 1,000 career-related reference books on subjects ranging from resume writing to LSAT and GRE study guides to guide books on individual career pathways.

The resource library is a partner of the UAA Consortium Library System. CSC's books are available for checkout directly from the library with a use of a UAA Wolfcard or a Municipality of Anchorage library card and picture ID. Books can also be reserved using the interlibrary loan. Books can be checked out for one week. A limit of three books may be checked out per person per day.

The library resource collection also holds a number of career-related videos. These videos are available for viewing inside the library only. They are NOT available for checkout. The videos can be viewed anytime during working hours.

The resource library is a supported computer lab consisting of six up-to-date computers. The library/lab is available for students who want a quiet place to study, complete assignments, write a resume, browse the Internet, etc. No food or beverages are allowed within the library, however.

Resume Reviews

Students may drop off their resumes at the CSC to be reviewed. Resumes will be looked over and then the student will be contacted to pick it up. When dropping off a resume for review, it is helpful to paper clip a job notice to the back of the resume, if applicable. This helps the reviewer look for key points that would be significant to that specific job. **Note:** It is important that the contact number on the resume be current in order for the resume to be returned to the student.

Mock Interview Program

Eligible clients are scheduled for one-hour appointments during which they can practice employment, professional or graduate school "mock interviews." The purpose of this practice session is to help the interviewee learn what to expect from real interviews and improve the way they present themselves. The videotaped interview is replaced for

visual feedback. In addition, the interviewee will provide with a constructive verbal evaluation.

Those who wish to schedule a mock interview are required to make an appointment. Upon making an appointment they will receive a mock interview application and information packet. This packet must be returned to the Career Services Center at least two days prior to the scheduled interview appointment. The packet helps prepare the interviewer for the type of interview questions to ask. Along with a packet, a resume should also be dropped off—just like for a real interview.

Workshops

Workshops are provided either within the Career Services Center or outside the center upon request. Twice a week throughout the year, the CSC provides a video workshop. These workshops are held in the CSC Resource Library. Videos are taken from the CSC's video collection. Other workshops/presentations may be scheduled for employers recruiting on campus. The location of these events will be posted with the workshop announcement. All workshops announcement are located on the CSC's website. Information about upcoming events can also be obtained from the Career Services Center front desk, the CSC's newsletter *Career Connection* and flyers posted around campus.

Workshops held within the center will begin at the time listed. If no one attends the scheduled workshop, the presenter may cancel the presentation fifteen minutes after the scheduled start time. It is important to be prompt to a workshop.

Website

Visit the CSC Website, www.uaacareerservices.com, for on-line resources and information about our Center. The CSC has web software that consists of full-time, part-time and internship job listings. Students are able to post their resumes and credential documents online and apply for many of the job listings online. All On-campus recruiting events and upcoming workshops are posted on the CSC's website.

On-Campus Recruiting

Career Fairs: Come set up a table, display your company, meet with the students, and most importantly, let them know who you are! Participating in this on-campus recruiting activity is a highly beneficial means of recruiting. To sign up for an upcoming career fair, register as an employer by going to www.uaacareerservices.com. Scroll down the right side of the page and click on the "Employers" link. Once all the necessary company information is filled in and the registration is submitted, the employer will automatically be taken to his or her own personal page, where he or she can post jobs or internships, as well as register for career fairs or interviews by clicking on the appropriate link.

Alaska Career Information System (AKCIS)

The AKCIS program is an online system providing information about a wide number of careers. Information includes colleges that provide those majors, salary and wages for the Alaska and the U.S., and general information about working aspects for specific careers.

On-Line Career Center

To register on the University of Alaska Anchorage's new on-line career center, please go to www.uaacareerservices.com and click on the "Student & Alumni" link.

1. Select your preferred username and password. Please note that these fields are case-sensitive.
2. Complete the rest of the form to enter your contact information into the system, and click on the "submit" button.
3. An email will be sent to you as soon as you have been approved with your username and password.

To login to University of Alaska Anchorage's on-line career center after registering, please go to www.uaacareerservices.com, scroll down on the right hand side until you see the login boxes. Enter your username and password and click "Login." Once logged in you may search for jobs, internships, etc. You may post your resume and other documents. You may also edit your personal information. Keep reading below to learn how to do those things.

Posting Your Resume on the On-Line Career Center

It is important to post your resume on the system. Once approved by the Career Services Center, you will be able to apply on-line to positions posted on the site. In addition, employers searching through the school's resume database will be able to view your information.

1. After logging into the system, you will see icons on the top of the page. Click on the "Resume & Documents" icon.
2. If you have already created your own resume, click on the "Upload Resume" button. We strongly suggest uploading your resume for better quality.
 - a. *Resume Name* — Create a title for this resume and insert it into the text field.
 - b. *Undergraduate School* — Select "University of Alaska Anchorage"
 - c. *Graduation Date* — Select the season and year you expect to graduate.
 - d. *Cumulative GPA* — Select your cumulative GPA out of a 4.0 scale.
 - e. *Major* — Select your major
 - f. *Which levels are you seeking employment?* — Select each level of employment that you are actively seeking employment in.
 - g. *Upload file* — Click on the browse button and find the file you wish to upload. Once the file is selected, it will appear in the box. Please note that Microsoft Word resumes are easiest to view.
 - h. When finished, click on the "Complete" button.
3. If you have not already created your own resume, click on the "Build Resume with Templates" button.
 - a. *Resume Name* — Create a title for this resume and insert it into the text field
 - b. *Which levels are you seeking employment?* — Select each level of employment from which you are actively seeking employment.
 - c. *Style* — There are three styles of resumes to choose from. Select any style that you prefer. The CSC recommends the professional style resume format.
 - d. Click on the "Continue" button
 - e. *Enter Information* — There are several headers in the template that you can fill-in. Simply click on

the "Add" button next to the header you wish to insert information, and complete the necessary information. If you would like to see how the resume looks, click on the "Preview Resume" button. To edit information under any header, click on the edit button next to the header. You may also included additional headers by clicking on the "Add New Header" button. Please note that you can rearrange the order of the headers by using the arrow keys on the right-hand side.

- f. When finished, click on the "Save and Return" button that will take you back to your resume builder page.
4. Once you post your resume, a representative in the Career Services Center will review it. Within a short time you will receive email notification informing you if it has been approved or if changes need to be made.
 5. In order to allow employers to view your resume, check the box that reads "Allow Employers to search my default resume."
 6. In this same area you may create a cover letter. To create a cover letter, click on the "Create New Cover Letter" button. The next page will ask you for a cover letter title. You can then type or cut-and-paste your cover letter in the text box. Click on the "Continue" button when finished.

To Edit Your Personal Information

1. Once logged into the system, click on the "My Profile" icon at the top of the screen.
2. Here you can edit any information you would like. Once finished, click on the "Update Profile" button.

Searching for Jobs

1. Once logged into the system, you will see several links on the left-hand side under "Job Search."
2. Click the link for the level of positions you are seeking.
3. Select job locations where you wish to work and the types of positions that interest you. To choose multiple job types or locations, hold "ctrl" while selecting job types or locations. When finished, click on the "Search Jobs" button.
4. You will see two lists of positions. The top list is comprised of all positions meeting your requirements that were posted specifically for University of Alaska Anchorage. The bottom list is comprised of all the positions meeting your requirements that were posted nationally. To view any of the positions, click on the job title. To view information about any of the organizations, click on the company name (if available).
5. To apply to a specific position, read the contact information below, and choose the application method that best suits your needs. Various contact information will be shown including mailing address, phone number, fax number, email address, and "Apply Online." To use your uploaded resume and cover letter, click on the "Apply Online" link.
6. When applying online, you can select any single approved resume that you have uploaded, and any single cover letter that has been uploaded which will be sent directly to the recruiter. Cover letters do not have to be sent. After you have made your selection, click on the "Send" button.

How to Find the Right Job

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 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.

Getting Experience

- ✓ Narrow down the career options you are considering through coursework and personal research.
- ✓ 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.

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.

Job Search Strategies: Pros and Cons

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

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

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

Making Your Career Center Work for You

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

The mission of career center practitioners is to teach skills and provide services that will facilitate the career development and job search process, ranging from assessing your abilities to negotiating employment offers. Don't overlook this opportunity; it could mean passing up the job of a lifetime.

Develop Relationships

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

A counselor/advisor will listen to your concerns and provide objective advice. You can bounce ideas off him or her, which will help you think through your options. Furthermore, when unique job opportunities come in, counselors/advisors often alert students who they know well and think might be a good fit with the position. Remember, the more you share about your skills and your goals with the staff, the better they will be able to assist you.

Attend Programs

Many career center practitioners spend the bulk of their time planning events for students. From mock interview days and networking nights to resume workshops and career fairs, at any given time there may be a number of programs going on that can assist you. Make sure you are aware of what's taking place. Find the event calendar, whether it is online, in paper, or through an email listserv. As you attend programs, ask thoughtful questions to make the most of what you are learning.

Don't Be a Stranger

Your relationship with the career center doesn't have to end the day you don your cap and gown. Many centers offer services for alumni similar to those for students. If you haven't found a job or even formed a plan by graduation, you still might be able to meet with counselors/advisors, use job listings and/or computers and attend programs. Check with the career center to see what is available and what time limits apply.

Programs and Services

In addition to these tips, it's helpful to understand more about career centers' numerous services. These programs and offerings may include:

Job Listings and Recruiting Programs

Virtually all career centers have job listings maintained in-house or by professional online services. Employers can post positions specifically for your individual college. Furthermore, many students will be able to take advantage of on-campus recruiting programs, where employers collect student resumes and conduct on-campus interviews for various job openings.

Career Fairs

The beauty of career fairs is that they bring employers to you. Often held in a large venue, you can browse their available positions, talk with them informally, and drop off resumes. Fairs may be held up to several times a year, focusing on different types of positions, such as internships or nonprofit jobs.

Internship Programs

Internships are the most valuable way to try out different career fields and gain hands-on experience while you are still a student. You can build your resume, learn the ropes, and maybe even get academic credit.

Workshops

Career center workshops cover skills ranging from writing an effective cover letter to honing your interview performance. Not only can you get pertinent advice from career center staff and other workshop presenters, but you will also benefit greatly from being in a group environment with your peers.

Remember, the more you share about your skills and your goals with the staff, the better they will be able to assist you.

Alumni Networks

Many schools offer students access to alumni contacts in various career fields. These graduates have volunteered to serve as a resource for information and advice. This can be one of the most helpful ways to learn about different industries, and can help you get your foot in the door.

Mock Interviews

When it comes to interviewing, practice makes perfect. The experience of having a simulated interview with a staff member can calm nerves, enhance performance, teach you how to answer tough questions, and prevent you from making big mistakes.

Resume and Cover Letter Critiques

In addition to the assistance offered during individual appointments, many offices hold specific drop-in hours where a staff member can provide a quick resume or cover letter critique.

Written by Jennifer Bobrow Burns, a free-lance career consultant/writer and former associate director of career development at Columbia University in New York.

Resume Reviews

A resume “review” is the process of looking over an already written resume for content, punctuation, structure, style, and presentation. Studies completed through the Professional Association of Resume Writers (PARW) have shown that it is imperative that certain facts be made clear and easy to find. When an applicant is applying for a job that requires interaction with customers, the applicant must demonstrate experience in customer service, resolving issues. The following are things to look for:

Name: The applicant’s full name should be centered on the top of the paper. The font size should be 14 and in bold. The remainder of the resume should be completed in size 12 font.

Address: The P.O. box or street address should be listed under the name.

Phone Number: The phone number (including the area code) should be listed under the address. Both personal contact and message number may be listed.

Email: Place email here (do not use an inappropriate email address).

“Hiccup Line”: A single bold line is placed two spaces under the email line in the address block. This line is used to break up the name from following information and highlights the applicant’s name.

Summary: A summary paragraph should be used only if the applicant is remaining in the same occupation and has ten or more years of experience in that occupation.

Objective: The applicant must clearly state what it is he or she wishes to do.

Education: Four pieces of information are required: 1.) How high did the person go; one credit or a PhD? 2.) What did they receive the training in? (e.g., business or psychology) 3.) Where did they get the training? and 4.) When did they get the training? (e.g., 2000 or 2001)

Remaining headings must relate to the individual’s personal skills and abilities.

Resume Tips

Preferred Paper: Off-white or white linen. *Note:* Never staple; never fold.

Preferred Font: New Times Roman, Arial, Garamond.

Common Mistakes

- 1.) Using spell check alone. Make sure you have someone with good language skills review it.
- 2.) Look for commas vs. semi colons.
- 3.) Inappropriate capitalization.
- 4.) Run-on sentences.
- 5.) Misuse of words.

Other Mistakes

- 1.) Too much information
- 2.) Too much remaining white space
- 3.) Not using words that relate to job
- 4.) Too wordy
- 5.) Using bond paper
- 6.) Hard to read font (style and size)

References: The applicant may mention that references will be provided, but never place the actual references on the resume. References go on a separate piece of paper.

When a student drops off a resume for review, the resume will be placed into the reviewer’s in-box. The reviewer should complete the review in not more than 48 hours. The reviewer will instruct the front desk person to contact the applicant and to pick up the reviewed copy at the front desk. The resume should be kept in an envelope with the applicant’s name on the outside, preventing personal information about the applicant to become known to others. The reviewer should make clear marks on the resume, using a red pen for corrections.

CV (Curriculum Vitae)

If you are seeking an academic or research position, you will need to prepare curriculum vitae (CV). The format of the CV varies from discipline to discipline. You are encouraged to consult with faculty in your academic department, your professional society and resources available in the UAA Career Services Center.

The CV is a summary of your professional experience, approximately two to six pages long. It is tailored to the type of position for which you are applying. Generally, there are three types of academic positions: teacher, researcher, and administrator. If you are applying for different types of academic jobs, prepare different CVs. For some administrative positions in academia, it is more appropriate to submit a resume. The resume is a one- or two-page document. The format differs significantly from the CV. Verify the type of document that is required to apply for the position.

A sample CV is shown on page 13 and is designed to give you an idea of the form and type of information included. Please use it as an example to create your own.

Categories Appropriate for a CV

Objective	Distinctions
Summary	Affiliations
Education	Certification
Areas of Expertise	Licensure
Professional Competencies	Scholarships/Fellowships
Areas of Concentration	Study/Travel Abroad
graduate study	Research Interest
Professional Experience	Teaching Interest
Administrative Experience	Academic Interest
Consulting Experience	Presentations
Publications	Honors
Languages/Language Competencies	

Power Verbs for Your Resume

accelerated	compared	excelled	maintained	repaired
accommodated	compiled	executed	marketed	reported
accomplished	composed	exercised	measured	represented
achieved	computed	expanded	mediated	researched
acquired	conceptualized	expedited	minimized	reserved
acted	concluded	explained	mobilized	resolved (problems)
activated	confirmed	extended	modeled	restored
adapted	consented	extracted	moderated	retrieved
added	consolidated		modernized	revamped
addressed	constructed	fabricated	modified	reviewed
adjusted	contracted	facilitated	monitored	revised
administered	contributed	familiarized	motivated	revitalized
admitted	converted	fashioned	multiplied	revived
advanced	convinced	figured		
advised	cooperated	finalized	negotiated	sanctioned
aided	coordinated	forecasted		satisfied
alleviated	correlated	formulated	officiated	scheduled
allocated	corresponded	fostered	operated	screened
allowed	counseled	founded	orchestrated	scrutinized
altered	created	fulfilled	organized	secured
ameliorated	critiqued		originated	served
amended	customized	generated	overhauled	set goals
analyzed		grew		settled
appointed	debugged	guaranteed	performed	shaped
apportioned	deciphered	guided	persuaded	smoothed
appraised	dedicated		pioneered	solicited
apprised	delegated	hired	planned	solved
approved	deliberated		polished	sought
approximated	demonstrated	identified	prepared	spearheaded
arbitrated	designated	illustrated	prescribed	specified
arranged	designed	implemented	prioritized	spoke
ascertained	determined	improved	processed	stimulated
assembled	devaluated	improvised	procured	streamlined
assessed	developed	increased	produced	strengthened
assigned	devised	indexed	programmed	studied
assisted	diagnosed	indicated	projected	submitted
attained	directed	inferred	promoted	substantiated
attested	disbursed	influenced	publicized	suggested
audited	dispatched	informed	purchased	summarized
augmented	displayed	initiated		supervised
authored	drafted	innovated	queried	supplemented
authorized		inspected	questioned	surveyed
	eased	inspired		sustained
balanced	eclipsed	instituted	raised	synthesized
bolstered	edited	instructed	rated	systematized
boosted	educated	integrated	realized	
brainstormed	elevated	interceded	recommended	tabulated
budgeted	elicited	interpreted	reconciled	tailored
built	employed	interviewed	recorded	traced
	empowered	introduced	recruited	trained
calculated	enabled	invented	rectified	transacted
catalogued	encouraged	investigated	reduced (losses)	transformed
centralized	endorsed	involved	refined	translated
certified	engineered	issued	referred	transmitted
chaired	enhanced		reformed	
charted	enlarged	judged	regarded	updated
clarified	enlisted	justified	regulated	upgraded
classified	enriched		rehabilitated	
coached	enumerated	launched	reinforced	validated
collaborated	envisioned	lectured	rejuvenated	valued
collected	established	led	related	verified
commissioned	estimated	licensed	relieved	visualized
committed	evaluated	lightened	remedied	
communicated	examined	linked	remodeled	wrote

Adapted with permission from the Career Resource Manual of the University of California, Davis.

The Top Ten Pitfalls in Resume Writing

- 1. Too long.** Most new graduates should restrict their resumes to one page. If you have trouble condensing, get help from a technical or business writer or a career center professional.
- 2. Typographical, grammatical or spelling errors.** These errors suggest carelessness, poor education and/or lack of intelligence. Have at least two people proofread your resume. Don't rely on your computer's spell-checkers or grammar-checkers.
- 3. Hard to read.** A poorly typed or copied resume looks unprofessional. Use a plain typeface, no smaller than a 12-point font. Asterisks, bullets, underlining, boldface type and italics should be used only to make the document easier to read, not fancier. Again, ask a professional's opinion.
- 4. Too verbose.** Do not use complete sentences or paragraphs. Say as much as possible with as few words as possible. *A*, *an* and *the* can almost always be left out. Be careful in your use of jargon and avoid slang.
- 5. Too sparse.** Give more than the bare essentials, especially when describing related work experience, skills, accomplishments, activities, interests and club memberships that will give employers important information. Including membership in the Society of Women Engineers, for example, would be helpful to employers who wish to hire more women, yet cannot ask for that information.
- 6. Irrelevant information.** Customize each resume to each position you seek (when possible). Of course, include all education and work experience, but emphasize only relevant experience, skills, accomplishments, activities and hobbies. Do not include marital status, age, sex, children, height, weight, health, church membership, etc.
- 7. Obviously generic.** Too many resumes scream, "I need a job—*any* job!" The employer needs to feel that you are interested in that particular position with his or her particular company.
- 8. Too snazzy.** Of course, use good quality bond paper, but avoid exotic types, colored paper, photographs, binders and graphics. Electronic resumes should include appropriate industry keywords and use a font size between 10 and 14 points. Avoid underlining, italics or graphics.
- 9. Boring.** Make your resume as dynamic as possible. Begin every statement with an action verb. Use active verbs to describe what you have accomplished in past jobs. Take advantage of your rich vocabulary and avoid repeating words, especially the first word in a section.
- 10. Too modest.** The resume showcases your qualifications in competition with the other applicants. Put your best foot forward without misrepresentation, falsification or arrogance.

The Three R's

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

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

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

Research the position. The more you know about the position, the better able you will be to sell yourself

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

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

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

Sample Internship Resume

Diane F. Smith

email: dsdfs@uaa.alaska.edu

Permanent Address
3150 East 42nd Street
Anchorage, Alaska 99512

Campus Address
123 West Hall
Anchorage, Alaska 99508

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS:

- Over five years of customer service experience
- Experienced conducting research and marketing presentations
- Outgoing, personable, and enjoy working in teams and on group projects

EDUCATION:

University of Alaska Anchorage

B.B.A. in Business Marketing, Minor: Accounting, May 05 - Junior

WORK EXPERIENCE:

University of Alaska Anchorage, Anchorage, AK

Career Services Center

Programs Assistant

- Create and post flyers in support of on-campus recruitment program
- Develop, write, and edit monthly center newsletter
- Monitor and make all changes in career center's website

Old Navy, Anchorage, AK

Promotional Assistant

- Interacted with hundreds of men, women, and children while giving away promotional items for a city-wide 4th of July promotional event
- Worked cooperatively with a group of fifteen individuals to effectively execute 4th of July promotional activities

Psychology Department, University of Alaska Fairbanks

Research Assistant

- Gathered and processed statistical data from numerous participants that was ultimately used in a nationwide survey

Hot Dog on a Stick, Anchorage, AK

Assistant Manager

- Analyzed and implemented a new scheduling system resulting in profit increase and store efficiency
- Kept accurate account of large sums of money and financial transactions
- Coordinated and supervised numerous recreational activities and events for sixteen employees

COMPUTER SKILLS:

MS Word, MS Excel, Power Point

Sample Resume—Marketing

Blake Michael Williams

3700 East 36th Avenue, Apartment #4
Anchorage, Alaska 99508
(907) 348-7777
email: asbmw@uaa.alaska.edu

OBJECTIVE: To obtain an entry-level management training position

EDUCATION:

B.B.A. in Marketing May 2004

University of Alaska Anchorage

GPA: 3.25 overall

GPA: 3.68 in major

Related Coursework:

- Marketing Research
- Sales Promotion Management
- Global Marketing
- Buyer Behavior

EXPERIENCE:

Marketing Intern

Anchorage Advertising, Inc., Anchorage, AK

- Designed customized exterior and interior signs featuring customer's products
- Working with sales rep, contacted customers weekly
- Maintained excellent working relations and continually reviewed customer needs
- Identified customer's specific needs and proposed more cost-effective alternatives.

Sales Clerk

Old Navy, Anchorage, AK

- Responded to customer inquiries, offered options for purchase, and handled inventory control.
- Worked 15-20 hours weekly to pay for college expenses.
- Asked to return for a second year.

ACTIVITIES:

- UAA Marketing Club
- Club Vice President
- Event Committee Chairperson

REFERENCES:

Furnished upon request

Sample Resume—Elementary Education

Lynn S. Stellers

1908 East 75th Avenue, Apartment #12
Anchorage, Alaska 99518
(907) 428-9800
email: lynn_stellers@yahoo.com

OBJECTIVE:

Seeking a career opportunity as an *Elementary Education Teacher*

EDUCATION:

- University of Alaska Anchorage, Anchorage, AK
Bachelor of Arts, cum laude, in Elementary Education 2004
- Dean's List (two semesters)
 - Academic Scholarship
 - Education Society, member 2001-2004

STUDENT TEACHING EXPERIENCE:

- Lake Otis Elementary School, Anchorage, AK
Student Teacher Fall 2003
- Taught third grade in all elementary subjects
 - Designed and implemented a two-week unit on Alaskan Native Culture

Muldoon Elementary School, Anchorage, AK

- Student Teacher** Spring 2004
- Taught second grade in all elementary subjects

South Anchorage Elementary School, Anchorage, AK
Student Teacher Fall 2004

- Concentrated on instructing lower level reading and math groups, and conducted whole class math lessons.

OTHER WORK EXPERIENCE:

- Fred Myers Groceries **Cashier/Sales Clerk**, full-time summers and part-time through the year 2000 - present
- Responsible for cashing out and verification of receipts
 - Prepare sales reports and break downs per department
 - Set up displays and implement in-store promotions

References furnished upon request

CAREER SERVICES CENTER

Sample Resume—Information Technology

John J. Junior
2313 Gagnon Lane
Anchorage, Alaska 99508
anaaaa@uaa.edu
(907) 786-1234

OBJECTIVE: To obtain a position in the field of Information Technology; specific interest in SAP.

EDUCATION: University of Alaska Anchorage, Anchorage, AK
Bachelor of Science in Management Information Systems
Expected graduation date: May 2005
Major GPA: 3.24/4.0

Relevant Courses:
Programming Business Applications
Economics
Business Writing
Statistical Analysis
Accounting
Data Base Mgmt.

EXPERIENCE: **Alaska Air Logistics** **January XX - May XX**
Logistics Analyst

- Managed automated order processing to allow international customers to order directly via EDI or FTP.
- Managed the Vendor Managed Inventory (VMI) for Alaska Global Freight to reduce and maintain their on-hand inventory.
- Responsible for running weekly orders and ensuring at the beginning of every month that the database was updated with the new forecasts and new safety stocks measurements if any.
- Responsible for analyzing international forecasts and supporting the creation of a web page to be posted on the Alaska Global Freight Intranet.

University of Alaska Anchorage **August XX - May XX**
Tutor; University Learning Center
Currently tutoring students in

- Financial and Management Accounting
- Introductory Microeconomics

SKILLS:

Computer

- Worked extensively with simulation programming languages such as Excel and ARENA
- Maintenance of Database Management Systems

ACTIVITIES: **President**, Management Information Systems Student Club

- Led the weekly meeting and organized various events throughout the semester

Secretary of UAA Homecoming Week

- Organized Campus Decorations Committee

REFERENCES: Available upon request.

Sample Resume—Registered Nurse

Linda P. Larson

3500 West Muldoon Avenue
Anchorage, Alaska 99510
(907) 783-6221

OBJECTIVE:

To gain valuable experience as a **Registered Nurse** in the medical-surgical unit of Alaska Regional Hospital with rapid progression to other departments, such as Emergency, CCU, and ICU.

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS:

- Will obtain a B.S. in Nursing from the University of Alaska Anchorage in May 2004
- Have gained experience in CCU, ICU, ER, and OR during nursing rotation
- Maintain excellent relationships with patients, family, staff, and administration
- Ability to decisively handle trauma situations and deal effectively with difficult patients
- Motivated and dedicated to provide professional, quality patient care

EDUCATION:

B.S. Nursing - May 2004
University of Alaska Anchorage, Anchorage, Alaska

Scheduled to take Alaska Nursing Board Exam for R.N. license in June 2004

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS:

American Nurses Association
Alaska Nurses Association

HEALTH CARE EXPERIENCE:

Nurse Technician/Mental Health Assistant - January 1999 - present
Mat-Su Hospital, Palmer, Alaska

- Provide patient care, counseling, and support
- Have assisted with "Code Blue" and "Code Yellow" situations and performed CPR
- Remove sutures and wound dressings, give injections, draw blood, insert urinary catheters, and administer other treatment as required

Linda P. Larson

Page Two

OTHER WORK EXPERIENCE:

Cashier September 1997 - December 1998
Wal-Mart, Wasilla, Alaska

Provided prompt assistance to customers, and perform all other duties with a professional and courteous attitude.

Cashier January 1996 - September 1997
Palmer Gifts, Palmer, Alaska

Assisted customers in selection of gifts, made recommendation for shipping, collected money, made change, and assisted Alaska visitors with general information on the beautiful State of Alaska.

References will be furnished upon your request.

Sample Curriculum Vitae

MICHAEL NICHOLAS TYLER

4500 South Ariane Street
Fairbanks, Alaska 99709
(907) 786-4513
tylor@uaa.alaska.edu

EDUCATION

University of Washington, Seattle, WA
Ph.D. in Psychology, May xx
Dissertation topic: Human cognition, perception and learning

University of Alaska Fairbanks, Fairbanks, AK
M.S. in Telecommunications, 19xx

University of Alaska Anchorage, Anchorage, AK
B.S. in Applied Psychology, 19xx

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Adjunct Faculty, University of Alaska Anchorage, Anchorage, AK 19xx - 20xx
Introductory and General Psychology

Faculty Lecturer, University of Alaska Anchorage, Anchorage, AK 19xx - 19xx
General Psychology
Human Growth & Development
Applied Psychology

Visiting Lecturer, AK Scientist/Teacher Partnership for Anchorage 19xx - 19xx
Public Schools
Communications: Telegraphs, Telephones, & Computer Networks
What is Science and the Scientific Method?

WORK EXPERIENCE

BMI, Research South Anchorage, AK (19xx - present)
Human Factors & Design Center, Network Hardware Division (19xx - present)

- Planned, conducted, and analyzed survey questionnaires and focus group data to obtain customer requirements and measure customer satisfaction.
- Designed and evaluated PC terminals to enhance customer set-up and application usability.
- Designed and tested keyboard usability, layout, graphics, and performance.

MICHAEL NICHOLAS TYLER
CV, Page Two

Network Management Human Factors Lab, Network Software Division (19xx - 19xx)

- Developed methods of graphically representing network configuration, operation, and performance of client-server networking software applications.

Human Factors/Usability Research and Design Lab (19xx - 19xx)

- Designed and evaluated end-user interfaces for personal computers and printers.
- Developed and evaluated the convergent keyboard for all BMIPC systems.

RESEARCH INTEREST

- Human information processing and performance
- Human-computer interface design and VDT/workstation ergonomics
- Usability measurement, testing and evaluation methodologies
- Telecommunications

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

- Human Factors and Ergonomics Society (HFES)
- Usability Professionals Association (UPA)
- American Psychological Association (APA)
- Psi Chi (National Honor Society in Psychology)

HONORS

- BMI Management Award
- BMI Management Appreciation Award

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- National Engineering Week speaker, Municipality of Anchorage
- Awarded innovation grant to develop science inventors program, Muldoon Elementary School

PUBLICATIONS

Tyler, M. N. (19xx). Safety or schedule effects in electric-shock therapy, **Journal of the Experimental Analysis of Behavior**, 36(3), 176-199

Smith, G.H., and Tyler, M.N. (19xx). Human factors testing: Keyboard design, **BMI Technical Report (TM07.178)**, South Anchorage, AK: BMI Corporation

Sample Cover Letter

8000 Lake Otis Parkway
Anchorage, Alaska 99508
(907) 786-2000
Date

Jennifer W. Wallis
Director
Muldoon Day Care Center
2121 Green Avenue
Anchorage, Alaska 99516

Dear Dr. Wallis:

Having worked in three day care centers as a volunteer and student intern, I was quite excited to learn from the UAA Career Services Center that you have an opening for a teacher at Muldoon Day Care Center. I would very much like to be considered for that position and feel qualified for several reasons.

According to the Careers Services Center's job announcement, you are interested in incorporating educational objectives into play programs. I am not only committed to such an approach but, as my enclosed resume illustrates, I have had the opportunity to design and implement such programs at two different day care facilities. Children, teacher and parents were all enthusiastic about how educational yet captivating these sessions turned out to be, and I thoroughly enjoyed both planning them and working with the children.

I was also informed that Muldoon Day Care Center is heavily used by African-American and Hispanic families and that you strive to meet their unique needs. In addition to studying the culture of urban minorities, for the past two summers I have also been a "Big Sister" for two African-American children, ages 4 and 6, living in Anchorage.

I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss these and other experiences with you and to find out more about Muldoon Day Care Center. Spring break lasts from March xx through the xx. Would it be possible to meet with you some time then?

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Ivana A. Career

Ivana A. Career

Sample Cover Letter

2020 University Lane
University of Alaska Anchorage, Anchorage, AK
(907) 786-1234
Date

John James
Anchorage Air Support
Avionics Division
Box 2300
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

Dear Mr. James:

After reading your brochure and researching Anchorage Air Support, I became quite interested in possible summer employment there. I've read that you have a summer program and am very interested in avionics products. Also, since I am graduating in December, I would appreciate being considered for a permanent position as well.

I have a large quantity of experience involving several programming languages as well as many computers. I've worked on many operating systems including 2.9.4.1 and 4.2 BSD UNIX, WindowsNT, VM/CMS, PC/IX, and MS-DOS. I've gained experience from both class work and employment (as stated in the enclosed resume). I have experience as a system programmer and operator on both Vax 11/780 and Vax 11/750, but could easily and quickly learn to program or operate a different computer.

Proved by my many activities, I have lots of energy to exert in work. I am an enthusiastic hard worker with the desire to learn many new concepts and skills. I would enjoy having Anchorage Air Support utilize this energy.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Lindsay I. Good

Lindsay I. Good

Enclosure

Note that this candidate refers to the research she's done on the company and expresses a sincere interest. She also points out the amount and types of her relevant experiences in the field.

Sample Prospecting Letter for an Internship

3745 Muldoon Road
Anchorage, Alaska 99508
(907) 786-4513
ascsc@uaa.alaska.edu

December 21, 20xx

Mr. James J. Jones
President
ABC Logistics, Inc.
3400 Airport Drive
Anchorage, Alaska 99515

Dear Mr. Jones:

The purpose of this correspondence is to see if an internship is available, or you would be willing to create one, in logistics or product/inventory control. If you have a need for a well organized, accurate, and efficient individual for any special projects or tasks please do not hesitate to consider me.

Enclosed for your review and consideration is my resume. I hope it reflects that I will maximize any opportunity provided to me and will prove to be a valuable addition to your workforce.

Please allow me the opportunity to discuss my qualifications with you, or the appropriate individual, at your earliest convenience. I can be reached at the above address, telephone number or email address. Thank you so much for your attention and consideration.

Sincerely,
(Pen written signature)
Your name typed here
Enclosure

(Be sure to keep a copy for your records)

Sample Networking Letter

3745 Muldoon Road
Anchorage, Alaska 99508
(907) 786-4513
ascsc@uaa.alaska.edu

December 21, 20xx

Mr. James J. Jones
President
EFG Business Consultants.
3400 Airport Drive
Anchorage, Alaska 99515

Dear Mr. Jones:

Mr. Reeves suggested I contact you regarding my interest in a management training position with your company. He and I believe you might be able to use someone with the following experience, knowledge and qualities:

- A work history of reaching goals and advancement
- A management training internship marked by outstanding performance evaluations
- Excellent performance in all management and related coursework
- 3.70 GPA while working 10+ hours per week; can get things done

Enclosed is my resume for your review. I am a "hands-on" individual with the potential to effectively motivate and supervise the work of others.

Please allow me the opportunity to discuss my qualifications with you, or the appropriate individual, at your earliest convenience. I can be reached at the above address, telephone number or email address. Thank you so much for your attention and consideration.

Sincerely,
(Pen written signature)
Your name typed here
Enclosure

(Be sure to keep a copy for your records)

Letter of Application

Your address
City, State ZIP
Telephone number
Email address

Month/Day/Year

Name
Title
Company
Address
City, State ZIP

Dear Mr. / Ms. _____:

Please accept this letter as an application for the Sales Account Coordinator position recently advertised in the UAA Career Services Center's website. The following experience, knowledge and qualities will allow me to effectively carry out the responsibilities of the position.

- A work history of reaching goals and advancement
- Sales internship marked by outstanding performance evaluations
- Excellent performance in all sales and related coursework
- 3.50 G.P.A. while working 15+ hours per week, excellent time management

Enclosed is my resume per your request. I believe it reflects the great sense of pride I take in doing quality work and the energetic and positive addition I can be to your workforce.

Please allow me the opportunity to interview with you, or the appropriate individual, at a time and place convenient to your schedule. I can be reached at the above address, telephone number, or email address. Thank you for considering me for this application.

Sincerely,
(Pen-written signature here)

Your name typed here

Enclosure

(Be sure to keep a copy for your records)

Letter of Inquiry—Intern Position

Address
City, State ZIP
Telephone number
Email address

Month/Day/Year

Name
Title
Company
Address
City, State ZIP

Dear Mr. /Ms. _____:

The purpose of this correspondence is to see if an internship is available, or you would be willing to create one, in logistics or product/inventory control. If you have a need for a well organized, accurate, and efficient individual for any special projects or tasks please do not hesitate to consider me.

Enclosed for your review and consideration is my resume. I hope it reflects that I will maximize any opportunity provided to me and will prove to be a valuable addition to your workforce.

Please allow me the opportunity to discuss my qualifications with you, or the appropriate individual, at your earliest convenience. I can be reached at the above address, telephone number or email address. Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Sincerely,
(Pen written signature here)

Your typed name here

Enclosure

(Be sure to keep a copy for your records)

Letter of Acceptance

Box 1200
University of Alaska Anchorage
Anchorage, Alaska 99508
asjjj@uaa.alaska.edu

August 12, 20xx

Mr. John Smith
Regional Director
(Name of company)
(Address of company)
Anchorage, Alaska 99508

Dear Mr. Smith:

Thank you for your letter of [date of letter]. I am pleased to accept your offer for the position of [name of position]. I understand that my initial assignment will be working for Mr./Ms. [full name] in the [company division/department] at a salary of [salary per year].

I will graduate on [graduation date], and will be available for work in [location of position] on [date you can start]. Please let me know whom I should contact regarding my moving arrangements and other details as to where and when I should report to work.

I appreciate all your efforts on my behalf and look forward to working with you at [company name].

Sincerely,
(Pen-written signature name here)

Janet Jones

(Be sure to keep a copy for your records)

Thank You Letter

Address
City, State ZIP
Telephone number
Email address

Month/Day/Year

Name
Title
Company
Address
City, State ZIP

Dear Mr./Ms. _____:

Thank you for taking the time to interview me at the University of Alaska Anchorage on (date of interview). I enjoyed talking with you and learning more about the [name of position] with [name of company].

As you recall from our interview, I have had experience as an intern with Accenture Accounting. I have also taken advanced classes in electronic payroll systems at UAA. I greatly enjoy this career field and wish to apply my interest and knowledge to [name of company].

Again, thank you for the opportunity to interview with you. I look forward to speaking with you again soon.

Sincerely,
(Pen written signature here)

Your typed name here

Enclosure

(Be sure to keep a copy for your records)

Getting the Most Out of a Career Fair

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

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

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

Fashions and Accessories

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

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

Stop, Look and Listen

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

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

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

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

You’re a Prospector—Start Digging

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

Fair Thee Well

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

A Few Words About Career Fair Etiquette

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

Dressing for the Interview

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

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

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

Here are some guidelines:

MEN

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

WOMEN

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

Staying Within a Budget

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

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

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

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

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

A Final Check

And, of course, your appearance is only as good as your grooming. Create a final checklist to review before you go on an interview:

- Neatly trimmed hair
- Conservative makeup
- No runs in stockings
- Shoes polished (some suggest wearing your sneakers on the way to an interview and changing before you enter the interview site)
- No excessive jewelry; men should refrain from wearing earrings
- No missing buttons, crooked ties or lint

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

Taking a Casual Approach

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

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

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

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

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.

Advice From the Experts

Interviewing Tips From On-Campus Recruiters

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

Define your career goals and the opportunities you want

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

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

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

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

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

Ten Rules of Interviewing

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

7 Ask questions.
The types of questions you ask and the way you ask them can make a tremendous impression on the interviewer. Good questions require advance preparation. Just as you plan how you would

answer an interviewer's questions, write out specific questions you want to ask. Then look for opportunities to ask them during the interview. Don't ask about benefits or salary. The interview process is a two-way street whereby you and the interviewer assess each other to determine if there is an appropriate match.

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

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

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

In Summary

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

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

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

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

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?
8. Define success. Failure.
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.

Questions to Ask Employers

1. Please describe the duties of the job for me.
2. What kinds of assignments might I expect the first six months on the job?
3. Are salary adjustments geared to the cost of living or job performance?
4. Does your company encourage further education?
5. How often are performance reviews given?
6. What products (or services) are in the development stage now?
7. Do you have plans for expansion?
8. What are your growth projections for next year?
9. Have you cut your staff in the last three years?
10. How do you feel about creativity and individuality?
11. Do you offer flextime?
12. Is your company environmentally conscious? In what ways?
13. In what ways is a career with your company better than one with your competitors?
14. Is this a new position or am I replacing someone?
15. What is the largest single problem facing your staff (department) now?
16. May I talk with the last person who held this position?
17. What is the usual promotional time frame?

18. Does your company offer either single or dual career-track programs?
19. What do you like best about your job/company?
20. Once the probation period is completed, how much authority will I have over decisions?
21. Has there been much turnover in this job area?
22. Do you fill positions from the outside or promote from within first?
23. What qualities are you looking for in the candidate who fills this position?
24. What skills are especially important for someone in this position?
25. What characteristics do the achievers in this company seem to share?
26. Is there a lot of team/project work?
27. Will I have the opportunity to work on special projects?
28. Where does this position fit into the organizational structure?
29. How much travel, if any, is involved in this position?
30. What is the next course of action? When should I expect to hear from you or should I contact you?

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 with the employer 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.

How to Find the Right Job

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 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.

Getting Experience

- ✓ Narrow down the career options you are considering through coursework and personal research.
- ✓ 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.

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.

Qualities Desired in New College Graduates

By Businesses, Industries and Government Agencies

Energy, Drive, Enthusiasm and Initiative

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

Adapts Textbook Learning to the Working World

Quick learner
Asks questions
Analytical; independent thinker
Willing to continue education and growth

Committed to excellence
Open-minded, willing to try new things

Knowledge of Computers

Established word processing, spreadsheet, database and presentation software skills
Excellent computer literacy

Communications Skills

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

Leadership Skills

Organizational skills and attention to detail

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

Oriented to Growth

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

Source: Recruiting Trends by L. Patrick Scheetz, Ph.D., Collegiate Employment Research Institute. ©Michigan State University.

Dealing With Rejection in the Job Search

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

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

Eight Guidelines to Ward Off Rejection

1. Depersonalize the interview.

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

2. Don't make it all or nothing.

Don't set yourself up for a letdown: "If I don't get this job, I'm a failure." Tell yourself, "It could be mine. It's a good possibility. It's certainly not an impossibility."

3. Don't blame the interviewer.

Realize interviewers aren't in a hurry to think and behave our way. Blame your turnaround on a stone-hearted interviewer who didn't flatter you with beautiful compliments, and you will learn nothing.

4. Don't live in the past.

When you dredge up past failures, your nervous system kicks in and you experience all the feelings that go with failure. Unwittingly, you overestimate the dangers facing you and underestimate yourself.

5. Don't get mad at the system.

Does anything less pleasurable exist than hunting for a job? Still, you must adjust to the world rather than make the world adjust to you. The easiest thing is to conform, to do what 400,000 other people are doing. When you sit down to play bridge or poker or drive a car, do you complain about the rules?

6. Take the spotlight off yourself.

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

7. See yourself in the new role.

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

8. Keep up your sense of humor.

Nobody yet has contracted an incurable disease from a job interview.

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

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 applicant's capacity for problem-solving activities?
6. How well does candidate respond to stress and pressure?

Turning the Tables in the Interview

You've sat through most of the interview and have answered all the recruiter's questions. You know you've made a good impression because you prepared for the interview and your answers were articulate and decisive. You've come across as a very bright, capable candidate when the recruiter asks something you didn't anticipate: "Do you have any questions?"

If you don't have any questions prepared and you try to cover your mistake by asking a spur-of-the-moment question, chances are you will damage your chances for a successful interview. Some recruiters refuse to hire people who don't ask intelligent questions. Don't ask questions just for the sake of asking questions—make sure it is information that you need.

Prepare Questions in Advance

You should have a list of questions prepared for this crucial part of the interview. Every question you ask should demonstrate your interest and confirm your knowledge of the organization.

You should read publications in the field. You can get information about new products or policies by surfing the employer's Web site or by reading general magazines or trade publications. It is appropriate to address some of your questions to what you have read. Ask about new products, how research and development is structured at the company, management strategies at the company, how the company has changed, and potential product growth.

Some of the publications providing a wealth of information are *Fortune*, *Forbes*, *BusinessWeek* and *The Wall Street Journal*.

Questions Not to Ask

Not only should you know what questions to ask during the interview, but it is important to know what questions not to ask. You don't want to alienate the recruiter by putting him or her on the defensive.

The following areas should generally be avoided:

1. Avoid asking questions that are answered in the company's annual report or employment brochure. Recruiters are familiar enough with their own information to recognize when you haven't done your homework. If some information in the annual report isn't clear to you, by all means ask for clarification.
2. Don't bring up salary or benefits in the initial interview. The majority of companies recruiting are very competitive and will offer approximately similar salaries and benefits. The recruiter may choose to bring up the information, but you should not initiate the topic.
3. Avoid asking any personal questions or questions that will put the recruiter on the defensive. This includes questions such as the interviewer's educational background, marital status, past work experience and so on.
4. Don't ask questions that have already been answered during the interview. If you have prepared a list of

questions and some of them have been addressed during the interview, do not repeat them unless you need clarification.

Questions You Should Ask

Now that you know what you shouldn't ask during the interview, determine what questions you should ask.

1. Ask specific questions about the position. You need to know what duties will be required of the person in the position to see if there is a fit between your interests and qualifications and the job you seek.
2. Try to find out as much as possible about qualities and skills the recruiter is looking for in job candidates. Once you determine the necessary qualities, you can then explain to the recruiter how your background and capabilities relate to those qualities.
3. Ask questions concerning advancement and promotion paths available. Every company is different and most advancement policies are unique. Try to find out what the possible promotion path is to see if it fits your career goals. You may also want to ask about periodic performance evaluations.
4. It is appropriate to ask specific questions about the company's training program if this information is not covered in company literature.
5. Ask questions about location and travel required. If you have limitations, this is the time to find out what is expected in the position.

Some Final Advice

The key to a successful interview is good communication and rapport with the recruiter. One of the fastest ways to damage this kind of relationship is by exhibiting ignorance about the company and asking inappropriate questions.

Listed below are questions you might ask during the interview. (*Used with permission from Career Planning Today, C. Randall Powell.*)

- How much travel is normally expected?
- Can I progress at my own pace or is it structured?
- How much contact and exposure to management is there?
- Is it possible to move through the training program faster?
- About how many individuals go through your training program each year?
- How much freedom is given and discipline required of new people?
- How often are performance reviews given?
- How much decision-making authority is given after one year?
- How much input does the new person have on geographical location?
- What is the average age of top management?
- What is the average time it takes to get to _____ level in the career path?

Students With Disabilities: Acing the Interview

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

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

To Disclose or Not to Disclose

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

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

Reasons for Disclosing

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

Timing the Disclosure

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

When You Get the Interview

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

Tips on Managing the Interview

Prior to the Interview

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

During the Interview

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

Written by Rosita Smith.

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 take 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 information and data

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 ever 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 Web site, 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.

How to Stand Apart From the Crowd

Competition for jobs is at an all-time high, so it's essential that you distinguish yourself from other job applicants. Regardless of the field that you're entering, individuality matters. Everything you've experience until now—in the classroom, during after-school jobs and internships, and through volunteer experiences—sets you apart from your fellow students. These unique experiences provide knowledge and abilities that must be demonstrated to potential employers through the resume, cover letter and interview. This is your chance to prove that you're the best candidate for the job and will make a great addition to their team. Here are some ways to make sure your true potential shines.

What Makes You Special?

Your roommate may have the exact same major and GPA as you do, but those factors are only superficial. More importantly: everyone has his or her own set of life experiences that influence personal growth and skill development. Maybe you've traveled around the world, speak several languages, or were born in another country. Or perhaps you've worked your way through high school and college to help support your family. Numbers only tell part of the story. When an employer is evaluating you for a job, you have to make sure your unique experiences come through on your resume and cover letter so that you have the opportunity to elaborate on the details during the interview.

Go Team!

Employers want hires who can hit the ground running and work well with others in a team environment. Your academic experience has been packed with teamwork even if you don't realize it. Just think back to all those group projects and study sessions. Many extracurricular activities from athletics and fraternities and sororities to clubs, volunteer work and student government require team participation as well. By using the language of teamwork and cooperation on your resume and cover letter, you've taken the first step toward proving that you're a collaborator. During the interview you can further express what you've learned about yourself and others through teamwork.

Leadership 101

Teamwork is key, but employers also want candidates who can step up to the plate and take charge when it's appropriate. If you've never been class president, however, don't fear; leadership can be demonstrated in many subtle ways. In addition to traditional leadership roles, leaders also take on responsibility by providing others with information and advice. If you've ever helped a friend with a paper, volunteered to teach a class or given a speech that motivated others, then you've served as a leader. During your interview, speak confidently about your accomplishments, but don't cross the line into arrogance. Good leaders know when to show off, as well as when to listen to others.

Art of the Resume

Your resume provides the opportunity to stand out, but don't distinguish yourself by using bright-colored paper or an unusual font. Those tactics are distracting and leave employers remembering you negatively. Instead, it's the content of your resume that will really get you noticed. Make sure to describe each experience in clear detail; highlight not only what you did, but also what results were gained from your actions. Don't forget to include special skills, such as foreign languages and international travel.

Cover Letter Zingers

While your resume chronicles your experiences, the cover letter lets your personality shine through. Here you can expand upon your past experiences and briefly discuss what you learned. Use concrete examples from your resume in order to showcase specific skills and characteristics. Be sure to tailor each letter to the specific organization and position, and state specifically why you want to work for the organization. Demonstrate that you've done your research; it will impress employers and set your letter apart from the rest.

Interview Expert

When it comes to the interview, preparation is key. Be ready to talk about everything you've done in a positive light, and make sure you're well informed about the organization and industry. Focus on what distinguishes the employer from their competition and why you are a good fit. If possible, speak to alumni or other current employees to learn more. Remember, practice makes perfect; many career centers offer mock interviews with a counselor. And don't be afraid to ask for help from friends and professionals as you review the answers to common interview questions.

Dos and Don'ts

- DO dress the part. Even employers with casual dress codes expect interviewees to be dressed in professional business attire.
- DON'T chew gum, wear too much cologne/perfume or smoke before the interview.
- DO look your interviewer in the eye and offer a firm handshake.
- DON'T try too hard to please and appear loud or cocky.
- DO emphasize your skills and accomplishments.
- DON'T make excuses for failures or lack of experience. Instead, take responsibility for your mistakes and change the subject to something positive.

Written by Jennifer Bobrow Burns, a free-lance career consultant/writer and former associate director of career development at Columbia University in New York.