



Penn State Career Guide

for Undergraduate & Graduate Students



Create your career pathway...



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CAMPUS CAREER OFFICE LISTING

Penn State Abington

The Career Development Center

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206 Lares Building
215-881-7529 | cad8@psu.edu
www.abington.psu.edu/career-development

Penn State Altoona

Career Services Office

Rebecca Maguda, Director
126 Slep Student Center
814-949-5059 | rvb5@psu.edu
www.altoona.psu.edu/career

Penn State Beaver

Career Services, Student Development Center
Larissa McDoniel Ciuca, Student Personal & Career Counselor
101 Student Union Building
724-773-3961 | CareerServicesBeaver@psu.edu
www.br.psu.edu/StudentServices/CareerServices/careers.htm

Penn State Berks

Office of Career Services

Tish Jepsen, Coordinator of Career Services
10 Perkins Student Center
610-396-6019 | paj7@psu.edu
www.bk.psu.edu/StudentServices/CareerServices/careers.htm

Penn State Brandywine

Advising and Career Services

Christine Allen, Coordinator of Career Services
Main Building
610-892-1390 | caa24@psu.edu
www.bw.psu.edu/StudentServices/CareerServices/careers.htm

Penn State DuBois

Career Services

Rebecca Pennington, Director of Student Affairs
106 Hiller Building
814-375-4766 | rxs163@psu.edu
www.ds.psu.edu/StudentServices/CareerServices/careers.htm

Penn State Erie, The Behrend College

Academic and Career Planning Center

Andrew Watters, Associate Director
125 Reed Union Building
814-898-6164 | askACPC@psu.edu
behrend.psu.edu/acpc

Penn State Fayette, The Eberly Campus

Center for Experiential and Developmental Education

Gina Jones, Coordinator
202 Eberly Building
724-430-4123 | cede@psu.edu
www.fe.psu.edu/StudentServices/CareerServices/careers.htm

Penn State Great Valley

The Career Management Center

Carla Holway, Director, Enrollment Management and Student Services
Main Building
610-648-3275 | CareerMgmtPSGV@psu.edu
www.sgps.psu.edu/current/resources/career/

Penn State Greater Allegheny

Office of Career Services

Erica Clarke, Career Services Coordinator
101 Frable Building
412-675-9117 | eec16@psu.edu
www.ga.psu.edu/StudentServices/CareerServices/careers.htm

Penn State Harrisburg

Career Services

Karl Martz, Assistant Director of Student Services & Career Development
Susquehanna Building
717-948-6260 | Ask4CareerAdvice@psu.edu
harrisburg.psu.edu/career-services

Penn State Hazleton

Advising Center

Kathryn Maxwell, Career Counselor / Academic Advisor
6 Administration Building (Lower Level)
570-450-3011 | kmm7@psu.edu
www.hn.psu.edu/StudentServices/CareerServices/careers.htm

Penn State Lehigh Valley

Career Services

Mike Hertel, Director of Academic Support
107 Saucon Building
610-285-5002 | lvcareerservices@psu.edu
www.lv.psu.edu/StudentServices/CareerServices/careers.htm

Penn State Mont Alto

Career Services

Linsey Covert, Career Services Coordinator
101D General Studies Building
717-749-6104 | careerservices@ma.psu.edu
www.ma.psu.edu/StudentServices/CareerServices/careers.htm



CAMPUS CAREER OFFICE LISTING

Penn State New Kensington Career Services

Jim Shields, Career Services Coordinator
Academic & Career Success Center, Student Union
724-334-6095 | CareersNK@psu.edu
www.nk.psu.edu/StudentServices/CareerServices/careers.htm

Penn State Outreach World Campus Career Services

Lynn Atanasoff, Career Counselor
301 Outreach Building, University Park
800-252-3592 | careercounseling@outreach.psu.edu
student.worldcampus.psu.edu/career-services

Continuing Education Career Services

Liz Lasher, Career Counselor
121 Outreach Building, University Park
800-228-1627 | psu4you@outreach.psu.edu
ceup.psu.edu/explore-careers

Penn State Schuylkill Career Services

Tina Rose, Coordinator of Student Leadership & Career Services
209B Student Affairs Suite, Health and Wellness Building
570-385-6253 | tmr24@psu.edu
www.sl.psu.edu/StudentServices/CareerServices/careers.htm

Penn State Shenango Office of Career Services

Heidi Friedrich, Career Services Coordinator
207 Sharon Hall
724-983-2969 | hmf1@psu.edu
www.shenango.psu.edu/career

Penn State Wilkes-Barre Career Services

Jill Laing, Career Services Coordinator
116 Murphy Student Center
570-675-9124 | jlaing@psu.edu
www.wb.psu.edu/careers

Penn State Worthington Scranton Career Services

Jonathan Tobin, Career Services Coordinator
Hawk Student Success Center, Study Learning Center
570-963-2684 | jrt16@psu.edu
www.sn.psu.edu/StudentServices/CareerServices/careers.htm

Penn State York Advising and Career Development Center

Andrew Caldwell, Career Services Coordinator/DUS Adviser
Main Lobby, Main Classroom Building
717-771-4053 | apc2@psu.edu
www.yk.psu.edu/acd

The following staff provide centralized support to career services functions at multiple locations:

Career Services at the Campuses

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814-865-4628 | lmv116@psu.edu

Barbara Holmes, Administrative Support Assistant
101 Bank of America Career Services Center, University Park
814-865-4628 | bah264@psu.edu

Western Region

Stephanie DeMaro, Regional Job and Internship Developer
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724-773-3953 | saw163@psu.edu

Eastern Region

Korie Munley, Regional Job and Internship Developer
118 Murphy Center, Wilkes-Barre Campus
570-675-9224 | kam75@psu.edu

To view the full Penn State University Park, Career Services staff directory, visit:
studentaffairs.psu.edu/career/about/StaffDirectory.shtml



Dear Penn State Student,

We have an excellent, nationally recognized Career Services office at Penn State and all of us encourage you to use our services. Additionally, Penn State enjoys an absolutely outstanding reputation among employers around the world for the quality of our academic programs and the professional qualifications of our students and alumni. For example, Penn State's university-wide career fair activity is among the largest at the national level and we enjoy a very high level of employer participation. In addition to providing a high volume of employment recruiting opportunities, we are committed to offering very high quality career services to our students on an individual basis.

Career Services offers programs to first-year students through seniors and graduate students representing all academic programs at Penn State. It is important for you to start the career planning process early. Whether that means exploring options for majors and careers or conducting a full-time job search, we have the resources to meet your needs.

You have access to career counseling; skill-building workshops and programs; career-related classes; interviews with employers; and major, occupational, employment, and graduate school information. Online, you can access our job posting service, Nittany Lion Career Network; a listing of upcoming events and career fairs; and career-related news and resources.

This Career Guide walks you through all of our services, as well as provides information to help you navigate the career planning process. If you have not yet determined what your career goals are or identified the ways in which to work toward those goals, I encourage you to contact our office. The staff of Career Services is committed to helping you find the best path for you, based on your personal interests, abilities, and values.

We encourage Penn State students to take advantage of the array of programs offered through Career Services at University Park and across the Commonwealth Campus system as well as the college-based career program offices. Employers continue to find that, now more than ever, Penn State students and graduates hold the professional qualities, academic knowledge and skills to excel in the workplace. We look forward to working with you along every step in your path toward success and I wish you a very rewarding year at Penn State.

Sincerely,



Jeff W. Garis



Photo by Patrick Mansell



The Career Planning Process: Developing Your Career Goals

When students hear about Career Services, they often think of activities related only to the job search process. Career decision making involves increasing self awareness, exploring career options, and acquiring the knowledge, skills, and experiences that will help you implement your career choices. This process is unique to each individual student and the Career Services staff is here to assist you in developing your career goals and planning steps to reach those goals.

The first step in career decision making is developing self-awareness. Your career decision is yours and is rooted in your own identity consisting of your interests, values, skills, experiences, and goals. You may be certain about all or only a few of these aspects. To increase your self awareness, career counseling offers an opportunity to discuss your life and career goals. Counseling may include assessment, which is available to help you identify and organize your interests, abilities, and values as they relate to career fields. Career counseling will increase your awareness of career options, reinforcing those options you've already considered and expose you to ones you haven't yet considered. Discussing connections between your self knowledge, experiences, and your vision for your future can lead to identifying career areas to explore.

Exploration can take many forms, all of which require you to be active in gathering information and applying this information to your self-awareness. Reading about careers through printed and online resources in the Career Information Center will help you to expand your knowledge base. While reading provides general information about career fields, talking with a professional who works in a field of interest to you (informational interviewing) can provide more details about the work and the setting, offer additional insight into careers, and answer your specific questions. Career Services can help you identify professionals in fields of interest who may offer information about their work and career. Your classes will also offer a forum for learning about careers through discussions with faculty, guest lecturers, and alumni.

Beyond gathering information, begin to consider ways to gain exposure and involvement within your identified career options. Career Services can help you learn more about student activities, volunteer opportunities, job shadowing, part-time work, research opportunities, and internships related to your interest areas.

As you move closer to selecting your career field of interest, you will learn about the knowledge base, personal qualities, and experiences which are valued by employers. These frequently include: communication skills, honesty/integrity, teamwork, interpersonal skills, motivation, leadership skills, ability to work with diverse people, work experience, and a strong work ethic. Career Services can help you plan to acquire these qualities and experiences. Active involvement in these areas will make you a more appealing candidate for available opportunities.

As you solidify your plans for employment or graduate school, remember to record your accomplishments and achievements for inclusion in your resume and/or portfolio. Your resume, cover letter, and application materials are the first impression you will give to an employer/graduate school. Take the time to represent yourself well in writing so that you get the opportunity to meet face to face. As you move into the interviewing process, prepare to present yourself in person in a way that highlights the skills, experiences, and qualities the employer/grad school is seeking in candidates. Remember to use a variety of resources and strategies in your search, evaluation, and acceptance of offers.

Each student brings individual experiences, interests, and goals to the job search. Career Services can assist you as you reflect on your unique qualities and apply them to your job search or graduate school goals.



Career Planning Steps

Increase Self Awareness

- Meet with a Career Counselor to identify interests, values, personality, abilities and clarify career goals.
- Reflect on past experiences in high school and college to help determine what you liked (interests), what you did well (skills), and what you felt was important (values).
- Explore interests through courses, volunteer work, student activities, and job shadowing.
- Consider taking a career decision-making course.

Explore Career Options

- Research career options of interest using the Career Information Center and online career exploration sites.
- Investigate career alternatives related to various fields of study.
- Conduct an informational interview or job shadow with friends, family, alumni, professors, and/or others in the community.
- Begin sampling careers by pursuing summer jobs and internships related to your interests.
- Attend career fairs, industry panels, and company information sessions.
- Research graduate programs through faculty, graduate and professional school fairs, and online.

Acquire Knowledge, Skills, and Experience

- Become active in extracurricular activities and volunteer work to develop teamwork, interpersonal, and leadership skills.
- Obtain relevant work experience by pursuing internships, co-ops, part-time work, and summer jobs.
- Develop a broader appreciation of diversity through study abroad, foreign languages, community service, multicultural courses and cultural activities on campus.
- Record your activities, accomplishments, and achievements.

Develop Self-Marketing Skills to Help Implement Your Career Goals

- Participate in resume writing, interviewing, and job search strategies workshops.
- Meet with a counselor to help design a job search or graduate school plan.
- Participate in a mock interview to practice interviewing.
- Consider taking an internship preparation or job search course such as LA 401, CNED 303, AG 100/SCI 101, or B A 420 as available (offerings vary by campus and semester).
- Take advantage of On-Campus Interviewing and career and graduate school fairs.
- Network with alumni through LionLink and gather valuable career advice.



Photo by Andy Colwell

Meeting With a Career Counselor

Meeting with a Career Counselor can be helpful in organizing and planning your future. A counselor can stimulate your thinking, ask important career planning questions to help clarify goals, provide encouragement, teach you strategies for making meaningful career decisions and help you plan your job search.

Career Counselors and students work together in developing career plans. Counselors can help you to learn more about yourself, understand the decision-making process, and begin to gather information about career opportunities. However, Career Counselors cannot make your decision for you or tell you what to do in planning your career. The responsibility for making career decisions rests with you. While students may seek a specific connection between their major and a specific career, each major can be connected to multiple career paths and possibilities. Through your work with a Career Counselor, you will develop a set of skills and knowledge which can help you define and reach your career goals.

Individual Career Counseling

Individual career counseling is one of the major functions of Career Services. Counselors help students tackle the often difficult process of career and life planning through one-on-one, ongoing, in-depth, and confidential sessions. After the first meeting, you and the counselor may decide to continue meeting.

Career counseling discussions may include such topics as:

- developing career goals
- assessing abilities, interests, and priorities
- improving interview skills
- resume, cover letter, and application forms
- internship and job search processes
- graduate school application process
- any related concerns, such as time management, transition from college to work, and coping with parental or financial pressures

Assessment

In conjunction with your individual counseling appointments, you also have access to specialized career assessment instruments that are designed to measure your interests, skills, personality characteristics, and work-related values.

Your Career Counselor will determine which assessment is appropriate, administer the assessment to you, and interpret the assessment result(s) with you. These tools can be highly useful resources in helping you get clarity on your career direction and make appropriate decisions.

You may wish to meet with a Career Counselor to:

- Begin to look at your interests, skills, and values through discussion, assessments and related activities.
- Learn about the tools and resources essential in gaining information about majors and careers.
- Discuss different opportunities, projects, activities and ideas that can assist you in making your college education satisfying, fun, and marketable.
- Engage in exercises that can help you to identify the career skills that your academic, extracurricular, internships and part-time job experiences have developed.
- Talk about how to make informed decisions about college major, careers, job offers and graduate schools.
- Recognize personal strengths and limitations and how they affect career planning. Develop ways to use and/or improve them.
- Learn to research employers and industries.
- Develop strategies to explore your professional network.
- Create and implement a strategic job search or graduate school plan.
- Develop your resume, cover letter, and interview skills.



Career Information Center

The Career Information Center (CIC) houses a wealth of occupational information on every step of the career planning process.

- Careers in all academic majors
- Occupations and industries
- Employer information
- Summer job and internship directories
- Job hunting and interviewing
- Resume and cover letter samples
- Salary information and negotiation resources
- Graduate schools
- Backpack to briefcase – transition from college to the real world

Our online resources, accessed via studentaffairs.psu.edu/career/cic, include:

CareerBeam

This comprehensive career management system offers career assessments, the latest industry research, and access to internships & jobs across the country.

- Use your @psu.edu email address to create an account

Careers Internet Database

Gives general information on 100s of occupations: education, traits, skills, earnings, potential employers/ areas and supplemental resources. Video & downloads available.

- Username: 1484w
- Password: future

Career Information Center Handouts

1-2 page single topic handouts highlight internal/ external print & online resources related to careers, occupations, or majors.

- Click "Salaries, Guides and Handouts"

Going Global

Gives country-specific job search, job/internship postings & cultural advice. Also features H1B visa-sponsoring employer database.

- Login with your Penn State userid & password

Internships.com

Search for internship or entry-level positions in every major/field across the country. Virtual opportunities also available.

- Sign up & search for "Penn State University – University Park" to get started

Internships-usa.com

Search for internships in non-technical fields like Liberal Arts, Arts, Political Science, & Human/Social Services

- Username: PennSt
- Password: PSt201314

Vault Career Library

Career, employer, & industry guides covering many fields. Also features salary, interview and company surveys. Download PDF guides.

- Accessed via University Libraries
- Search Databases by Title (A-Z), Vault Online Career Library
- Create an account using your @psu.edu email address

WetFeet

Career, employer, & industry guides covering business, consulting, & communications. Also features guides on getting great internships in specific fields. Download free PDF guides.

- Use your @psu.edu email address to download guides

What Can I Do With This Major?

Connects majors with typical career paths.

- No password or login required

To access these resources, visit studentaffairs.psu.edu/career/cic



Informational Interviewing

What Is an Informational Interview?

An informational interview is one of the best ways to obtain information about an occupation. Ideally, it is a 30- to 60-minute meeting at the workplace of an individual whose job you are interested in learning about. During this meeting, you have the opportunity to ask questions about work tasks, work environment, the person's background, and how he or she obtained that job. If you are unable to meet in person due to geographic limitations, you can conduct the interview by phone.

What You Will Gain:

- A more in-depth understanding of a career field which may help you decide what type of work and setting you prefer.
- More confidence regarding your career goals and an easier time tailoring your resume to your career objective.
- Career knowledge that will make you better prepared for future job interviews.
- One professional contact who may help you within your current or future job search.

Locating a Person to Interview

Ask family, friends, neighbors, professors, employers, and anyone else you can think of: "Do you know a (computer programmer, journalist, accountant...) I could talk to about his/her job?" OR "Do you know anyone who works at (specific place) whom I could contact to discuss the (computer programming, journalism, accounting...) field?" Take advantage of as many opportunities as you can to interact with professionals in your field of interest.

Consult the Networking article on page 12 for ideas on how to connect with professionals in your field!

Setting Up the Interview

Once you have identified someone to contact, it is time to make the call to set up an appointment. Once the person on the other end

of the line says "Hello" you need to be ready to communicate who you are; why you are calling; and convince them to take the time to talk to you—all in the span of approximately one minute.

It is best to plan what you are going to say in advance and practice saying what you want before you make the call. To assist you in planning your one-minute introduction, use the following as a guideline:

Hello [insert person's name], my name is [your name here] and I was given your name by [insert person's name] who encouraged me to call you. I'm a student at Penn State and have been discussing my plans for after graduation and one of the career fields I am considering is [insert career field].

Given your success in [insert career field] at [insert company name], I was wondering if you would be able to meet with me to provide some advice and guidance. I have been researching the field and learned that [insert some key facts to demonstrate your knowledge]. I would appreciate a chance to ask you some questions as I am interested in learning from your personal perspective.

I will be in town during break and was hoping we could get together. Would it be possible to set a meeting at this time? OR Is there a time convenient for you that we can set aside up to 30 minutes to talk by phone?

Of course your individual situation will be unique—simply adjust the outline above to fit and you will be ready to make the call. But first, remember it may be helpful to practice—so make the first call to a friend and ask for feedback on how your "one-minute" introduction sounded.

Since people expect students to be looking for employment, they may assume you are calling to ask about a job. They may indicate that there are no openings at their company or that they are not in charge of hiring. Make sure to stress that you are not asking for a job interview and reiterate your interest in gaining occupational information.



Tips on How to Conduct a Successful Interview

- Prepare ahead of time.
- Write out questions and don't be afraid to refer to them. Keep the yes/no questions to a minimum; you want to stimulate discussion rather than a series of short answers.
- Start the interview centered on the person you're interviewing, with questions such as "How did you become interested in this line of work?" and "What has been your career path in getting to where you are today?"
- Never start with "Tell me about your job." That is such a broad question that the person usually doesn't know where to begin. A more focused question, such as "What do you do during a typical workday?" helps focus the answer.
- Follow up general responses, such as "I handle personnel disputes," with requests for examples so you get more specific information and aren't later left guessing what the person meant.
- Take notes. You'll be surprised how much you will forget!
- Ask for a tour of the building and examples of the person's work. Take note of the work environment—the dress, ways people communicate, etc.
- If you have a resume, take it with you as it can be an effective method of showing the person your background. You can get advice on how to improve your resume and what you need to enhance your skills and experiences. Don't bring it with the intention of getting a job with it.
- Be yourself—conversational and amiable—to make this an enjoyable experience.

After the Interview

Take some time to think about what you learned, your positive and negative impressions, the requirements of the job, and your interests. Remember, work environments and jobs differ tremendously from one place to another so you need to avoid forming an opinion about the entire field based on only one person's opinion and job description. Continue to seek out people in the field to meet with to expand on what you have gained from this interaction and how the knowledge fits with your career goals.

Remember to send or email a thank-you note. The person will appreciate hearing from you, and you will leave a much better impression of yourself and Penn State. You may want to call them again for more information, so keep the lines of communication open!

Some Suggested Questions

About the person:

- What is your educational background?
- How did you get started in this field?
- How did you get to where you are today? What are your future career plans?
- What jobs did you have previous to this?
- What best prepared you for this job?

About the job itself:

- What do you do during a typical workday?
- What do you like most/find most interesting about your work? What do you like least about your job?
- What kinds of problems do you face? What do you find most difficult?
- What skills/abilities do you find are most important in your work?
- What other career areas do you feel are related to your work?



About the career field:

- What are the basic prerequisites for jobs in the field? May I read job descriptions and specifications for some of the positions in this field?
- What is the typical work environment like for a person in this career area?
- What entry-level jobs qualify one for this field?
- What does the step or position above the one you hold now involve? How long does it usually take to move from one step to the next in this career path?
- Are there other areas of this field to which people in it may be transferred? What are they?

About your career planning and/or job search:

- How suited is my background for this field (education, interests, experiences, personality)?
- Would you recommend any further courses or extracurricular activities to help prepare me for this field or make me more marketable? Are there professional organizations you would suggest I join?
- Can you name a relevant trade journal or magazine you would recommend I review to learn more about the field?
- Where would I find position announcements in this field? In the newspaper, journals, or websites (which ones)? By word-of-mouth (who spreads the word)? By the personnel office (how and where)?
- Do you have any suggestions of other people doing this kind of work with whom I could talk? May I please mention that you referred me?
- Do you have any other advice or suggestions?

Remember, work environments and jobs differ tremendously from one place to another so you need to avoid forming an opinion about the entire field based on only one person's opinion and job description.

People to contact:

Questions I'd like to ask:

Network Your Way Through College and Beyond

What is Networking?

- Developing relationships or contacts
- Building partnerships that support you while you map out your career goals
- Sharing information
- Ongoing and reciprocal in nature

What it Isn't:

- A process of making cold-calls
- Using people to get jobs

Why Bother?

- Networking is not just about who you know but who knows you, you already have contacts who can become the basis for your network.
- Networking can build your base of contacts for future reference and provide a support network as you explore and pursue career goals.
- A single personal connection can lead to multiple opportunities for professional and personal growth, from job leads to lasting friendships.
- Networking helps you explore new career options and can help you keep up with changes in your field.

How to Network Effectively

Ideally, networking starts long before a job or internship search. Contacts are not only relatives and friends, but also your neighbors, former high school/college classmates, Penn State faculty/staff members, and Penn State alumni. For those of you who have been working or interning—other contacts can include current and former co-workers and supervisors. In essence you are already networking through your daily interactions with others. When looking to expand beyond your existing network, consider these steps:

1. Establish Your Goal

Before contacting anyone, decide on what kind of information or assistance you would like and can expect from the people you meet. For instance:

- Information on a career
- Referrals to specific job openings
- Advice on the best strategies to break into a career
- A secondary contact

2. Do Your Research

Interviewing and networking conversations are less stressful if you are prepared. By doing this, you will feel more confident, you'll not be at a loss for words, and you will make a positive impression.

- Make sure you do your homework on a company before you meet with one of its employees.
- Before you meet with someone make sure you know what questions you'd like to ask (see Informational Interviewing on page 9 for ideas).
- Remember, the more prepared you are, the more productive the networking experience.

3. Make Contact

When you contact someone, give them some information about you. For example, let them know that you'll be graduating soon, what your specific skills are, and the type of position/organization that you are seeking. During your conversation you might:

- Ask for information and advice for someone seeking to enter their field or find employment with their organization.
- Seek suggestions for other colleagues to talk to who have a connection to the industry or position that you are seeking. Ask them if you may use their name as a referral.
- Offer to send them a copy of your resume and ask them to keep you in mind if they should hear of any openings.

4. Send a Thank-you Note or Email

The person that you have spoken with has given you their time; a valuable resource. Express your appreciation for the meeting/interview with a note of thanks and include any actions that you will take as a result of the meeting. This step should not be overlooked, it is one tangible way that you'll begin to build your network of contacts.

5. Develop a Contacts File

Using a database or index cards, develop a contacts file in which you maintain all pertinent information about that individual. Record information from your meeting with that person as well as your anticipated next action. Through this step, you are building your relationships with contacts who might be able to help with future career opportunities.



6. Set Goals for Ongoing Networking & Follow Up

The Penn State Alumni Association offers many opportunities to connect with alumni including LionLink and Nittany Networking Events in key cities. Think about how many people you will try to call in one week, how many meetings you should attempt to schedule, and how many networking events you'll attend. As part of your goal setting, make sure that you follow up with existing contacts. Be sure to let your initial contacts know of the outcomes of your meetings. In other words, keep your contacts informed about your progress and any success you have had.

7. Always Reciprocate

When you ask others for help, be prepared to return the favor.

Successful Networkers Are:

- Open-minded and willing to meet new people
- Prepared and persistent
- Informed and up-to-date on current events (i.e., news, industry, etc.).
- Respectful of everyone they meet and thank their contacts for their time
- Able to set clear, realistic, and achievable goals
- Not afraid to ask for the information they need

I'm Ready, How Do I Find Contacts to Talk to?

- Use LionLink – a database of alumni who have volunteered their time to serve as a networking resource for students and other alumni, ready to answer questions about what they do and where they work, and serve as a career resource. For more information on LionLink, please visit studentaffairs.psu.edu/career/alumni/LionLink.shtml, or email lionlink@psu.edu.
- Engage professionals with LinkedIn and/or other social media - remember to keep your profile and interactions professional. Any information that is posted is fair game for employers and the public at large to view.
- Attend information sessions hosted by various organizations.
- Watch for events featuring guest speakers within certain fields through your academic department or student organizations, etc.

Sample Contacts File Entry

Contact Person: _____

Title: _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: ____ Zip: _____

Preferred Phone Number: _____ Email: _____

Date Contacted: ___/___/___ by phone by email in person

Date Thank You Sent: ___/___/___

Additional Recommended Contacts: _____



Managing Your Online Presence

Social networking sites are doing much more these days than connecting people over the Internet. According to the Jobvite 2012 Social Recruiting Survey, 92% of U.S. companies have used social media networks to find talent and potential employees to hire. Having a noticeable presence can put you ahead of the rest in your job searches, but can also ruin your chances of getting a job if what they find is damaging to your reputation.

Employers might look at your social networking sites for many different reasons. When they check your profiles though, it can be a reminder of all of the positions you've held and how qualified you are as long as you create an effective, social media presence.

Creating Your Online Presence Setting Up an Account

The first and easiest step to begin creating your online presence is to create accounts on the social networking sites that you think will be beneficial in showcasing your past experiences and skills. Some of the most popular social media sites, such as Facebook and Twitter, can definitely be valuable, but blogs and professional websites, such as LinkedIn, are where employers really look for you to showcase your abilities.

On any social networking site, when you edit your profile, there is usually an area to describe yourself. In this area, highlight your qualifications for any position with your major, career objectives, a current position you hold and one of your skills. For example, your bio on Twitter could say, "PR student at Penn State University, PR Intern for PSU Career Services, enthusiast of all things social media." Other sites, like Facebook and especially LinkedIn have sections of users' profiles specifically designated for past employment.

Online Portfolios

Online portfolios can be beneficial to show potential employers all of the work you've done in one place. Many websites make creating an online portfolio very simple. Some websites to check out to create yours for free include:

- Weebly.com (Created by a Penn State Alum!)
- Wix.com
- Behance.com

Another effective way of displaying your work online is to create a blog. All Penn State students can apply to have their own web space through blogs.psu.edu. Other external sites include Wordpress, Tumblr, and Blogger. Design your site or blog with a title and creative content that you want to use. Feel free to use samples from class projects if you don't have any professional work samples. Don't forget to put an "About Me" section on your portfolio detailing your interests and goals as well as a "Contact" section with your name, email address, and other professional social media accounts. The next time someone asks you for a sample of work you've done, you'll be able to impress them by sending them a URL to your online portfolio.

Effectively Using Social Networking Sites

So now that you have all of your social networking accounts set up, what do you do with them? The answer is simple; interact with different groups, companies and professionals that are in the field you are interested in. The easiest way to do this is to "like" their pages on Facebook or follow their accounts on Twitter or LinkedIn. This is an easy way to stay updated with all of the company's news.

A lot of companies utilize social media to interact with their consumers. When this happens, take advantage of it! Tweet back your response, post on their wall, or like their updates. If you ever land an interview with the company, you will have plenty to talk about with them.

Joining groups on LinkedIn that pertain to your field of interest is a great way to network online. Professionals in the field will often post updates and job or internship postings to the group. Be sure to join Penn State Career Connection on LinkedIn too, where you can connect with employers in a meaningful way, and broaden your knowledge of career fields and employment trends.

Protecting your Online Presence

No matter how many social networks you belong to and how much experience you post on your profiles, you will lose many opportunities if the material you post online is inappropriate. Many times, employers will check the social media profiles of potential employees or interns as a way to judge their character. If you're posting complaints about how much you hate your current job and boss, the recruiter might think



you'll do the same once you work for their company, too. Once you do have a solid online presence, it's important to keep your reputation positive at all times. Some things to think about before your next post:

- If you wouldn't say it to your Grandmother or want her to see it, don't post it.
- Don't say anything online you wouldn't say in an interview or mind if it was brought up in an interview.
- Assume that anything you post will be on the internet forever for everyone to see.

You should also do an online search of your name often to see what comes up. If you don't like what you find, then start to make the changes necessary on your social media sites. Consider setting up alerts to notify you when anything about you is posted online. Always scan your pictures, posts and conversations that you have with people on every social media platform to make sure the right messages are being sent about your character. If you ever doubt anything- delete it or un-tag yourself. Your friends may like your photos; but a future employer may not.

Privacy Settings

The key to protecting your online profiles is to understand how to use each site's privacy settings. Spend sufficient time on each site learning how to best protect yourself from people outside your immediate circle. Sites are always changing and that includes the privacy settings. Check often to make sure that when you search yourself as a stranger, you like what you see.



Photo by Patrick Mansell

Consider all of your social media accounts and complete the following checklist.

- | | | |
|---|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| All of my profile pictures are appropriate: | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| All of the appropriate privacy settings are turned on: | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I would not be embarrassed if a recruiter looked at my profiles: | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| When I search for my name online, no personal information or inappropriate content is brought up: | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I know each and every one of my Facebook friends who have access to my profile: | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| My friends do not have any inappropriate pictures of me posted online: | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| My friends have not posted anything inappropriate on my profiles: | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |

Gain Experience and Develop Marketable Skills

Ways to Gain Experience

Take a Class

One easy way to get a feel for a career area is to take an academic course that will give an overview of the field. If you think that you might be interested in a business career, consider taking a course in accounting, finance, marketing, etc. If you think you'd like to do human service work, enroll in some health and human development, psychology, or sociology courses. The more you get involved in the course through individual projects, group work, and research papers, the more you will gain.

Career Planning Courses

Various career development courses are offered across the Penn State system, such as:

- Effective Career Decision-Making (CN ED 100)
- Preparation for Career Management (B A 420)
- Job Search Skills and Strategies for Educators (CN ED 303)
- Job Search Skills and Strategies for Technical Careers (AG 100/SC 101)
- Job Search Skills and Strategies for Non-Technical Careers (L A 401)

Topics include selecting an academic major, determining career goals, identifying potential employers, formulating effective job search strategies, preparing a resume, and improving interview techniques. Please consult the Schedule of Courses at schedule.psu.edu for availability by campus and semester.

Study Abroad

While most students consider study abroad an exciting way to incorporate travel into an academic program, it's also a great way to gain experience. Think of the skills you may learn: navigating a foreign country, complete with new currency and cultural norms; a sense of independence as you explore on your own, thousands of miles away from home; an appreciation of diversity as you are challenged to integrate your background and upbringing with those from other cultures. Not to mention the initiative it took for you to plan and execute such a significant event.

Participate in Extracurricular Activities

The activities you engage in outside of your academic coursework can be more than just fun. They are an excellent way to explore your career-related interests and develop many skills you will be able to transfer later to any job. If you think you may be interested in working with children, the elderly, a housing authority, etc., check out the volunteer options available in your community. If newspaper writing is a possible career choice, consider joining the staff of your campus newspaper. If you like to lead people and projects, consider getting involved with student government. Check out clubs.psu.edu for a complete listing of student organizations. There are hundreds of extracurricular activities in which you can become involved. Additionally, the contributions you make to an activity, whether it is leading meetings, chairing a committee, developing a project, recruiting new members, or organizing a conference, can be related to many potential future employment goals.

Volunteer

Many nonprofit organizations will enthusiastically accept the services of an industrious, cheerful, and interested volunteer. Becoming a volunteer shows a potential employer that you have initiative and a commitment to your community. Find organizations that you can relate to – connecting through personal values or professional aspirations – and give it your all. Not only will you give back to your community, but you will gain experience and make long-lasting networking contacts.

Join a Sports Team

Don't underestimate your involvement in physical activity as being related to your future career goals. Being a member of a sports team, whether intramural, club or Division I, will help you develop many skills that employers are seeking: time management to balance courses with practices and games; work ethic to continually improve your performance; adaptability to constantly adjust your game plan; and, of course, don't forget the obvious, teamwork.



Look for Summer Jobs/Part-Time Work/Temping

Summer jobs may not be obviously related to your long-term career goals; however, they may still be beneficial in providing income and/or employment. Some students may need to work in jobs that provide decent wages such as construction, sales, or hospitality services.

In these situations, you can develop skills transferable to professional careers after college. For example, a server could benefit from acquiring experience in training other employees in a restaurant or customer service skills.

Explore Undergraduate Research Opportunities

Penn State offers a variety of opportunities for undergraduate students to participate in research projects. These experiences allow you to work with faculty and staff in your area of interest, build specific skills, and further explore your career options. Check with an advisor in your academic department to see what type of research is being conducted or go to undergradresearch.psu.edu to review projects listed by academic college and department. If you are considering graduate school, helping out in a lab is a great way to get introduced to what may be expected when you continue your education. You will gain a deeper understanding of the research process, as well as knowledge of cutting edge developments within your field.

Apply for Experiential Internships or Cooperative Education

Internships are intended to provide professional experience related to your major and/or career plans. Internships may be for credit and/or paid and vary in length. Many internships are offered for one semester or over the summer, although some may provide more lengthy experiences by spanning a summer and an additional semester.

Most academic departments and colleges have specific internship offices. Be sure to check with your academic college/department to identify the resources and programs in place.

Cooperative education is often confused with internships since it, too, provides professional relevant experience. However, cooperative education differs from internships in that it is an alternating work experience blended into the academic program, typically within the science and engineering disciplines. Therefore, a student will leave the University multiple times during the baccalaureate degree program to obtain cooperative experience with an employer.

Workshops and Seminars

Seminars and outreach programs are offered each year on a wide range of topics such as career planning, resume writing, interview skills, job and internship search strategies, and graduate school applications. Check with your campus career office for availability.

Classes related to my areas of interest:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Organizations I am in or would like to join:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Other opportunities I'd like to explore:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____



Resumes

Resumes often serve as your initial contact with employers and are the most critical item in determining whether or not you will obtain an interview. It is a brief "advertisement" of your skills, knowledge, and relevant experience. If you are seeking positions across industries, you may need to have several versions of your resume specific to each type of job you are seeking.

Ideally your resume should emphasize your strong points while expressing your uniqueness and individuality. Therefore, you should present yourself clearly, succinctly, and confidently. Use the suggestions here to develop your resume and consult the samples provided to gather ideas

Do not copy these examples verbatim!

Anita Job
123 Goingmy Way
College Town, PA 54321
(814)123-4567
princesspower10@gmail.com

Objective

To obtain a challenging position with a growing company where I can utilize my skills and knowledge

Education

Pennsylvania State University, Class of 2015

Major: HDFS, GPA 3.2

Minor: Psych

**Must support self by working to pay for school

Courses: HDFS 239, HDFS 315, PSYCH 212, PSYCH 281

Experience

XYZ Agency, Inc., Sept. 11 - current

As a Life Skills Volunteer, I provide direct service for delinquent youth. I am responsible for providing physical care, ensuring safety, and monitoring daily activities. I work with the Life Skills Coordinator to carryout treatment plans.

Human Resources Job Shadow, Pittsburgh, PA, 12/2011 & 3/2012

- Over semester and spring break, I followed an HR Professional around the office. I sat in on various meetings and learned about Human Resources.

Jobs:

Findlay Dining Commons, Server

Stahl Community Pool, Lifeguard

Activities:

THON

Typically, employers spend less than 15 seconds reviewing your resume before making the decision to consider you for an interview.

OBJECTIVE:

- One or two concise, easy-to-read statements focusing on the type of position you are seeking, the skills you want to utilize, and or the tasks in which you want to become involved.
- Avoid cliches or jargon, such as, "To contribute to the profitability of an employer" or "A challenging position offering opportunity for growth and advancement."

EDUCATION:

- List degrees in reverse chronological order—most recent first. Keep the information easy to scan.
- You may want to include details relevant to the job you are seeking, such as courses, special projects, a minor or area of emphasis, etc.
- Education Abroad experiences should also be listed here as well. Use the same format as your Penn State entry.
- Most employers expect to see your GPA (either overall, major or both).

Compare this resume to the one on the facing page. Both have the same information, but which do you think represents the candidate best?



Need some help?

Having your resume reviewed is an important step in order to feel confident uploading your application materials to potential employers or via Nittany Lion Career Network. Proofread your resume several times, and then have a friend or trusted professional proofread it again.

Resume assistance is available through your campus career office. Also, an online resume workshop is available year-round through ANGEL.

Resume Examples

The resumes on pages 19-23 are examples of different ways good resumes have been written. Additional resume examples may be accessed online or in your campus career office.

GPA:

- If your cumulative GPA is a 3.0 or above, it is beneficial to list it.
- Be sure that your GPA matches what an employer would find on your official University transcript. That means no rounding up!
- If your cumulative GPA is below a 3.0, consider listing both your Major GPA and your cumulative GPA, or you may prefer to list your Major GPA alone. It is recommended that you visit with your academic advisor to discuss the best method for calculating this GPA if it is not listed on your degree audit.
- If you work a substantial amount of hours per week to pay college expenses while attending college full-time, you may include a statement highlighting this within your Education section. This kind of statement can serve as justification for a GPA that may not be an accurate representation of your true potential.

Anita Job
123 Goingmy Way
College Town, PA 54321
(814)123-4567
abc123@psu.edu

OBJECTIVE
To obtain a summer internship with the administration of a social services agency where I can apply my knowledge of child development and organizational behavior

EDUCATION
The Pennsylvania State University May 2015
Bachelor of Science in Human Development and Family Studies GPA: 3.17
Minor in Psychology
Work 25-30 hours per week while a full-time student in order to pay tuition and expenses

Coursework:
Adolescent Development Introduction to I/O Psychology
Family Development Introduction to Developmental Psychology

EXPERIENCE
XYZ Agency, Inc. State College, PA
Life Skills Volunteer Sept. 2011 - present

- Provide a range of direct services for the care and rehabilitation of delinquent youth
- Instruct and monitor 25 residents during structured daily activities
- Assist with the development of treatment goals for residents; implement treatment plans under supervision of Life Skills Coordinator

Human Resources, H.J. Heinz Corporation Pittsburgh, PA
Job Shadower/Observer December 2011 & March 2012

- Gained broad exposure to a variety of departments within the human resources function at Heinz World Headquarters, a Fortune 500 company, including Benefits, Executive Personnel, Personnel/Recruiting, etc.
- Completed 20-25 total hours of observation of each function within HR during winter break; encouraged to return for further shadowing opportunities over spring break following initial positive experience

ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE
Findlay Dining Commons, Server Fall 2011
Stahl Community Pool, Lifeguard Summers 2010 & 2011

ACTIVITIES
Penn State Dance Marathon (THON), Moraler Spring 2012

- Provided emotional support to assigned dancer, dancing for 46 hours
- Raised \$2,000 through mail and sidewalk solicitations

Appearance of Your Resume

Length

- One page is the most common length, because most students lack sufficient experience for two pages. Individuals with added experience and/or degrees may need a two-page resume to present the relevant details adequately.
- Resume length may also vary by career field. Consult with professionals in your field and/or Career Services Counselors to discuss the resume length best for your situation.

Margins

- One inch margins all around are recommended to keep your resume from looking cluttered with text.
- Half inch margins may be acceptable if necessary, but no smaller.

Font

- Use a plain typeface, such as Arial or Times New Roman
- Font size should be between 10 and 12 points.
- Headings and/or your name may be emphasized by using a larger font size.
- Asterisks, bullets, underlining, boldface type and italics should be used only to make the document easier to read.

Spacing

- Use consistent spacing throughout your resume for a pleasing presentation.
- Bullet points should be single-spaced.
- Allow enough space between headings to show that a new section has begun.

CHRIS R. STUDENT
crsXXXX@psu.edu

SCHOOL ADDRESS
1855 Nittany Street
Erie, PA 16509
(814) 555-5678

HOME ADDRESS
5678 North Z Street
Anytown, PA 12345
(234) 555-8910

OBJECTIVE: To obtain an internship or co-op experience in Mechanical Engineering.

EDUCATION: **B. S. in Mechanical Engineering, May 2015**
Penn State Erie – The Behrend College, Erie, PA
GPA 3.25

Relevant Courses

Engineering Thermodynamics	Electrical Circuits and Power Distribution
Strength of Materials	System Dynamics
Fluid Flow	Technical Writing

RELEVANT EXPERIENCE: **Manufacturing Process In-class Project** Spring 2012
Sponsored by CompanyX Consumer Products, Co.

- Implemented Statistical Process Control into manufacturing process
- Responsible for trouble-shooting in the processing and packaging of over-the-counter pharmaceuticals
- As part of a team, wrote standard operating procedures for production floor to be reviewed and approved by the FDA
- Combined efforts with Quality Assurance, Research and Development, and Engineering to implement new processes
- Installed, inspected, and validated system upgrades to process control equipment

LEADERSHIP: **Landscapes Plus**, Bradford, PA June 2009-August 2009
Crew Leader

- Successfully led 5 crew members in the completion of 17 commercial and residential landscaping projects; received positive feedback from clients regarding satisfaction with results
- Promoted to Crew Leader based on performance in two previous summers as a Crew Member

ACTIVITIES: American Society of Mechanical Engineers, Member, 2011-present

- Entertainment Committee Chairperson, 2012 - 2011
- Professional Development Chairperson, 2013 - present

Independent Travel throughout Europe, Summer 2012

- Developed creative solutions to maximize travel to 5 countries on a limited budget

Big Brothers Big Sisters, Big-Brother, 2011-2012

- Served as a Big-Brother for a 7-year old boy in Erie County

SKILLS: Advanced knowledge of AutoCAD
Basic knowledge of Spanish

EXPERIENCE:

- Give details of your accomplishments and responsibilities rather than a general list of duties. Numbers make strong statements and can enhance credibility; these numbers can show volume, percentages, dollar amounts.
- Do not be discouraged if you have never had employment in your field. Instead, focus on your strengths, skills, and accomplishments.
- Summer and/or part-time work experiences can demonstrate skill sets that you have developed, even if not directly related to your career goals.
- If you have not yet gained paid work experience, community involvement, volunteer work, and extracurricular activities are all experiences that may be included in detail on a resume.

As a first-year student or sophomore, it is appropriate to include information from your high school years on a resume. However, as you continue to grow professionally and gain experiences that demonstrate increasing relevance to a particular career field, you may begin to omit items that are outdated or that no longer effectively highlight your current abilities. Typically, it is recommended that information from high school years be omitted from your professional resume by the time you begin your junior year at Penn State.



Layout

- Pre-formatted templates are easy to spot and allow little room for uniqueness.
- Starting with a blank document offers greater flexibility and more effective space usage on the page.
- Use a table or tab stops to help organize information in a visually pleasing manner.

Bullet Points

- Each bullet should be no more than 1-2 lines long.
- Use up to 5-6 bullets to describe each listed experience.
- Describe duties involved in various positions or highlight skills and qualities that you developed that are related to the position you would like to obtain.

SKILLS:

- Technology-based or computer skills, foreign language knowledge, and other field-specific skill sets and certifications are appropriate to include.
- Indicate your level of knowledge or aptitude in the skill sets you choose to highlight using qualifiers such as "Proficient in..." or "Fluent in..."
- List skills and languages with which you are familiar or have basic knowledge—just be sure to describe that level accurately. Remember—you could be tested on that knowledge in an interview!
- Special certifications relevant to your field could also be included here.

Compare this resume to the one on the facing page. Notice how the type of experience highlighted can change as a student gains more professional experience.

Type of paper

- A resume prepared carefully with a good laser printer can be very effective.
- Use good quality paper; a white or off-white shade is generally preferred.

Proofread

- Proofread your resume several times, and then have a friend or Career Counselor proofread it again.
- A mistake on your resume will leave a poor first impression with the employer.

JENNIFER C. CHAO
335 West Beaver Avenue
State College, PA 16801
jcc@psu.edu
(123) 111-2131

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

EDUCATION: The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA May 2013
Bachelor of Science in Management Information Systems
Major GPA: 3.66/4.0
Universidad de Barcelona, Seville, Spain Spring 2012
Courses in European Union Economics and Leadership in a Cross-Cultural World

EXPERIENCE: **Johnson & Johnson, New Brunswick, NJ** May 2011 – December 2011
Logistics Analyst Co-op

- Managed automated order processing to allow international customers to order directly via EDI or FTP
- Oversaw the Vendor Managed Inventory (VMI) for Global Affiliates to reduce and maintain their on-hand inventory
- Coordinated weekly orders and ensured that databases were updated with new forecasts and safety stock measurements as needed at the beginning of every month
- Analyzed international forecasts and supported the creation of a web page to be posted on the Johnson & Johnson Intranet
- Assisted in the Global Air-Freight Data collection Project (GAP) to reconsider Johnson & Johnson freight carriers and their rates

Smeal College of Business, University Park, PA August 2010 – May 2011
Undergraduate Researcher, Center for Supply Chain Research

- Assist faculty researchers in collecting data to study the effect of information technology on customer service in the transportation industry
- Gained an understanding of how e-Business supports and enhances supply chain management

SKILLS:

- Worked extensively with simulation programming languages such as Perl and ARENA
- Professionally trained in Mercia Lincs (CRP system), MFG/Pro (Manufacturing, Planning, and Costing system), and COACT (Order Processing System)
- Accurately maintained Database Management systems

ACTIVITIES: **Penn State Asian American Student Caucus**
President, Spring 2012 – present

- Led weekly meetings and organized various events throughout the semester
- Coordinated fundraising efforts increasing club budget by 15%

Member, Spring 2012 – present

- Participated in professional development workshops on networking and resumes

Alpha Beta Chi Service/Social Sorority, Penn State Chapter
Philanthropy Chair, Fall 2010 – Spring 2011

- Organized participation in AIDS walk and Diabetes walk as well as visits to a local nursing facility in State College, PA

Member, **Operations Committee**, Penn State Dance Marathon (THON), Spring 2010



Resume Formats

Chronological Format

Present education and work experience in reverse chronological order, describing responsibilities and achievements under each entry. This is the most appropriate format if you have experience directly related to your career goal.

Functional Format

Your experience is explained under major skill headings, while job titles, employers, and dates are listed separately. This type of resume is especially useful when your degree or work experiences are not directly related to your career objective.

Combination Format

In many instances, the combination of both the chronological and the functional formats may be the most effective. This is especially the case when some past experiences are more directly related to future goals than others. This format allows for experiences to be separated into different categories—related and unrelated—making the strongest impact by placing the most related experiences first, regardless of the dates during which the experiences took place.

The resume on this page shows a combination format. The facing page illustrates elements of a functional resume.

Addison A. Anderson
aaa0000@psu.edu
(717) 555-2222

Home Address
22 Oak Lane
Chambersburg, PA 17222

School Address
101 Smith Street
Middletown, PA 17057

OBJECTIVE To obtain a full-time position in Sports Management

EDUCATION Penn State Harrisburg, Harrisburg, PA May 2013
B.S. Finance
Major G.P.A. – 3.23
Relevant Courses include: Financial and Managerial Accounting; Management; Statistical Foundations; Financial Management of the Business Enterprise; Risk Management of Financial Institutions; Money and Banking; Business Strategy

SPORTS EXPERIENCE Morgan Academic Support Center for Student-Athletes, University Park, PA Summer 2013
Tutor
▪ Learned about the challenges facing student athletes and how academics affect NCAA regulations and eligibility
▪ Tutored student-athletes in various Business and Finance courses including Financial and Managerial Accounting and Corporation Finance

The Chambersburg Country Club, Chambersburg, PA Summers 2009 – 2010
Tennis Club Assistant
▪ Prepared the tennis courts and surrounding areas for daily play
▪ Sold tennis-club items to members of the country club
▪ Coordinated and led various sporting events for members and their families

BUSINESS EXPERIENCE Bank of America, Chambersburg, PA Summer 2012
Finance Office Assistant
▪ Entered data on financial accounts into the customer database system
▪ Reviewed and processed summary statements for corporate clients
▪ Analyzed end of the month and end of the fiscal year reports and updated totals in Microsoft Excel

Nationwide Insurance, Carlisle, PA Summer 2011
Assistant Web Master
▪ Tracked and monitored the activity and hits that the website experienced
▪ Designed two staff-only sections of the in-house portion of the webpage
▪ Developed a tutorial to enable staff to enter new web pages in a consistent manner
▪ Met weekly with the Web Master to devise a long-term plan for the website

LEADERSHIP Penn State Harrisburg THON Chair, Penn State Dance Marathon 2011 – 2012
▪ Organized support for dancers of a 46-hour dance marathon
▪ Helped raise money during canning events

Volleyball Captain, Penn State Harrisburg Intramurals 2009 – 2010
▪ Served as captain for our Intramurals volleyball team
▪ Coordinated practices and game schedules

SPORTS ACTIVITIES Tennis Club; Golf Club; Intramural Chair; three-year letterman in high school; First Team All-Conference in Tennis and Golf

ACTIVITIES:

- List the most relevant activities and offices held first. Include college, community, professional, and occasionally, outstanding high school activities.
- Consider adding brief explanatory details of the position and your accomplishments.
- Include hobbies and interests only if they are relevant to the job objective or if they reveal characteristics important to the job.
- This section can add individuality and flavor to your resume, so you may want to include unusual or interesting items.

HONORS/AWARDS:

- This section is optional.
- Include only if you have several honors.
- If you have only one or two honors, you can include them in a combined section along with your activities.



Action Word List:

Achieved
Administered
Advised
Advocated
Allocated
Analyzed
Anticipated
Applied
Approved
Arranged
Assessed
Assisted
Attained
Audited
Balanced
Briefed
Budgeted
Built
Calculated
Cared

Coached
Collaborated
Collected
Comforted
Communicated
Compared
Completed
Composed
Computed
Conducted
Consulted
Contributed
Converted
Coordinated
Counseled
Created
Decided
Defined
Delegated
Demonstrated
Designed
Developed
Devised
Diagnosed
Directed

Documented
Drafted
Edited
Eliminated
Enforced
Enhanced
Ensured
Established
Estimated
Evaluated
Examined
Exceeded
Expanded
Facilitated
Financed
Formulated
Fostered
Founded
Gained
Generated
Guided
Helped
Identified
Implemented
Improved

Increased
Initiated
Instructed
Integrated
Interpreted
Introduced
Invented
Investigated
Launched
Learned
Led
Maintained
Managed
Mastered
Maximized
Mediated
Mentored
Met
Minimized
Modified
Monitored
Negotiated
Observed
Obtained
Offered

Operated
Organized
Overcame
Oversaw
Participated
Partnered
Performed
Planned
Prepared
Presented
Prioritized
Produced
Programmed
Projected
Promoted
Proposed
Provided
Raised
Ran
Received
Recommended
Reduced
Reorganized
Reported
Researched

Responded
Reviewed
Revised
Screened
Served
Sold
Solved
Strategized
Streamlined
Strengthened
Studied
Succeeded
Supervised
Supported
Targeted
Taught
Teamed with
Tested
Trained
Upgraded
Utilized
Validated
Visualized
Won
Wrote

Anita Job

337 Maple Lane, Springfield, PA 19064

610-555-1111 | afjXXXX@psu.edu

OBJECTIVE

To obtain a full-time public relations position within the non-profit or government industry

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Arts in Communications, May 2014 – *Penn State Brandywine, Media, PA*
Major GPA: 3.3; Overall GPA: 3.1

INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE

Public Relations Intern — Summer 2013
XYZ Transportation Institute, Chevy Chase, MD

PROJECT & EVENT COORDINATION

- Coordinated outreach activities of the Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP)
- Managed a multi-state government relations project to facilitate the implementation and evaluation of research products developed by the Federal Highway Administration
- Coordinated LTAP government relations activities

TRAINING & SUPERVISION

- Coordinated the strategic planning process for the LTAP center
- Conducted training for local governments on various computer applications
- Supervised 5 student workers

RESEARCH & WRITING

- Assisted in all facets of contracted research program including writing proposals, collecting data, managing financial resources, and generating reports
- Served as Assistant Editor of the LTAP quarterly newsletter, which is distributed to several state local governments and legislative institutions

WORK EXPERIENCE

Silver Springs Outlet — Silver Springs, MD — Summer 2012

Comfort Inn Banquets — Springfield, PA — Fall 2010 to Present

The Gap, Inc. — King of Prussia, PA — Summer 2010

H&M — King of Prussia, PA — Summer 2009

ACTIVITIES

Intramural Volleyball and Softball, Special Olympics Volunteer, Big Brother/Big Sister Program

SKILLS

Computer: Microsoft Publisher; Adobe InDesign; Dreamweaver

Language: Fluent in Speaking Spanish; Proficient in Writing/Reading Spanish

REFERENCES:

- Most organizations will not expect references on your resume.
- You may want to prepare a list of references on a separate page formatted to match your resume for use when employers request references.
- Usually, three to five references are appropriate. Consider individuals familiar with your academic achievements, leadership and teamwork skills, and/or your work habits.
- Include the referee's name, title, organization, mailing address, phone number, and email address.
- You should always seek prior approval from individuals you plan to list as references.



Your Name

Address

Phone

E-mail

OBJECTIVE _____

EDUCATION

RELATED EXPERIENCE

WORK EXPERIENCE

ACTIVITIES

SKILLS



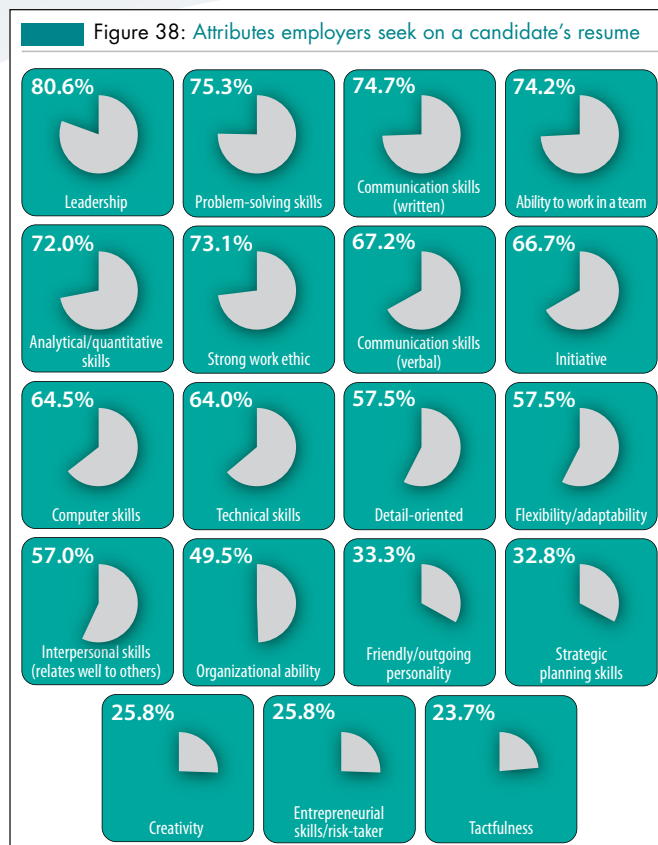


Figure 39: Influence of attributes

Attribute	2013 Average Influence Rating*	2012 Average Influence Rating*
Has held leadership position	4.0	3.9
Major	4.0	3.9
High GPA (3.0 or above)	3.8	3.6
Has been involved in extracurricular activities (clubs, sports, student government, etc.)	3.6	3.7
School attended	3.1	3.0
Has done volunteer work	2.8	3.1
Is fluent in a foreign language ¹	2.4	N/A
Has studied abroad ¹	2.3	N/A

¹Attribute not included in prior years' surveys.

*5-point scale, where 1=No influence at all, 2=Not much influence, 3=Somewhat of an influence, 4=Very much influence, and 5=Extreme influence.

Figure 42: Employers' hiring preferences relative to experience, by percent of respondents

Hiring Preference	2013	2012	2011
I prefer to hire candidates with relevant work experience	71.0%	73.7%	72.4%
I prefer to hire candidates with any type of work experience (doesn't matter if it's relevant or not, just some type of experience)	19.9%	17.5%	17.6%
Work experience doesn't typically factor into my decision when hiring a new college graduate	4.8%	4.1%	5.3%
Other	4.3%	4.6%	4.7%

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Correspondence

Cover Letter

1. Address by name and title of the individual with the power to hire you, if at all possible. Try to avoid, sir, madam or to whom it may concern.
2. Adapt the letter carefully to specific details of the job opportunity.
3. Open with an idea that captures the attention of the prospective employer so that the letter and resume are considered worth reading.
4. Highlight and draw attention to the points in your resume that uniquely qualify you for the position.
5. Close your letter with a request for an interview.
6. Use a business letter format and maintain a professional tone.
7. Special attention should be given to grammar, spelling, and neatness. The cover letter should represent your very best efforts. It may be beneficial to have a friend, relative, or member of the Career Services staff review your letter prior to sending it to an employer.

Your present address
City, State, Zip

Date

Person's Name
Title
Company
Address

Each cover letter should be tailored to the organization to which you are applying. Your letter should not read as if you just filled in the blanks.

Dear Ms. Jones:

FIRST PARAGRAPH:

Attract the employer's interest by briefly touching on your specific interest in the company and/or position. If you have been referred by someone, here is where you mention it. Avoid such stereotypical, overused first sentences as "This is in answer to your advertisement," or "I am a senior in Psychology at Penn State." You want to convince the reader that you are interested in them by specifically outlining why you want to work for them and how you would contribute to the organization.

MIDDLE PARAGRAPH:

Describe your interest in the position, in the field of work, or in the organization. If you have a related class, student activity, volunteer or work experience, be sure to mention pertinent data or accomplishments to show that you have specific qualifications or skills for this particular type of work. Refer to key aspects of the resume which relate to the job or employer, but don't restate complete sections of the resume.

CLOSING PARAGRAPH:

Mention your interest in discussing the job in person (i.e., ask for an interview). Express appreciation for being considered and include a statement about your desire to have an interview.

Sincerely,

(handwritten signature)

Your typed name



Cover Letter Sample - Internship

101 Nittany Pike
Wilkes-Barre, PA 18702

Date

Dee Ziner
Account Executive
Advertising, Inc.
One Promotions Way
New York, New York 10001

Dear Ms. Ziner:

To succeed in advertising, one must possess a flair for creativity, the ability to work effectively with clients and associates, initiative, and perseverance. Through this letter I would like to demonstrate such qualities and express an interest in an Account Services internship with Advertising, Inc. When I read the announcement posted to my department's listserv, I was immediately drawn to the opportunity for professional development that this position would allow in regard to client relations and media placements.

I have enclosed a resume for your review, which outlines my experience in the field of advertising and promotion. As an advertising salesperson for my local newspaper, I work successfully with a variety of clients and with the media in designing and arranging advertisements. My responsibilities in this position enhanced my skills in writing, design, promotion, marketing, and follow-through. I quickly learned to identify appropriate markets and to promote the newspaper as an effective medium to reach those markets.

Much of my success is due to my customer orientation, my skills in identifying client needs, and in marketing the services of my employer. I am a self-starter, persistent, and possess the ability to learn quickly. I feel these skills and experiences would be a strong addition to your firm and am excited about the prospect of putting them to work for you.

I hope you agree that my qualifications seem to be a match for this internship. If so, I would appreciate the opportunity for an interview. I look forward to speaking with you.

Thank you for your consideration.

Best Regards,

Mark E. University

This candidate demonstrates an understanding of the internship requirements and is effective at relating specific details about his accomplishments and skills to the employer's needs.



Cover Letter Sample - Full-Time

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.

2014 Pittsburgh Pike
Fayette, PA 15438

Date

James Donovan
HR Administrator
Xyntek, Inc.
301 Oxford Valley Rd.
Monroeville, PA, 15146

Dear Mr. Donovan:

After reading your brochure and researching Xyntek, Inc., I became quite interested in possible employment in IT software and systems consulting. I am submitting this letter in application for this position.

I have a great deal of experience using several programming languages, including SQL, ORACLE, JavaScript, HTML, CSS and XML. In addition, I have worked with jQuery and Microsoft .NET.

In my internship at XYZ Corporation I was part of a team responsible for the design, development and production of database candidate processing systems for their human resources department. My specific role involved testing and trouble-shooting databases as they were developed. This has proven very successful for XYZ and has increased efficiency of the recruiting process for the HR administrators. I've also been web page editing on contract. In a project for the Fayette Federal Credit Union, I developed an internal search engine and an online loan application, and kept their web page up to date and added new features as needed.

I am an enthusiastic hard worker with the desire to learn many new concepts and skills. I would enjoy applying my skills and talents to a position with Xyntek, Inc. I look forward to hearing from you. Thank you for your time.

Cordially,

Mary E. Smith



Letter of Interest or Prospecting Letter

You may find that you are sincerely interested in a particular organization, but they have no jobs currently available that suit your interests. A prospecting letter will introduce you to the company in the event that positions open up matching your qualifications.

1. State why you are interested in working for that organization.
2. Demonstrate the skills you possess that could benefit the organization.
3. Outline an action plan. Ask for an interview or indicate when and how you will follow-up.
4. Thank the reader for his or her time and consideration.

321 Beaver Avenue
State College, PA 16801

Date

Terra Justice
Marketing Director, XYZ Company
54 Shady Lane
Yourtown, Anystate 54321

Notice how this candidate relates her personal, interests, abilities and values to the type of organization that she would like to work for following graduation.

Dear Ms. Justice,

Sustainability has long been a passion of mine. As I complete my senior year at Penn State, my interest in working for an organization that shares my passion has become paramount. Recognizing the need to preserve natural resources and look for sustainable business practices is something in which all companies should be engaging. I was excited to learn of the ways that XYZ Company has been making strides to become a nationally recognized green organization within the retail industry. As I look to the future and consider where I would like to begin my career after college, the XYZ Company seems like the perfect fit.

Throughout my time at Penn State, I have been involved in numerous student organizations that reflect my professional interests. As early as my freshman year, I was representing green initiatives as an EcoRep within my residence hall. I went on to become an active member of EcoAction, where I helped to educate students about sustainability through events and informational workshops. I put theory into practice through my involvement in the Penn State Marketing Association, by encouraging more electronic communication, less printing, and a more conscious effort to be mindful of environmental concerns. Due to my encouragement, PSMA took on a new client, working with them on how to market their green practices to enhance their customer base.

Academically, I pursued a minor in Environmental Inquiry, in addition to my major in Marketing. With a solid business background obtained through my coursework in the nationally ranked Smeal College of Business, I recognize that business is more than just the bottom line. It is about building and maintaining relationships; relationships that are founded on a common set of values.

I believe that XYZ Company and I share common values. This, coupled with my professional aptitude, would make me a respected employee within your Marketing department. During the week of March 15, I will be in your area and would appreciate the opportunity to speak with you further about any potential openings that you expect within the next few months. I will be graduating in May 2012 and could be available for work as early as June. I have attached my resume for your reference, which includes my contact information.

I appreciate your time and consideration, and look forward to talking with you soon.

Sincerely,

Dawn Greenfield



Thank-You Letter

1. As soon after the interview as possible, a letter should be sent to express your appreciation for the opportunity to present yourself.
2. Use the letter to express your continued interest in the position and organization. Some details of things which impressed you are a nice way to personalize your letter and convey your interest more convincingly.
3. Supply any additional information that was requested at the time of the visit or interview.
4. It is acceptable to email your thank-you letter. Be sure it retains the degree of professionalism you would have in a hard copy letter.

1234 College Ave.
Reading, PA 19607

Date

William Johnson
LMO Pharmaceutical Company
9183 Short Hills Road
Philadelphia, PA 19111

Dear Mr. Johnson:

Thank you for the opportunity to interview with you on Friday, October 23, 2013. The Account Representative position we discussed is a wonderful opportunity for which I feel uniquely qualified.

As we discussed, my background in both the sciences and business will enable me to interact effectively with physicians and pharmacists. Not only am I able to discuss the technical aspects of your products, I understand marketing techniques and the importance of the bottom line.

If you require any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me by phone or email. Again, thank you for meeting with me. I look forward to speaking with you again soon.

Sincerely,

Martin A. Student



Acceptance Letter of Second Interview or of Job Offer

1. Be businesslike but also tailor your letter to the specific employer, so you look sincere and genuinely interested in the company and job. Never copy example letters.
2. Write to the person who wrote and/or interviewed you.
3. Thank the person and/or show your enthusiasm for the offer.
4. State what you are accepting.
5. Concisely, yet descriptively, give some details about what has impressed you about the company and/or interview.

1001 Progress Avenue
Hazleton, PA 18201

Date

Harold Sherman
XYZ Corporation
678 5th Avenue
Albany, NY 12208

Dear Mr. Sherman:

Thank you for your recent offer of employment as a management trainee with XYZ Corporation. I am pleased to accept this offer. The position sounds quite challenging, particularly the 12 month rotation among your regional plants. I am looking forward to this challenge and believe I will be successful at meeting it.

I understand that your offer involves a starting date of June 6, 20XX. I also understand that the salary offered is \$43,500, plus benefits as discussed at my most recent interview. I will contact you within the next several weeks to discuss travel and moving details as you requested.

Once again, thank you for your offer. I am excited about becoming part of the XYZ Corporation team.

Sincerely,

Jane C. Doe

When a rejection is received, special consideration should be given to your response. Don't take this rejection letter as a definite NO! A demonstrated interest in the company and respectful letter may lead to further consideration for other positions as they become available.

1. Acknowledge receipt of the letter.
2. Thank the interviewer for considering your application, indicate that you are still interested in a position with the company, and give some specific information to illustrate what you like about the company, position, or both.

Rejection Letter

1. It is important to turn down a site visit or job offer graciously.
2. Write to the person who wrote you.
3. Thank her/him for the offer.
4. Briefly state that you are declining and why (don't get too personal).



Searching For a Job or Internship

Key Steps

Whatever your goal, you need to:

1. Know what you want to do and the skills you bring
2. Identify and target the employers that have what you want
3. Develop effective marketing materials: resumes, cover letters and interview skills
4. Secure and successfully engage in the interview process
5. Evaluate and accept (and often decline) your offers

Seems simple, right? Just remember that you will be repeating the steps for each employer you pursue. While there will be disappointments along the way and things you cannot control may have a great impact (like the economy), keep focused on your goals and work the process.

While some job search methods will work better for you and the career field you are pursuing than others (see listing on page 33), it is important to diversify your search and use multiple methods with your own personal spin that sets you apart.

STEPS 1 & 2

The most important steps in the job search are identifying what kind of job you want, what you have to offer, and finding the employers that offer the opportunities you are targeting. Employers are most interested in individuals who have focused their career interests. Therefore it is important to:

- Identify and be prepared to discuss your interests, skills, experiences, knowledge, and attributes.
- Identify and research employers that have the type of positions and environment that fit your interests.

Don't get caught without experience

Through internships or other experiential opportunities, you will benefit enormously from getting real world work exposure. Employers expect you to supplement your academic background with work experience. You also get the chance to develop contacts in your chosen career. The people in your network can be valuable for advice, information, and job leads. Remember to check with your academic college about internship possibilities.

This information is applicable across all levels of the job search—for undergraduate and graduate students looking for internships or entry-level jobs, alumni with more experience looking to change careers or move up in their current field. Many of the methods are timeless and will be useful for the remainder of your professional life.

STEPS 3 & 4

Effectively promoting your skills and experiences will catch the attention of employers. Your communications might take the form of resumes or cover letters, informational interviews, networking, meeting at a career fair, or telephone calls. You must express why you are interested in that particular employer and position and why you believe you are qualified for the job.

Refer to the articles on Resume Writing, Correspondence, Interviewing, and Job Offers and Acceptances in this Guide for tips. Check with your campus career office for more resources and information on both online and in-person workshops.

STEP 5

As you can see, the job search process involves a great deal of thought and time to eventually have offers to consider. Deciding on the best offer for you is an important final step and often involves sensitive communications and some negotiating.

REPEAT STEPS 1-5

For even highly qualified people, rejection and disappointment are part of the job search process. You might need to look at the amount of time you are spending on job search activities to determine if you are doing enough. You might also need to reassess your job objectives—are they focused enough? Are you following up on leads? Are your resumes and cover letters tailored to the positions you are seeking? Are your interview skills strong enough?



Job Search Methods

There are many ways to look for job opportunities. The most successful job search plan is one in which a variety of search strategies are used. Presented below are some of the most popular strategies for the job search as well as benefits, challenges, and tips.

STRATEGY/TOOLS	BENEFITS	CHALLENGES	TIPS
CAREER FAIRS Attend career fairs sponsored by Career Services and academic colleges	Opportunity to meet with a number of recruiters in person and in one location; Build networking contacts	Not all fields and areas of study are equally represented; Students with very specific career goals may benefit from seeking field-specific or geographically-specific fairs	Plan ahead and research companies attending; Follow up to learn about opportunities in your area of interest
ON-CAMPUS INTERVIEWING Add the OCI option to your Nittany Lion Career Network account, view the orientation session on ANGEL and search for jobs from employers interviewing on campus.	Primary way in which companies recruit for business and technical positions; Employers are specifically seeking Penn State students to fill employment openings	Not all industries use on-campus interviewing as a recruitment strategy	Check job listings on a weekly basis paying close attention to deadlines
NITTANY LION CAREER NETWORK Update your personal and academic information, upload a resume, search for job postings and leads/prospects postings, find details on information sessions and more.	Access to a wide variety of jobs posted by employers who are not coming on campus to interview	Not all fields and areas of study are equally represented	Check job postings regularly as they come in on a daily/weekly basis
NETWORKING Talk to everyone you know to develop a list of contacts; Ask for information on jobs/companies and circulate your resume	One of the top job search strategies to identify potential job opportunities and learn more about a position, company, or industry	Takes time and effort to build your network; Requires skill in organizing contacts and following through on recommendations received	Join online networking programs: LionLink, or Penn State Career Connection, the Career Services LinkedIn group; Check with your college/department for contacts.
TARGETED SEARCH Identify the types of organizations you would like to work for, develop a targeted list, and research companies	Allows you to be more proactive and take charge of your search, instead of waiting for companies to post positions	Takes investment of time to research and tailor your resume/cover letter to the organization and the position	Use resources such as CareerBeam, your local Chamber of Commerce, and employer directories
INTERNET Scan job openings on various job search and employer websites	May help you identify types of positions available	Overwhelming number of sites and positions to sift through; May not receive responses	Check listing of recommended sites in this <i>Guide</i>
PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS Research professional associations related to your career interests, as most provide a "career opportunities" section on their website	A source of networking information and career opportunities; Build contacts with individuals who share your professional interests	Entry-level positions may be limited; May need to belong to association to access job postings	Ask faculty to suggest professional associations to research; Use Career Information Center resources to identify top associations
EMPLOYMENT AGENCIES Inquire whether these agencies offer experiences in your career areas	Helpful in identifying local businesses and employment opportunities	May have fees associated with the employment services	Research each agency before signing any contract; Talk to others who have used employment agencies

Using Online Resources in Your Job Search

You can find a lot of information about job listings, salary statistics, employer information, and more online.

To have a successful online job search:

- post an online-friendly version of your resume to professional networking & job sites
- research and target employers
- check employer sites for job postings
- network through blogs, social networking sites like Facebook, LinkedIn & Twitter

Below is a list of several helpful career sites.

Nittany Lion Career Network

This easy-to-use database has many internship and full-time opportunities especially for Penn Staters. NLCN accounts have already been created for all registered Penn State students. Check your campus career office's website for access information. Login to your account today and use the job search agent feature that sends you email updates with jobs that meet your skills and needs.

Career Information Center Online Resources

studentaffairs.psu.edu/career/cic/

Access major, internship, and career information from WetFeet, Vault, CareerBeam, What Can I Do With This Major?, and more.

See page 8 for more information on the resources available.

Career Information Center Handouts & Salary Information

studentaffairs.psu.edu/career/cic/handouts.shtml

Download career-specific handouts on topics ranging from Consulting to Careers in Sports and access the latest starting salary information from NACE.

Job Search Via Social Media

LinkedIn ~ Facebook ~ Twitter

Social media sites are excellent places to learn about careers and internships and cultivate a professional network. Recruiters are also using social media tools like LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter to identify and connect with potential candidates.

If you choose to search for jobs on these networks, be aware that companies are using them to conduct background checks on applicants looking for jobs. They want to uncover questionable judgment, illegal activity, or other things that they consider to be red flags. Some companies even gain access to information that students might consider relatively private by asking interns who have strong campus connections to perform online background checks.

Exercise CAUTION: Recruiters report that students who use these sites to brag about drinking habits, illicit drug use, etc. are likely to hurt their chances of obtaining job offers. Students who would never dream of bringing up such subjects in an interview or showing a recruiter risqué photographs sometimes do that very thing online, thinking that a company will never uncover this information. That's a dangerous—and incorrect—assumption.

Investigate the privacy settings on social networking sites and use good judgment before you post.

See page 14 for more tips on how to manage your online presence.

Other Career Sites

www.quintcareers.com

www.rileyguide.com

www.simplyhired.com

www.collegegrad.com

www.onedayonejob.com



Avoiding Scams while Hunting for Jobs and Internships

Enter with Caution: Tips for Avoiding Job Posting Scams

- Do not give your personal bank account, PayPal account, or credit card numbers to a new employer.
- Do not agree to have funds or paychecks direct deposited into any of your accounts by a new employer— you should know them first. Most employers give the option of direct deposit or a paycheck, and make these arrangements during your first day or week of actual employment—not before.
- Do not forward, transfer, send by courier (e.g., FedEx, UPS), or “wire” any money to any employer, or on behalf of any employer, using your personal account(s).
- Do not transfer money and retain a portion for payment.
- Do not respond to suspicious and/or “too good to be true” unsolicited job emails.
- In general, applicants do not pay a fee to obtain a job (but there are some rare exceptions—so be careful, and consult with a Career Services professional first).
- Do not pay to participate in high priced international internships (not only are these internships unpaid, but the students must pay the organization to intern with them).
- Stay away from high-pressure sales pitches that require you to pay now or risk losing out on an opportunity.

Warning: Signs of a Possible Scam

- Often found via broad-based employment web sites or sent as unsolicited email directly to you
- Makes claims such as: “Work from home – make thousands from your computer. Work as much or as little as you want.”
- “Company” does not have a web site, or it is very poorly organized or developed
- Uses domain names that do not exist (e.g., @InMail24.com and others) or free mail services like Gmail, Hotmail, Yahoo, etc.
- Asks you for personal information that may include social security number and/or bank account information (for “credit check” purposes) prior to any face-to-face interview
- Job advertised is not the same as the one offered to you
- Job involves money transfers of any kind and/or as part of the interview process
- Emails sent to you contain poor spelling, grammar, and punctuation
- “Employer” asks you to generate “leads” as part of your interview

***If it seems too good to be true,
it probably is!***

Job Scam Email: An Example

Hello,

If you are seriously looking for income and want to work when your schedule permits, we can help you. We are currently looking for online workers. You will need to have available computer and internet access. All you do is online. No experience required.

So, if you are interested and need more info on this job, please email me at my business email: ashleyr@worksj.com

*Best regards,
Ashley Randall*

P.S. Please send all emails to: ashleyr@worksj.com



Investigate: Resources for Researching Possible Scams

Check with your local consumer protection agency, state Attorney General's Office, Federal Trade Commission, and the Better Business Bureau to see if any complaints have been filed about a company with which you intend to do business.

- Better Business Bureau : www.bbb.org
- National Association of Attorneys General: www.naag.org
- Federal Trade Commission: www.ftc.gov

You may file a consumer complaint with the FTC by calling (1-877-382-4357) or by using the FTC's online filing system, located at www.ftc.gov. Click on "File a Complaint Online."

Help –I've Been Scammed! What Can I Do?

- Close all bank accounts at the bank(s) where transactions were made related to the scam.
- Order a credit report from all three credit bureaus every 2 to 3 months—look for unusual activity.
- Victims of payment-forwarding scams should contact their local Secret Service field agent. The Secret Service handles complaints of international fraud.
- Fraud victims should file a police report with local law enforcement officials.
- Victims should report the company name, the job posting, and all contact names to the job sites where the scam was posted.
- Victims should permanently close all email addresses that were associated with the job fraud where possible.

Content adapted from "How to Avoid Job Scams while Job Hunting" – a publication of the Academic and Career Planning Center at Penn State Erie, The Behrend College

Since we can't warn you about every scam out there, it is up to you to learn how to recognize the warning signs. If you **EVER** have concerns about whether a job or internship opportunity is legitimate, please contact the Career Services office for guidance.

Please visit studentaffairs.psu.edu/career/students/disclaimer.shtml to read the full disclaimer which describes the shared responsibility among Penn State Career Services and internship/job seekers in researching and identifying potential concerns about the legitimacy of employers and their respective postings.



Government Employment

Federal, state and local government continue to offer a variety of opportunities to graduating students. Students from across all of Penn State's colleges and majors can find career connections within government agencies, departments, and settings. Government jobs offer many competitive benefits and can offer competitive salaries with the private sector.

Federal Jobs

The federal government's official Employment Information System, USAJOBS at www.usajobs.gov, contains job postings from all Federal agencies. However, students may want to check out Pathways for Students and Recent Graduates to Federal Careers, available at www.usajobs.gov/studentjobs/. Pathways is a federal job website geared towards those seeking entry-level jobs as well as pre- or post-baccalaureate internship experiences. Because each agency does their own hiring, procedures and information required are often varied.

Federal resumes may differ from standard resumes in the amount of information necessary. Examples of additional information required to complete your application may include transcripts, application forms, narrative descriptions of competencies, questionnaires, etc. Be sure to follow the instructions very carefully as information not submitted can result in your application not being evaluated.

Tips for the application process can be found at www.makingthedifference.org. This website also contains information about hiring trends within federal government, and provides examples of how academic majors and fields of study relate to federal agencies and internship / employment opportunities.

State Jobs

State and local government opportunities exist in all 50 states. The application process, information required, and procedures will vary by state. Information about state and local government structures and employment opportunities can be found at www.statelocalgov.net.

PA State Jobs/Civil Service

PA state residency is required at the time of application for most state civil service positions.

Students who currently reside and are enrolled in colleges, universities or technical schools in Pennsylvania and who have Pennsylvania mailing addresses are eligible to apply prior to graduation for positions requiring Pennsylvania residency.

View job announcements at the Pennsylvania State Civil Service Commission web site, www.scsc.state.pa.us (click on "Job Seekers"). The announcement provides information on the nature of the work, job requirements, job opportunities, testing and test results, and how to apply. It also indicates the opening and closing dates when an application can be submitted. To find more information on the Civil Service tests and applications go to the website listed above and click on "General Information".

Local Government

Research is the key to a successful job search campaign in local government. Locate the agencies and departments in which you are interested and contact them to learn about the application procedures. Look online to learn about local municipalities and their application processes.

In some places, for example, you look at job listings, apply for positions, and if qualified, take a city civil service test. If you pass, your name will be added to a list of eligible candidates and stays there for a period of time unless you are hired. Many positions in local government offices have standard applications for interested individuals to complete.

Additional Opportunities

There are numerous other opportunities for employment working within or around the various levels of government. Many organizations are not part of the federal or state government system, but work very closely with these governments in the public arena. These organizations range from nonprofit foundations and charitable organizations to lobbyists, professional associations, and consulting firms. Opportunities also can be found in legislative agencies such as the General Accounting Office and the Library of Congress, on personal staffs of members of Congress, and in the judicial system. The job search for each of these areas differs, though each relies heavily on networking.

Job Search Strategies for International Students

Many international students are interested in exploring short-term and long-term work opportunities in the United States. Current U.S. immigration laws permit international students to be employed in the U.S. during and after a course of study. However, these regulations have specific requirements and restrictions.

If you wish to work in the U.S. you must plan ahead and be prepared to be persistent. First, it is important for you to understand under what circumstances you may apply for work authorization on your student visa. In addition, unfamiliarity and discomfort with the American job search process may put an international student at a disadvantage when competing for a job. The following information is intended to help you understand and, thereby, overcome some of the obstacles associated with seeking employment in the United States.

When and How to Start?

It is crucial to start your job search process right away by learning about the types and regulations of employment (i.e., part-time jobs, summer jobs, internships, work-study programs, assistantships) both on-campus and off-campus according to the specifics of your student visa and program area of study. You should obtain the most up-to-date information about your employment eligibility (e.g., work or internship authorization) from the Office of Global Programs (http://www.global.psu.edu/international_students/) or the appropriate office on your campus. Start early to explore opportunities to gain experience, which may or may not be related to your area of study, by actively networking (see page 12) with your academic advisors, faculty, peers, alumni, college internship offices, on campus work-study program coordinators, student clubs and activities, and various employers visiting the campus career fairs and providing information sessions. It is also very important to maintain and improve your existing network in your native country and/or other countries to explore multiple options and plans for your career in the global job market.

In general, not being a U.S. citizen or permanent resident adds a level of difficulty to a job search, but there are employers who are willing to hire foreign nationals. It will depend on the industry and the employer. In general as a foreign national you cannot work for the U.S. federal government, for most other U.S. state and local government entities, or for

private employers who receive government contracts. Avoid companies dependent upon contracts from the U.S. Department of Defense. Your visa status will be less of an absolute barrier with other types of employers. You should start searching and learning about potential industries or employers of interest by using the resources available through Career Services and the Career Information Center (see page 8). Although you do not need work authorization for non-paid internships and other volunteer positions, you will need to educate many employers about your employment options such as Curricular Practical Training (authorization for work experience in your area of study when you are a registered student) and Optional Practical Training (authorization of work experience in your area of study after your graduation; or after your thesis/dissertation defense for graduate students). You can obtain and bring brochures about the CPT and OPT process to career fairs and job interviews to help employers overcome the perceived burden of work authorization paperwork. To be proactive, you should also use social media networks and develop an online profile and/or portfolio to network (e.g., searching and learning from professional profiles of individuals and companies on LinkedIn) to gather further tips and strategies.

Approaching the Topic of H1-B Visas with Employers

Many employers are intimidated by the U.S. immigration process and are reluctant to sponsor H1-B visas, or simply have a policy against it. If you attended school in another country and you don't say on your resume or in your cover letter that you are a citizen or permanent resident of the U.S., a savvy employer will probably assume that you have a student visa. On an employer's formal application, if there is a blank for visa status, you need to fill it in with the correct information. On your resume, you may either make no mention of your visa status or make the most positive statement that you can truthfully make. For example, "Visa allows 12 months U.S. work permission" or "Permanent residency to be awarded within the next four months." If you are already a permanent resident, be sure that your resume says "U.S. permanent resident" in a spot where it cannot be overlooked, because it will mean that your employer will not need to worry about work permission. Needless to say, you should only say things that are true, and you should be prepared to document them.



When You Should Bring Up the Issue

Do not begin an employment interview with an inquiry regarding H1-B sponsorship. In general, you may want to raise the issue sometime near the end of a positive first interview, or, perhaps, at the time of being invited in for a second interview. You should definitely talk to a potential employer about your status before you are offered a job. Some employers aren't necessarily aware of work permission issues, and if someone offers you a job and only then learns that they'll have to apply for an H-1 visa in order to keep you, the person may be angry that you didn't provide this information up front.

What Can You Do to Maximize Your Chances?

Begin your job search early, and be prepared to devote extensive time to it. Learn everything you can about the process through which an employer can obtain an H-1 visa for you. In some cases, you'll need to be the one to explain it to an employer. Don't vaguely tell an employer that it's "no problem." Rather, be prepared to explain exactly what steps are involved. Refer to The Department of Labor's site at www.foreignlaborcert.doleta.gov for instructions for both candidates and employers. There also may be some advantage to having the paperwork handled by a lawyer who is thoroughly familiar with the process. If you'd be willing to pay any associated fees, let the employer know that. You can also tell an employer that they can consult with the staff at the Office of Global Programs for more information about the process. As an independent third party, Office of Global Programs may have more credibility than you will in explaining the process.

To seek out companies that have a history of H1-B sponsorship consider the following sources.

1. GoingGlobal provides a database of US H1B Plus visa-sponsoring employers; in-depth information for the international job search; as well as employment information for major U.S. cities and states. Penn State Career Services has a subscription to this service which can be accessed through the Career Information Center online at <http://studentaffairs.psu.edu/career/cic>

2. ForeignMBA.com is reportedly the #1 Internet community for M.B.A. students from around the world. The site includes a list of more than 70 employers that have a history of hiring foreign M.B.A.s.
3. H1VisaJobs.com is a website housing 10 databases listing companies that have sponsored H1-B visas within the past several years as reported by the federal government. There is an access fee for each database for a six-month period. Penn State Career Services does NOT have a subscription to this service.

Other Links for International Students

The following links give more information on living and working in the U.S., as well as job announcements.

www.phds.org – Covers all levels of students: bachelors, Masters, PhDs, and Post-Docs

www.istudentcity.com

www.h1base.com

Career Services counselors are familiar with the special situations you face and can help you at all stages of your job search. We also strongly recommend that you work with the Office of Global Programs (410 Boucke Building, University Park) or the appropriate office on your campus to learn more about work permission and immigration regulations. The Office of Global Programs can acquaint you with current requirements and help you avoid being offered a job but having no legal basis upon which to accept it. Besides such information and guidance, you should remember the importance of being persistent, especially with networking, and follow up contacts in a professional manner.



**The Office of Global Programs has
Employment Information and Resources available online at
www.global.psu.edu/international_students/employment.cfm**



Nittany Lion Career Network (NLCN) is the primary online resource for connecting students with employers. As a registered Penn State student, a free NLCN account has been created for you. With your NLCN account you can:

- Search for job and internship opportunities
- Participate in On-Campus Interviewing (OCI) at select campuses
- Research organizations using the Employers tab
- Participate in online resume books (employers can use these books to locate qualified candidates)
- Receive announcements about upcoming events and career fairs
- Search the list of organizations attending career fairs
- Network with Penn State alumni through LionLink
- Find someone to job shadow

PLEASE NOTE: You will NOT be able to see any OCI jobs unless you have added the on-campus interviewing function to your NLCN account.

Job Postings

Our online job posting service is available for you to look at full-time, internship, and part-time positions with employers who are specifically seeking Penn State candidates from all academic colleges and campuses. Much like other online systems, Nittany Lion Career Network allows you to maintain multiple versions of your resume, apply for positions online, and to keep a history of applications you have submitted through the system. To view job postings, use the Jobs & On-Campus Interview Postings tab in NLCN.

On-Campus Interviewing (OCI)

The On-Campus Interviewing system offers students the opportunity to interview with employers at select campuses. This service is most advantageous for students who are graduating and looking for full-time employment after graduation. Many positions are offered in business, industry, and government and are for students with an interest and background in business and technical fields. Please note: there is a \$15.00 fee for participation in the OCI portion of Nittany Lion Career Network.

You must have the OCI option activated in order to request/schedule interviews with employers participating in on-campus interviews. If you are selected to interview at one of the campuses offering OCI opportunities via NLCN, you must be willing to travel to that location for an in-person interview. This is a benefit to both you and the employer.

Information Sessions

Employers hold information sessions throughout the year. These sessions provide a chance for you to learn more about an employer, meet with recruiters, ask questions about various opportunities, and express your interest in current or future opportunities. These sessions are open to students who have an interest in the company and are often required for students interviewing through OCI. To learn about upcoming information sessions, visit your campus career office and/or website.



Career Fairs

Career fairs are offered each semester on your campus and/or within your local region to meet the varying needs of students seeking employment opportunities. Be sure to speak with a Career Services professional and visit your campus career office website to learn about the most appropriate opportunities in your area.

In addition to opportunities available at your campus, you also have access to several major career events at Penn State University Park which are described in more detail as follows:

- Fall and Spring Career Days support students from all campuses and majors pursuing full-time, internship and co-op opportunities in government, industry, corporate settings and more.
- Graduate and Professional School Week is held each October which features graduate schools, medical and health-related programs and law schools for those planning to continue their education.
- For students interested in the helping professions, the People-to-People Career Fair is offered in the spring semester.
- An Education Career Day is also available during the spring semester for students interested in pursuing positions in education, K-12.
- The Central Pennsylvania Regional Career Fair is the final fair of the year and provides all students, but especially continuing education students, the opportunity to connect with employers within the Central Pennsylvania region.

For more information and to view the list of employers attending upcoming career fairs at University Park, visit careerfairs.psu.edu.



Photo by Courtney Wozetek

Education Credential Services (ECS)

This service enables students seeking full-time employment in the field of education (pre-K through higher education) to centrally store and distribute required application documents. You can establish a credentials file online at studentaffairs.psu.edu/career/credentials. You may manage your credentials file or have ECS send your credentials to schools at your request. A fee of \$8.00 is required for each copy sent via regular mail/email.

LionLink: A Professional Networking Program

LionLink is one of the many programs and services offered through Alumni Career Services, a partnership between Career Services and the Penn State Alumni Association. LionLink is a professional networking program that links Penn State students and alumni with alumni volunteer Career Coaches. Career Coaches provide valuable information and advice on jobs and careers to Career Explorers, who are alumni or students looking for a job or seeking career-related information.

Through informational interviews, student and alumni Career Explorers can gain valuable inside information on careers, industries, companies, and geographic areas from a trusted resource. LionLink can help you gain the information you need that you can't get in a classroom as you build your own professional network. To connect with a LionLink Career Coach, use the LionLink tab in NLCN.



Photo by Patrick Mansell

Making the Most of Career Days

Throughout the fall and spring semesters, several career fairs will be sponsored by various colleges, campuses, and Career Services. At these career fairs, you can come in contact with many employers in a few short hours. You can speak with the organization representatives about career opportunities and present your qualifications for positions you may be seeking.

Employers will be looking for candidates who are professional, articulate, career-directed and prepared. Although many employers attend career fairs to promote their organization and opportunities, most use career fairs as a pre-recruiting screening tool. Therefore, you should present yourself to them as a prime candidate.

You are encouraged to use career days as part of the career exploration and development process. Talk with employers to learn about careers in various industries and get advice on increasing your marketability within your field. It is a valuable opportunity to start and/or enhance your job search network. If you are a first-year student, consider volunteering at the fairs to get an inside look of how things work before you have to start the internship/job search process yourself!

To make the most out of career fairs, we recommend that you:

1. Prepare your resume and have several copies available to bring with you that day. Attend resume workshops, use this Guide or the Career Services website for assistance in preparing your resume. And don't forget to have it reviewed by a career services professional!
2. You will only have a few minutes to present yourself as a candidate; positive first impressions are vital. Dress appropriately. Suits are usually expected, but visit the fair webpage to find out what dress is suggested for different events.
3. Go online and research the organizations attending the fair. Identify the organizations with which you are interested in speaking and narrow your list down to your top ten. Be ready to articulately state why you are interested in each particular organization.

4. Introduce yourself to the representative in a positive and confident manner; offer a firm handshake. Include your name, your major, and the year you are graduating.
5. If looking for a job, give the representative a resume and be ready to discuss your background, qualifications and career goals. Ask what you should do to apply for a position.
6. Tell him/her what your interests are, such as:
 - discussing a particular career or job with that organization,
 - discussing something of interest you learned from their web site,
 - learning more about what someone in a particular career does,
 - discussing internship or summer job opportunities.
7. Think of questions regarding your area(s) of interest. Take notes on what you learn. Some questions might be:
 - What are common career paths with your organization?
 - What is the training program for new hires?
 - What do you look for in a candidate?
8. Make sure you obtain the representative's name, title, address, and phone number in order to follow up. Collect business cards and literature. Take a few moments after speaking to a recruiter to jot a few notes about the conversation on the back of their business card. Utilize these notes in your follow-up thank you email. After the career fair, you should make it a point to follow up with an additional resume and a letter/email expressing your interest in the company and in what they have to offer.

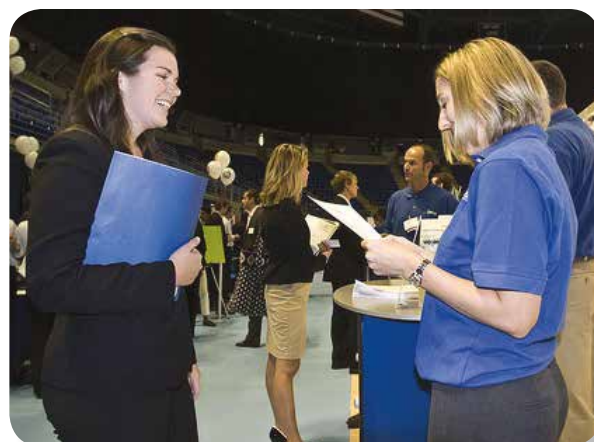


Photo by Greg Grieco

Sample 30-second intro:

My name is _____. I will be graduating in May with a degree in _____ and am seeking full-time positions focused on _____. I am interested in working with _____ because _____.

My name is _____. I am a sophomore, majoring in _____ and I am seeking an internship for the summer of 2014. I am interested in interning with _____ because _____.

Organization

Two traits of interest



Photo by Laura Glickstein

Interviewing

The interview is one of the most important steps in the job search process, and thorough preparation is essential. To interview effectively you need to know what you have to offer, what the employer is like, and the kind of position you want. Being able to answer questions with relevant details and in a conversational manner is very important.

First Impressions: It is always important to make a good impression on the interviewer.

- Arrive at least 10 minutes early
- Look polished: Dress professionally, avoid perfume or cologne, and wear only simple jewelry
- Give a firm handshake, make good eye contact and smile

The Purpose of an Interview:

- For the interviewer to determine a match between you and the organization/school
- For you to sell your qualifications and skills
- To determine if the organization or graduate school is what you want
- To secure a job offer

The 3 criteria employers are looking for in candidates:

- 1) Can you do the job? (skills)
- 2) Will you do the job? (interest/motivation)
- 3) Are you a good fit with the organization? (personal qualities)

As such, they will be asking a variety of questions to determine if you match their needs. There are many types of interview styles or formats. Described below are some of the most common. You may encounter any or all of these, sometimes in the same interview.

Traditional Interview Questions

Traditionally employers have asked questions designed to help them gain a feel for who you are and what makes you unique: your motivation level, your background and strong points, your interest in the position, and the aspects of your personality that may affect how you perform on the job, such as organization, interpersonal skills, decision making, teamwork, etc. The questions asked might be seeking expansion of information presented on your resume, or focus on the qualities and skills that you can bring to the table.

Behavioral Interview Questions

Based on the premise that the best way to predict future behavior is to examine past behavior, behavioral interviewing is now widespread among recruiters. The technique involves asking a series of questions designed to get the candidate to talk about how he or she handled certain situations in the past. Interviewers feel that they can make more accurate hiring decisions by focusing on an applicant's past actions and behaviors, rather than subjective impressions of a candidate's self-proclaimed qualities.

Here's how it goes: Typically, the interviewer will have determined several behavioral characteristics that would be most important for on-the-job success and will base questions on the characteristics identified. You will be asked to share situations in which you may or may not have exhibited these behaviors. You won't be able to theorize or generalize about events, rather, you will be asked to provide details. The interview will be a more structured process that will concentrate on areas identified by the interviewer, rather than on areas that you may feel are important.

Follow-up questions will test for consistency and determine if you exhibited the desired behavior in that situation: Can you give me an example? What did you do? What did you say? What were you thinking? How did you feel? What was your role? What was the result? You will notice an absence of such inquiries as, "Tell me about your strengths and weaknesses."

One of the supposed benefits of this technique for employers is that candidates cannot prepare for these questions in advance. However, you can help yourself by anticipating the types of questions you might receive and dredging your memory for examples of past behavior. You may be able to guess at some of the questions by analyzing the job requirements beforehand.

Check out a list of sample interview questions on pages 48-49.



How to Prepare for Behavioral Interview Questions:

- Think of recent situations that demonstrate some of the most commonly sought after behaviors, especially leadership, teamwork, initiative, planning, and customer service.
- Prepare short descriptions of each situation; remember STAR
 - S—Describe the Situation.
 - T—What Task(s) did you identify that had to be completed?
 - A—What Action did you take?
 - R—What were the Results of your actions?
- Be honest. Don't exaggerate or omit any part of the story.
- Be specific. Don't generalize about several events; give a detailed account of one event.

Mock Interviews

Practice interviews may be available by appointment or as part of the career counseling process on your campus. See a career professional for more information.

Also, InterviewStream is a powerful online practice interviewing tool that is available at all Penn State campuses. Record and view your own practice interviews and share the link with a career professional on campus, a faculty member, or whomever may be most appropriate to gain feedback. Visit your campus career office website to access InterviewStream.

Case Interview Questions

Another common interview format, especially for consulting firms, is the case interview. It is also probably one of the most difficult and feared formats around. In it, you'll be asked to analyze a hypothetical business problem and come up with solutions on the spot. Case interview questions are designed to test your ability to think analytically under stress, with incomplete information. Every case interview problem presented is trying to judge all or some of the following:

- Your ability to identify key concepts, process thoughts in an orderly manner, and separate important facts from irrelevant facts.
- Your insight and knowledge of relevant issues in a business problem scenario. Some examples: competitive threats, barriers to entry, competitive advantages, target marketing, pricing strategies, etc. Your goal is to recognize which type of business analysis is appropriate for the specific case(s) presented.
- Your ability to come up with a new approach to a problem, find a hurdle that nobody else had noticed, offer an insightful remark.

Helpful Hints for Case Interviews:

- Listen carefully to the material presented. Take notes if you want to, and be sure to ask questions if you are unsure about details.
- Take your time. If you need a minute or two to collect your thoughts and work through your answer, say so.
- Offer a general statement or framework up front to serve as an outline for your answer. As you proceed with your answer, draw on the outline of your framework.
- Focus on key, broad issues first.
- Orient your answer toward action. Suggest specific steps that can be taken to solve a problem, not just theory.
- Be conscious of resources. If it relates to the problem, ask your interviewer about the budget, capital, and other resources that the client can allocate to the solution.
- To do well, you need to enjoy the intellectual challenge of analyzing tough problems and coming up with reasonable solutions.

Refer to the charts on page 25 to review the attributes employers seek in candidates.



How Can I Best Prepare for Interviews?

Know yourself, first. Know what kind of job you want and what makes you feel qualified. Think about what information you want to include in your responses. Don't go in "cold" and expect to do well, but don't memorize, either.

Research the employer. First get the basics, including the company's size, location(s), product(s), or service(s). Then look for details relevant to the position you seek: job description, training, advancement paths, etc. You may need to look several places to get this information, including:

1. The company's information session, if they are holding one.
2. The Career Information Center online at studentaffairs.psu.edu/career/cic
3. Company websites, many of which can be found from links in Nittany Lion Career Network.
4. The Business Library online at www.libraries.psu.edu/psul/business.html. You can link to Hoover's Online, Factiva, Standard and Poor's Net Advantage, and more.
5. Contacting the local chamber of commerce or the company's public relations or personnel department.
6. Talking with someone in the company or agency in the type of position of interest to you.
7. Search online news sites to review any recent articles regarding the company.

Use Career Services. Take advantage of the variety of free services:

1. Workshops on interview skills are presented throughout the semester.
2. InterviewStream: Record and view your own practice interviews and share the link with a career professional on campus, a faculty member, or whomever may be most appropriate to gain feedback. Visit your campus career office website to access InterviewStream.
3. Meet with a Career Counselor to discuss your fears, experiences, and questions.

What Is the Best Approach to Answering Questions?

Recruiters are surprisingly accurate in sensing "canned" answers. These canned responses don't give interesting or reliable information about you. When you answer, remember these guidelines:

1. There is no single right answer. It's often how you answer that is more important than the exact content.
2. Be honest. Don't pretend, for example, that you were sure about your major from the very start if, in fact, you weren't. The details about how you chose your major may be much more interesting and communicate some very positive things about how you make decisions.
3. Don't look for ulterior motives. Some questions are asked purely out of curiosity or to help you relax. Recruiters are not going to conclude that you lack sufficient interest in the field if your favorite course was not related to your major. A genuine answer is almost always more interesting.
4. Give details and examples. General responses become boring and don't help the recruiter get to know you. You need to be specific. Details illustrate your points and make answers more vivid and memorable. Therefore, when discussing one of your strengths, give an example or two illustrating that strong point. When mentioning the course you liked most, give some details to illustrate what you liked and why. Remember to use the STAR method outlined on page 45.
5. Stay focused and don't ramble. Give details that are relevant but don't start telling long stories that include unnecessary details. Some candidates make the mistake of repeating themselves when they haven't thought of how to wrap up the answer. Respond directly and succinctly.
6. Keep the position in mind. What details can you give that are relevant to the type of job you are interested in? When you think of some, try to remember to include them. For example, if you worked at a summer camp and are now looking for a sales position, you can mention how you were successful at persuading the participants to enjoy your programs.



How Can I Best Respond to a Question About Salary?

Fortunately, it is seldom asked during the initial interview. When asked, you need to answer carefully. It is usually best to give a salary range and to have an idea what the range is for your field. Salary information is available online and through the Career Information Center.

What Types of Questions Should I Ask?

You make the best impression if you ask questions about what you are seriously interested in concerning the company and job. What do you want to know more about? Don't be afraid to be specific, because specific questions convey genuine interest.

If many of your questions have been answered by good company literature, tell the recruiter, mentioning some of the more important questions and perhaps even a brief summary of what you have learned.

Initially you should stay away from questions about benefits and salary. This is usually discussed during the second or site interview. Above all, do not ask for the same information that is in any company literature you have already received.

Questions to Ask Employers

- Can you describe a typical first year assignment?
- What are the most challenging aspects of the job?
- How would you describe your organization's culture?
- Why do you enjoy working for your organization?
- What initial training will I receive?
- What opportunities for professional growth does the organization offer?
- How will I be evaluated and promoted?
- What are the characteristics of a successful person at your company?
- What are the organization's plans for future growth?
- What is a typical career path at your organization?

- What are the biggest challenges facing the organization/department?
- What is the management style of the organization? Of the department?
- What are the goals of the department? Of the organization?
- How much decision-making authority is given to new employees?
- In what ways is a career with your company better than one with your competitors?

Points to Remember

1. The recruiter saw something in your resume that was impressive. Go into your interview remembering that this person already likes what he/she saw.
2. The interview is a two-way conversation. Try to relax and enjoy the opportunity.
3. Be specific, not vague. You'll be much more interesting.
4. Think about your answers ahead of time. Don't memorize, but have a focus and don't ramble.
5. Be prepared to describe why you are interested in that employer and give specific characteristics about the kind of position that you want.
6. Sell yourself. If you don't state what your strengths, skills, and accomplishments are, the recruiter will be unable to see you as a good candidate.
7. Genuine self-confidence and confidence in your ability to perform well at the job are your best assets in any interview. This attitude of confidence is one of the best indicators to the employer that you are the person needed for the position.
8. Don't forget to assess the company to see if you would like to work for them.



Sample Questions

- Tell me about yourself.
 - Keep your answer to one or two minutes, don't ramble.
 - Give a short version of your resume — general goals, skills and background.
- Why are you interested in our organization? What interests you about this job?
 - Project an informed interest: know products, size, income, reputation, people, history, etc.
 - Talk about their needs, how you can make a contribution to the company goals.
- What areas of your study have excited you the most? How have you explored them beyond your course work?
- Describe your most rewarding academic experience.
- What is your GPA? How do you feel about it? Does it reflect your abilities?
- Since attending college, what is the toughest decision that you have had to make?
- What previous work experience has been the most valuable to you and why?
- What are your strengths? Your weaknesses?
- What accomplishments are you most proud of?
- How do you handle pressure?
- If I asked the people who know you well to describe you, what three words would they use?
- What are your long term career goals? How do you plan to achieve those goals?
- What things are most important to you in a job?
- What type of work environment appeals to you most?
- In what ways do you think you can contribute to our organization?
- Why are you the best candidate for this position?

Sample Behavioral Interview Questions

- Give me an example of a time at work when you had to deal with unreasonable expectations.
- How have you handled a situation in which the information presented to you was conflicting or there was no clear right or wrong answer?
- Tell me about a time when an unexpected event interrupted your work plans. How did you handle the situation? What was the outcome?
- How have you handled the challenge of developing your skills in a situation where feedback and/or coaching was delayed or limited?
- Give me an example of a time when you were asked to do something you had never done before.
- Give me an example of a situation in which you were especially skillful in making a decision quickly.
- Tell me about a time when your ability to reward and encourage others created positive motivation.
- Give me an example of a time when you actively defined and evaluated several alternative solutions to identify a way to resolve a problem you encountered.
- Tell me about the most important time in your work history when you successfully prioritized your goals and objectives.
- Tell me about how you used realistic schedules and timetables to generate a plan leading to a specific goal.
- Creativity often means stepping back from regimented ways of thinking. When have you been able to break out of a structured mind set and intuitively play with concepts and ideas?
- Tell me about a time when you felt it necessary to compromise your own immediate interests in order to be flexible and tolerant of another person's needs.
- Give me an example of a time when your timing, political awareness, and knowledge of how groups work enhanced your ability to generate a change.



- Tell me about a time when your understanding of issues associated with a problem provided you with a foundation for generating a good solution.
- Give me an example of a success you have had in the use of delegation.
- Describe a complex problem you faced at school or at work that required you to carefully analyze the situation, information, or other details.



Photo by Patrick Mansell

Sample Case Interview Questions

- You are consulting for a major personal care products manufacturer that mainly produces and distributes products such as soaps, shampoos, conditioners, etc. Every year their profits are shrinking. What could be the cause of this?
- You are in marketing with one of the largest and fastest growing supermarket chains in the country. This chain is considering opening its own bank branches in its supermarket locations. What is your advice?
- Your client is a small regional bank in the U.S. They are considering closing branch locations, and diverting their resources to telephone and Internet banking facilities. Should they implement this strategy? What are some of the basic areas they need to research before this strategy is recommended?

Think of a skill you would like to highlight during an interview. Outline a scenario below that demonstrates that skill.

Skill to highlight: _____

Situation: _____

Task: _____

Action: _____

Result: _____

The Site Interview: What to Expect

The site visit or interview is the make or break point for job offers. If you are offered an interview at the employer's facility, you can consider yourself in a strong position. But don't think that an offer is a "sure thing." Rather, think of this phase of the interview process as the way for both you and the employer to get a more in-depth assessment of each other.

An employer is offering you the opportunity to convince all of the principal players that you are the right candidate. After a site interview you can make a more informed decision about the position, the people, the environment, long-term career opportunities, and the community.

- Learn as much as you can about the company by reading the company's literature, looking at their web page, and reviewing industry and business publications. You can also talk to employees who are Penn State alumni to learn more about the company through LionLink (see page 41)
- If you receive an offer for a site interview, respond promptly and professionally. If you are not interested in that company, decline politely. Never go on a site interview for "practice." Don't schedule back-to-back site interviews.
- If you accept the offer for a site interview, you should ask the person coordinating the trip who will be responsible for making the arrangements for the trip and if you should keep track of your expenses. Most medium- and large-sized companies (as well as many smaller ones) will pay your expenses, but some will not.
- Request a schedule and directions to the hotel and the facility before traveling. Maintain a phone number for your contact person.
- You should plan to bring several extra copies of your resume; copies of paperwork (e.g., applications) that you may have forwarded to the employer; names and contact information of your references; an up-to-date transcript; the names and addresses of past employers; and a notebook and black or blue pen.
- Travel lightly to avoid checking luggage, if you can. When you arrive, make a trial run to the office location. At the hotel inquire about any messages or packages that may have been left for you. Note: You should verify prepayment, but be prepared for a credit card imprint.
- Many times you can expect a full day of interviews including a lunch meeting. During your site interview, you may meet potential co-workers, department managers, and potential supervisors, all the way up to the president of the company. The interviews may be one-on-one or panel and could range from 1/2 hour to 2 hours in length. You may also participate in a tour.
- If you attend a lunch or dinner meeting, remember to remain professional. Although the atmosphere may seem more relaxed, the employer is still evaluating you. Abide by the following: Do not order alcohol. Do not chew with your mouth open. Do not swear.
- You should be prepared to discuss salary, understanding what the going rates are for people in your field and how certain geographic areas affect salaries. For more information on salaries, talk to a Career Counselor or review the resources in the Career Information Center. Remember: Your best bet is to let them bring up the discussion of salary.
- Often the final meeting of the day is with your contact person or employment manager. During this session they often offer answers to any final questions you may have, explain follow-up procedures, and discuss reimbursement of your expenses. Make sure all of your questions are answered.
- Most companies only offer site interviews to candidates they are seriously considering, so you may find yourself with an offer at the end of the day or very soon afterwards. Do not feel compelled to accept an offer on-site. You should take time to consider the offer in terms of your needs and in comparison to other offers you may have.

- After your interview, you should manage expenses according to the company's policies.
- Send out thank-you letter(s) to the person(s) who will be making the hiring decisions. You may also want to write thank-you letters to people with whom you want to continue to network.
- Feel free to contact the company if you have not received a response in the agreed upon timeframe. Also contact any of the interviewers for whom you have additional questions.

If you decide that the job and the employer are right for you, don't feel shy about telling the employer that you are eager to join their team. But, never be afraid to decline an offer if it is not right for you. Remember that long-term career satisfaction is the goal of the whole process.



Photo by Erika Stover

Missing a Site Interview

When you accept an invitation for a site interview you are making a commitment to that company. Employers have reported students not showing up for site interviews, after extensive arrangements have been made. This is not acceptable behavior.

If you are no longer interested in an opportunity or cannot make an interview, it is professional courtesy to contact the employer and let them know of your situation. Employers generally understand about situations changing. But, simply not attending a scheduled interview will ensure that you will not be considered for a position with that company in the future. Your actions can also jeopardize Penn State's relationship with the company, making interviews difficult for future students.

Career Services expects that students using our Nittany Lion Career Network services maintain professional behavior. In fact, when you utilize the Nittany Lion Career Network system, you must agree to maintain professional conduct throughout the recruiting process.

Dress for Success

Making an impressive first impression gives you a powerful edge when interviewing for an internship, co-op, or full-time position. During interviews, employers will be evaluating your skills and abilities, but remember the old adage, "You never get a second chance to make a first impression." The following guidelines can help you dress for success.

Men

- Present a clean-shaven face or neatly trimmed facial hair
- A tailored suit is preferred
- Wear a dark, conservative suit with a white, long sleeved, pressed dress shirt (blue or gray suits are acceptable in a less conservative environment)
- A sport coat or collared button-down shirt and dress pants or khakis may be appropriate for internship and co-op interviews
- A tie should be silk, coordinate with your suit, and neatly knotted (avoid flashy patterns)
- Wear polished dress shoes with dark dress socks
- Hair should be combed, clean, and neat

Women

- Wear natural-looking makeup, avoiding bright colors, sparkles, or glitter
- Wear a dark conservative skirt suit or pant suit
- Skirts should be no more than two inches above the knee - avoid thigh-high or ankle-length
- Wear a blouse with a tailored collar or jewel neckline
- Avoid large scarves that are distracting
- Wear polished, dress pumps with 2-3 inch heels
- Hosiery should be sheer or blend with the suit color
- Keep jewelry to a minimum
- Hair should be combed, clean, and neat with long hair pulled away from the face

Everyone

- Turn your phone off or set to vibrate
- Carry a small leather/leather alternative briefcase or portfolio with extra copies of your resume, pen, and paper
- Avoid strongly scented perfumes, colognes, lotions, and soaps
- Fingernails should be neat – avoid bright colors/designs



Check out the Career Services Pinterest page at pinterest.com/psucareer/ for examples of appropriate professional and business casual attire.

Job Offers and Negotiation

Evaluating the Entire Job Offer: It's Not Just About Money

There are many things to consider when making a decision about a job offer. While financial compensation is certainly important, it's also important to weigh in other factors such as reputation of the organization, the quality of their training program, possibilities for promotion, and satisfaction of the employees.

Following is a list of important factors to consider in order to examine the whole offer:

The Type of Work

Your assignment should be challenging, satisfying, and a good match with your skills and interests. You should know what your responsibilities will be as you begin your job.

Training/Continuing Education

Life-long learning is essential for long-term career success. Explore whether you will be offered continuing education/training to keep you current in your field. Company courses, professional seminars, and tuition reimbursement for university course work are ways in which the company can contribute to your growth and development.

Salary

Research the average salaries for positions of comparable type and level. Refer to the salary resources listed in the "Do Your Research" section of this article. Factor in the geographic location and its cost of living differences. Also factor in your level of experience and skill sets compared to those represented in the various salary surveys you're using.

Benefits

You will also want to be sure what the benefits package includes, for example: insurance coverage, retirement plan, health care plan, paid vacation and sick leave, income supplements (such as profit sharing), relocation assistance, etc.

Company Culture

Company culture, or values which underlie the work environment, is also a key to your decision. The company's culture should match your own values so you feel no conflict of interest.

Supervisor and Colleagues

Is your supervisor-to-be interested in your professional growth? Your supervisor can be especially critical as you learn your job and the company's way of doing things, and he or she can greatly impact your ability to move ahead. Are you compatible with your colleagues? You will want to choose a job that involves people with whom you feel comfortable.

Opportunity for Growth

Will you have the opportunity to grow professionally? A position that will serve as a springboard offers greater challenges over time, additional responsibilities, and a variety of activities in which you can become involved.

Negotiating Job Offers Strategies and Tips

Students often find that the competitive nature of negotiating job offers is one of the most stressful and unpleasant parts of the job search process. To help you approach the negotiation process more positively, we have provided you with a few useful strategies and tips.

Adopt a Win/Win Mindset

The ultimate goal is to achieve an outcome that is pleasing to both you and your employer. The goal of your potential employer is to gain a valuable new employee who will add value to their organization at a "reasonable" cost. Your goal is to gain employment with a desirable company where you can add value and be fairly compensated for your talents and efforts. It is our belief that if you approach your negotiation with the attitude that you also want your employer to get something out of the interaction, and that it's not an issue of "I win if they lose" (or vice versa), then you are in the right frame of mind for moving forward.

Negotiation Is Not a Bad Word

Life is about compromise and negotiation. You do it unconsciously every time you bargain with your friends about whether to go out for pizza or burgers, go to the pool or to the pool hall. In most cases, employers expect some degree of negotiation. It's the manner in which you negotiate that can make the difference between a positive and negative negotiation experience. As with any interaction, be respectful, understand that you may have to give a little to get a little (remember win/win), and always express appreciation that you have received an offer.

Timing Is Key

The time for negotiation occurs at the point that you have been extended an offer of employment, no sooner. This may seem like common knowledge, but people still make the mistake of talking money and benefits too soon in the process. Prior to an offer, the focus should be on explaining how you can add value to their organization and on obtaining information about the specifics of the actual job and the organization. The company should get the impression that your primary focus is on your investment in their organization...the money will follow.

Do Your Research

You stand a better chance of having a successful salary negotiation if you present a well-reasoned argument that is backed up by data, such as average salary, adjustments due to geography and your level of education, background and skills. For example, according to Salary.com, you would need a salary of \$78,000 to secure the same lifestyle in Washington, D.C. as \$48,000 would get you in Pittsburgh, PA.

Practice, Practice

The art of negotiation like so many aspects of communication and interpersonal effectiveness requires practice and experience to be really good at it. In the same way that you might prepare for a job interview, we urge you to put similar effort into your negotiation preparation. Career Counselors can help you with preparing a negotiation strategy, answer your specific negotiation questions, as well as help you role play a mock negotiation scenario.

Resources for Researching Salary

A Comprehensive Site for Researching Salary Information
salary.com

NACE Salary Calculator
www.jobsearchintelligence.com/NACE

Wage, Earnings and Benefit Data from the
U.S. Department of Labor/Bureau of Labor Statistics
www.bls.gov/oes

Company salaries, reviews, and inside connections for thousands of companies
www.glassdoor.com/

Penn State Post Graduation Data
studentaffairs.psu.edu/career/postgrad.shtml



Understanding the Ethics of Offers

Remember that You're Representing Penn State

You may receive several offers during your job search. You aren't required to accept the first job offer that comes along and can continue to interview and consider all of your job offers until you have accepted a job. But once you have accepted a job offer, verbally or in writing, you are bound by ethical standards and values, and remember that you are representing Penn State to the outside world of employers.

Once you accept a job, you should:

- Withdraw from the recruiting process. You have made a commitment when you accept an offer. The employer stops interviewing and holds the position for you. Accepting an offer as a precautionary measure, hoping that something better will come along, is not only misleading to the employer, but also limits the opportunities for other students who are genuinely interested in that employer. Also, you may change your mind and want to work for that company someday.
- Let all employers who are actively considering you know that you are no longer available and that they should consider other candidates.

- Notify Career Services so that we will not refer your resume to any other employers. Cancel all pending interviews.
- If you face extreme circumstances that force you to renege on an acceptance (e.g., critically ill parent, marriage), you should notify your employer immediately and withdraw the acceptance. If you have accepted a signing bonus, you should return it.

Employers are also bound by ethical standards. They should:

- Provide accurate information about their organization, positions, career advancement opportunities, and benefits, as well as timely information on your status in the hiring process and any hiring decisions.
- Not exert undue pressure. Employers are expected to provide candidates with a reasonable amount of time to make a decision about an offer as well as a reasonable process for making a decision.
- Offer fair and equitable assistance, including (but not limited to) financial assistance and outplacement services, if, because of changing conditions (e.g., downsizing, or withdrawn contracts), an employer must revoke a job offer that you have accepted.

Rank the following in order to help you compare job offers. Repeat this exercise for each job offer you are considering and compare the totals.

	Column 1	Column 2	Column 3
Factors to consider	How Important It Is to You (1 not at all, 2 somewhat, 3 very much)	Job Offer 1 (1 doesn't meet this need, 2 meets this need, 3 exceeds this need)	Multiply Column 1 by Column 2
Type of Work			
Continuing Education			
Salary			
Benefits			
Company Culture			
Supervision			
Opportunity for Growth			
		TOTAL (add column 3)	

Applying to Graduate or Professional School

Graduate education appeals to students who seek to extend their knowledge or research in a specialized area, as well as to students who seek to access careers that require education beyond the bachelor's level. Individuals pursue graduate education to support a desired career change, or to attain a greater level of leadership and responsibility, based upon one's experience and education. Depending on your career goals and readiness, you may choose to go directly to graduate school or work for a few years and then attend graduate school on a full or part-time basis. The following information will help you plan, prepare for, and move through the process of applying to graduate programs of all types.

Identify your rationale for pursuing further education:

- Access to a career goal requires further education
- Extend knowledge or research of a particular area of study
- Pursue a new career direction or goal

Obtain Information About Schools and Programs

- Admission requirements and deadlines
- Costs
- Sources of financial aid / how students pay for graduate education
- Faculty research and teaching interests
- Curriculum and degree requirements
- Opportunities for experiential learning (internships, practica, field-experiences, volunteer)
- Program accreditation and reputation of the graduate program within the academic and professional field
- The types of careers program graduates pursue after completing a graduate degree

Ways to research graduate programs

- Graduate and Professional School Week (careerfairs.psu.edu/gpweek)
- Individual Graduate Program websites
- Faculty contacts and networks, beginning with faculty here at Penn State
- Professional and Educational Associations
- Accreditation agencies
- General Graduate School Websites (Petersons.com, gradschools.com, gradprofiles.com, graduate-school.phds.org)

An important element in exploring graduate programs is to speak with faculty and students currently involved with the program that you are exploring. Visit schools and programs if at all possible. This will give you a much better feel for the programs you are interested in attending. Make arrangements in advance to meet with faculty, the individual who coordinates the applicant review, and some graduate students. If you cannot visit a program, scheduling an appointment to speak with someone is another option to learn about program details, as well as share information about your interests and goals. Before contacting programs, take time to list and prioritize questions that can be asked of students and faculty members.

Admissions Criteria

The specific criteria and their relative weights vary, depending on the academic discipline, particular educational institution, and number of applicants. Faculty contacts and program websites can provide specific information about grade point average and admission test score criteria. Certain programs have very high grade point average or test score cutoff points, while other programs prioritize work experience and evidence of success in relevant courses. Do not assume that you can never get into a discipline. Remember that admission requirements differ from one graduate program to another.

You generally do not need to have an undergraduate degree in the same or a closely allied field. However, graduate programs may have prerequisite coursework. At some universities you can complete these courses as a non-degree graduate student seeking to become qualified for a program.



If the programs you first investigate have admissions criteria that you cannot meet, look for related programs in other fields with less stringent criteria. You may discover a challenging, relevant program or field that you have not considered.

In addition to the complete application form, your application may include graduate admission test scores, transcripts, letters of recommendation, an essay or statement of intent and an application fee. The application process will differ slightly from program to program. Therefore, the first test of graduate school is to complete the admissions process in an organized and timely manner!

A note about application deadlines:

When schools list priority deadlines for applications, those dates are often used for consideration of scholarships, graduate assistantships, and fellowships. It is in your best interest to send in your materials by this date if you need or want financial assistance throughout your program. Additionally, it is in your best interest to send in your application materials as early as possible. For rolling deadlines, students are accepted on a continuous basis and when the acceptance slots are full, the program will no longer accept applications. Sending in your application materials as early as possible will demonstrate a true interest in the program and will increase your chances of acceptance.

Graduate Admissions Tests

The tests required vary by type of graduate study. The most common admissions tests include the Graduate Record Exam (GRE), the Graduate Management Admissions Test (GMAT) for Business schools, and the Law School Admissions Test (LSAT). Program websites will specify which test you need and will often indicate average scores needed to be competitive for acceptance. You should plan to take the appropriate test approximately one year before your anticipated matriculation date although many test scores are valid for three to five years.

Keep in mind that while schools primarily utilize graduate admission tests as requirements for acceptance, some schools also use test scores when considering students for scholarships or fellowships.

For more information on Graduate Admissions Tests

GRE: www.gre.org
GMAT: www.gmac.com/gmat
LSAT: www.lsac.org
MCAT: www.aamc.org/students/applying/mcat/
MAT: www.milleranalogies.com

Studying for these exams is best done by following the suggestions in the registration materials. There are many books and services available for practice and strategy development. Before you invest in costly study methods, decide if you learn better by reading and practicing independently (books) or by instruction and group practice (review course) and evaluate each method prior to purchase. GRE, GMAT, and LSAT prep courses are offered through Career Services at University Park. Visit studentaffairs.psu.edu/career for more information.

The Application Process Transcripts

Official transcripts of your undergraduate work and any other graduate work you have completed must be sent to the graduate schools. This may be done at the end of your junior year or in the middle of your senior year or, for those going on later, at any point after you have graduated. Contact the registrar's office or login to eLion to request transcripts; anticipate a fee for this service.

Letters of Recommendation

Letters of recommendation are endorsements of your capacity to succeed as a graduate student and also as an emerging professional within your field. Consider seeking letters from people who have observed you in field-related classes or work settings. Most graduate programs require that two or three recommendation letters be sent. These letters are frequently submitted to programs directly by your reference providers, often electronically.

Schools prefer and sometimes require that at least one and sometimes two references be on the faculty or staff of a university or college, preferably in the same department where you are currently studying and/or in the same field in which you are applying to do your graduate study. If you have worked in a job related to the field, a workplace supervisor may provide an excellent reference.

When choosing referees, an important consideration is how well and in what depth the individual will describe you in the letter. If a doctoral teaching assistant knows your work more thoroughly than a full professor, for example, s/he may write a better, stronger reference.

When approaching people for references, keep the following in mind:

- Offer enough time: Three to five weeks in advance of a deadline is often recommended.
- Share a resume and any additional information that will help the referee to understand the context of your goals and experience. Be willing to meet to discuss your motivation to go to graduate school, your related experience, and how your interaction with the reference has contributed to your potential to succeed in graduate school. Share a list of the programs you are pursuing, with information about deadlines and how the reference will be delivered to the program.
- Remember to ask the reference if s/he is willing to be a reference. If there is hesitation or a refusal to write a reference, know that this individual may be encouraging you to seek someone else who could write more positively or comprehensively on your behalf.
- Don't be afraid to check with each referee one or more times prior to the deadline to see if the reference has been sent. Many people with good intentions get busy and forget the deadline.

Application Essay / Personal Statement

Most schools will require that you write an essay or statement on your background and interests as they relate to your field of study. These are often used as an opportunity to see you "beyond the numbers" in the admissions criteria. Many schools will also ask you to provide short answer essays to specific questions within

your field to assess your knowledge and understanding of the field you are entering. These essays are one measure of your ability to write, to build arguments, and to think critically. They also assess your enthusiasm for the field of study, creativity, maturity, and uniqueness.

For most personal statements or letters of intent, schools will expect you to be clear about your career goals and your reasons for applying to that institution. In your essays, you want to demonstrate that you have specific career goals (e.g., to become a lawyer) and understand how that particular program will assist you in achieving your career goals. It can be helpful to incorporate into your essay specific research being conducted by faculty members or particular classes you are interested in from that institution.

Have someone review your essay for content, grammar, and spelling. Often the best people to critique your essay are people who understand your field and have some awareness of your background and current work, (e.g., your references). Take your time developing your essay(s); they are often the most crucial part of your application.

Financial Aid

Three kinds of financial aid are available:

- 1) work programs, such as graduate assistantships and college work study programs;
- 2) monetary awards, including grants, fellowships and scholarships; and
- 3) loans, usually administered through banks, the government, or the educational institution.

Because every graduate school has its own application process and system of awarding aid, you must obtain that information directly from each of the institutions to which you are applying. You can check with both the financial aid office and the graduate academic department.

Graduate assistantships often pay tuition and a stipend for living expenses. Most are administered by academic departments and involve either 10 or 20 hours of work per week. Teaching assistantships involve assisting a professor with grading, office hours, and recitation sections or being responsible for the entire teaching of one or more courses. Research assistantships provide the opportunity to participate in ongoing research and can evolve into conducting your own research project for a thesis.



Loans and college work-study programs are awarded on the basis of financial need. To determine need, many graduate schools require that the applicant submit the FAFSA, the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, which is administered by the U.S. Department of Education. To obtain the most up-to-date information on these options, talk with a graduate financial aid officer, or visit www.fafsa.ed.gov. For additional information on financial aid, check out FinAid: The Financial Aid Information Page (www.finaid.org) or the Department of Education's Student Guide (www.ed.gov/finaid.html)

Programs of study I am considering:

Institutions I am considering:

Letters of recommendation to request:

Application Action Plan

Fall and Spring of your Junior year

- Research areas of interest, institutions, and programs.
- Talk to advisers about application requirements.
- Register and prepare for appropriate graduate admission tests.
- Investigate national scholarships.
- If appropriate, obtain letters of recommendation.

Summer between Junior and Senior year

- Take required graduate admission tests.
- Work on your application materials.
- Visit institutions of interest if possible.
- Write your application essay.
- Check on application deadlines and rolling admissions policies.
- For medical, dental, osteopathy, podiatry, or law school, you may need to register for the national application or data assembly service most programs use.

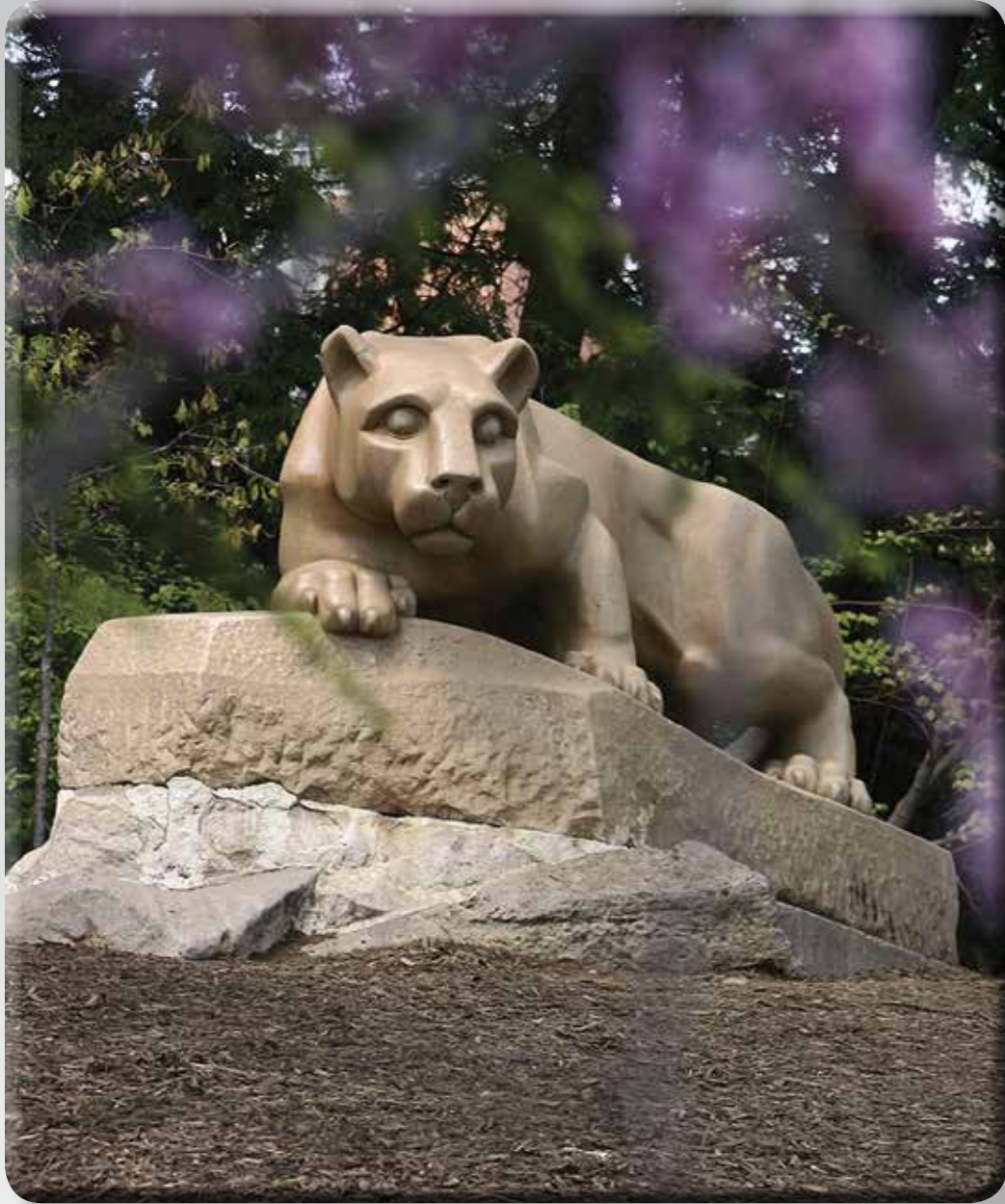
Fall of your Senior year

- Obtain letters of recommendation.
- Take graduate admission tests if you haven't already.
- Send in completed applications.
- Complete the FAFSA, if required.

Spring of your Senior year

- Check with all institutions before the deadline to make sure your file is complete.
- Visit institutions that accept you. Send a deposit to your institution of choice.
- Notify other colleges and universities that accepted you of your decision so that they may admit students on their waiting list.
- Send thank-you notes to people who wrote your recommendation letters, informing them of your success.

Special Section for Graduate Students



All of the services and resources described in the Career Guide are available to undergraduate and graduate students. The articles that follow are specific to the needs of graduate students and will help you to prepare for and explore career options.

Finishing Your Master's Degree and Planning Your Next Step

When to Consider Going on for a Doctorate

As any graduate student understands, completing an advanced degree takes a strong commitment of time, energy, and financial resources. Many students on the verge of completing their master's degrees ask the question, "Should I continue on with a Ph.D. or other doctoral-level program?" For many, pursuing a doctorate immediately following master's degree conferral serves as a natural next step based upon the professional goals of those students. However, those with other professional aspirations may prefer to postpone the doctoral degree until after they have gained a substantial amount of work experience in their chosen field—or they may choose not to pursue the doctoral-level degree at all. Entering an advanced degree program is an important decision that should be both carefully weighed and well-informed.

Understanding Master's vs. Doctoral Degrees

Gaining a clear understanding of the distinctions between the master's and doctoral-level degrees can be an important first step in deciding where to go on the next leg of your professional journey.

The Master's Degree: A Closer Look

The intended purpose of the master's degree is to provide you with an increased level of understanding, depth of knowledge, and applicable skills to be used within your chosen field. Master's study introduces you to research and provides the opportunity to learn research techniques, collect and analyze data, and write a thesis based on this research. Typically, programs require approximately two years of full-time graduate study. During the first year, schedules are comprised of a heavier course load which (unlike undergraduate general education) consists of material that is field-specific rather than broad-based in nature. Students will begin working with an advisor during the first year in order to narrow their desired concentration within the field. Research on a master's thesis or master's paper topic may begin in the latter portion of the first year.

The second year experience consists of additional coursework that will serve to complete the degree requirements set for the program. The level of emphasis on research also increases as you progress toward the completion of the thesis or paper required for

degree conferral. The thesis requirement is intended to serve as a demonstration of the level of field-specific knowledge and research skill you have gained within the academic focus. You may participate in internship or practical learning experiences to a more significant degree during the second year, enhancing direct exposure to your selected area of concentration. A critical point of career decision making often occurs as the end of the master's program nears. This is the period of time when you may be most strongly encouraged to consider applying for doctoral programs based upon your demonstrated research, skill, and professionalism in completing the master's degree.

The Doctoral Degree: What to Expect

Choosing to enter a doctoral program is a major decision that requires the utmost commitment and a keen awareness of what to expect. A doctorate may take at least 4-6 years to complete, and the demands of this level of education are more rigorous than what is required at the master's level. The two primary doctoral degrees are the Doctor of Philosophy, which is an academic degree, and the Doctor of Education, a professional degree. For the purpose of simplified explanation, the doctoral program may best be divided in half.

During the first half of the doctoral program, much of a candidate's work is based in coursework that fulfills the degree requirements of the particular program. Areas of research interest are also narrowed by working with an advisor and possibly one or more additional professors in the field. The first half of the doctoral program typically culminates with the completion of comprehensive exams.

The final half of the doctoral program is usually defined by a shift in focus from coursework to intensive research and development of the dissertation, depending upon the degree sought. The purpose of the dissertation is to showcase new and innovative research in one's area of concentration or demonstrate the application of scientific principles to practical problems. Candidates experience a much greater sense of professional autonomy within this final stage of the program as compared with the more structured nature of the first half. Candidates may also be likely to teach a heavier course load and interact more closely with professors and other colleagues in the field. Finally, the candidate will defend his or her dissertation in front of a panel of faculty members.



You may begin determining the pros and cons of seeking a doctoral degree by asking yourself the following questions:

- Why should I pursue a doctorate?
- When should I pursue a doctorate?
- What current commitments are influencing my decision?
- What specific program(s) would I consider?
- How long will it take to complete the program?
- Am I able to pay for this, and what resources are available?
- What institution(s) would I want to attend?
- Can I find a mentor to help me as I navigate through a doctoral program?

Determine Your Readiness Current Commitments

What commitments are currently impacting your decision to seek a doctorate? It is important to consider the commitments you have to your current job or workplace, to your family, and to other close associates. First, with regard to the workplace, what are the provisions made by your employer that serve to promote professional development? Would you be afforded the ability to stay at your current position while seeking credits toward a doctorate on a part-time basis? Is there another feasible compromise that can be agreed upon between you and your employer that will allow for you to actively move toward your career goals? These are just a few questions that you may want to ask yourself or address with your current supervisor prior to applying to any programs.

Commitments to family and other close associates can also be highly influencing factors to consider when deciding to pursue advanced degrees. Your decision to enter the challenging and time-consuming process of attaining a doctorate does not typically involve you alone. What are your personal goals for life and family? Are you currently in a committed relationship? Do you have children? How will your home life and leisure time be affected by the financial challenges, time, and energy required to focus on your education? Discussing how this decision may impact you and those closest to you will be necessary for the well-being and understanding of all involved parties.

Emphasis of the Program

What is the emphasis of the doctoral program you are considering? How well does the specific focus of the program align with your future aspirations within the realms of academia or industry? Is earning a doctoral degree in your field a feasible—and necessary—next step that is consistent with your long-term career goals? These are very important questions to ask. If you can articulate only vague career goals related to the field you wish to study, or if you view the doctoral degree solely as an extension of previous education that will enable you to buy time prior to entering the workforce, you are probably not ready to seek a doctorate. Specific interest in an area of your field along with a strong commitment to clearly defined career goals, which make the doctorate desirable and/or necessary, are imperative to determining your readiness to become a successful doctoral candidate.

Funding Resources

Funding is an extremely important factor to take into account when deciding whether or not to pursue further education. The availability of loans and other financial aid can serve as a green light—or as a barrier—to realistically seeking an additional graduate degree. In addition, it would be wise to determine, in advance, if funding is available for your doctoral research. Such funding may be available via internal resources (through your academic department or institution) or externally provided through various grants, fellowships, etc.



Photo by Andy Colwell

Community and Support

As a graduate student, the demands of your program can be both exciting and overwhelming at the same time. For most advanced degree-seekers, having—or forming—a community of fellow graduate students and professionals who can relate to the challenges of academic life can create a more collegial graduate experience. Researching the out-of-class experience at institutions you are considering can be helpful in establishing a starting point for finding community with similar interests to yours. Also, you may wish to visit the campus(es) you are researching on days that are not designated as official visitation days. This will enable you to obtain a more accurate sense of the campus culture and/or graduate student life as it exists on any given day.

In addition to establishing a peer community, it will be of great importance to find a mentor within your field or program who can help you to navigate the challenges that may arise as you enter into or progress through your chosen degree program. Finding an individual whose research interests and personality are compatible with yours may take time, but it is certainly possible. You may begin by reviewing faculty biographies on the department's website, or you may choose to meet with a few individuals on a campus visit to help determine who may be willing to work with you in this capacity.



Photo by Patrick Mansell

Curriculum Vitae

Because your resume or curriculum vita (CV) is usually the first and sometimes the only thing an employer will see about you, it is often the most critical item in determining whether or not you will obtain an interview. These essential elements of the job search serve as an advertisement of your skills, knowledge, and relevant experience.

Tips for preparing a resume can be found on page 18.

What Is the Difference between a Resume and a Curriculum Vita?

	Resume	Curriculum Vita
Purpose	Outlines your personal, educational and work related experiences	Comprehensive summary of your educational and professional experience, including publications, presentations, professional activities, honors, and additional information
Length	One- or two-page document	Generally three or more pages in length, depending on your qualifications and level of experience
Focus	Strengths and qualifications for a particular position	Comprehensive biographical statement
Objective Statement Included?	Yes	No
Used in application for these types of positions	Business, non-profit, other non-academic positions	Faculty, research, clinical, or scientific positions

If you are uncertain whether to use a resume or vita, ask yourself "Am I sending this document to other Ph.D.s? Is my Ph.D. required for this position? Is my scholarship relevant for this position?" If the answers to those questions are yes, you are probably going to use a vita. As a general rule of thumb, unless a vita is requested, you should send a resume.

Getting Started

Begin your vita preparation by brainstorming. List everything that you can imagine could be included—both your educational and professional history—being careful not to overlook anything. Then ask yourself what you actually did in each of those activities. Your answers to what you actually did are the sets of skills that you have to offer to an employer. Once you feel you have covered everything, you will decide what to include and what to exclude.

Read through the tips below and then look at the template suggestions in this section for guidance on placement of sections. Then, start with a blank document on the computer—do not use a resume template. Resume templates are often inflexible and do not use formats that are conducive to presenting your information in a logical way. They are especially inappropriate for curriculum vitae.



Best Format or Style?

Ideally your vita should emphasize your strong points while expressing your uniqueness and individuality. There are two basic formats to choose from:

Chronological Format

Present education and work experience in reverse chronological order, describing responsibilities and achievements under each entry. This is the most appropriate format if you have experience directly related to your career goal.

Functional Format

In this format, your experience is explained under major skill headings, while job titles, employers, and dates are listed separately. This format is especially useful when your degree or work experiences are not directly related to your career objective, for example, if you are pursuing employment in a field outside your area of academic study.

With either format, you should present yourself clearly, succinctly, and confidently.

NAME	
Address Phone Number Email	
SUMMARY STATEMENT/OBJECTIVE <i>(Optional)</i> Discusses key strengths	
EDUCATION/DEGREES AWARDED	
The Pennsylvania State University Ph.D. Degree Concentration, Date Dissertation	
Institution, City, State M.A. Degree Major, Date Thesis	
Institution, City, State B.A./B.S. Degree Major, Date	
POSTDOCTORAL TRAINING <i>(if applicable)</i>	
FELLOWSHIPS	
Field of Research, Place, Title	<i>Dates</i>
PROFESSIONAL/TEACHING EXPERIENCE	
TITLE	<i>Dates</i>
Place, City, State Description of responsibilities, leadership roles	
PUBLICATIONS	
Use standard format	
PAPERS PRESENTED	
Use standard bibliographic format for your field, minus the author portion (if co-authoring, supply your co-author's (s') name(s) in parentheses.	
GRANTS AND AWARDS	
PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS	
SKILLS	
Languages Computer	
LICENSURE/CERTIFICATION <i>(if applicable)</i>	
Type of License or Certification	<i>Dates</i>
REFERENCES	

Consistency

If you are inconsistent, the reader may think you are careless or confused. Be consistent in the following ways:

- Don't mix styles in any category. If you put your job title first, followed by the employer name, list all job entries the same way. Likewise, state the name of the senior project author or director for all activities—not just a few. Leave no doubt about any entry.
- Do not use double entries. This means do not list a citation or activity more than once. Some people think these multiple listings of essentially the same activity strengthen their resume or vita. Actually, they weaken it because they create the appearance of loading up and repeating the same information to impress the reader—it usually does the opposite!
- Keep all tabs, margins, timesteps and sizes (except your name, which can be larger), and bullets consistent. Visual impact is affected by these minor details and inconsistency can detract from a positive initial impact.

Heading/Contact Information	<p>Your name is your heading (do not put “Curriculum Vita” on your document as a heading). It should be bold and in larger print than the rest of the resume.</p> <p>Contact information includes your permanent and campus office address, your permanent and office telephone numbers with area codes (remember to use a professional message on your voice mail), your email address, and your web address, if you have one. Remember to check your email often. A vita should not include: sex, age, height, weight, marital status, dependents, race, ethnic background, religion or photographs.</p>
Education:	<p>List degrees in reverse chronological order—most recent first. List the official name of your degree and/or certification that you have obtained, or will obtain, the month and year of your graduation, and your major and minor(s). Keep the information easy to scan—a list is preferred over paragraph form.</p>
Experience:	<p>This section could be labeled a number of things— Experience, Work Experience, Research Experience, etc. Reverse chronological order is what readers expect, but if you have a mixture of experiences, you can break this into two major categories, such as Related Experience and Additional Experience. This allows you to put the most relevant items together and move older, but more relevant items to the beginning.</p> <p>List your job title/position, the name of the organization for whom you worked, the dates of employment, the job title, and an active, descriptive summary of job duties. Give details of your accomplishments and responsibilities rather than a general list of duties. Numbers, such as volume, percentages, and/or dollar amounts, make strong statements and can enhance credibility.</p> <p>Consolidate information when possible; avoid repetition and excessive details in describing experiences. Make the format easy to scan by using bulleted statements, not paragraphs, and start each with a strong action word. Use the Action Word List on page 23 for ideas.</p>
Activities:	<p>List the most relevant activities and offices held first. Include professional, community, graduate level, and occasionally, outstanding college activities. You can add brief explanatory details of the position and your accomplishments, if it is appropriate. As this section can add individuality to your vita, you may want to include unusual or interesting items.</p>
Honors/Awards:	<p>You should include this section only if you have several honors. If you have only one or two honors, you can include them in a combined section with activities or education.</p>
Skills:	<p>You may want to consider a special skills section to highlight skills you have on specific computer hardware or software, foreign languages, or machinery required for performance on the job. You could also include certifications in this category.</p>
References:	<p>References are usually listed as a part of the vita. Three to five references are appropriate. Consider individuals familiar with your academic achievements, research or teaching skills, and/or your work habits. Include the referee’s name, title, organization, mailing address, phone number, and e-mail address. PLEASE NOTE: You should always seek prior approval from individuals you plan to list as references and provide them with a copy of your vita.</p>

Get Feedback from Outside Readers/Critics

A mistake on your resume or vita will leave a poor first impression with the employer. Proofread your resume or vita several times, and then have a friend or trusted professional proofread it again. Several suggestions for selecting proofreaders include:

- A professional person who knows you well enough to spot any significant information you may have left out
- A professional person who does not know you well and will read critically
- A hiring personnel officer you know
- A career services professional

Choose and arrange categories so that the most relevant information is placed where it will catch the reader's eye.

Potential items to include:

- Educational Background
- Grants Received
- Professional Service
- Research Experience
- Publications
- Thesis or Dissertation
- Teaching Experience
- Presentations
- Internships
- Professional Experience
- Fellowships
- Certifications/Licensures
- Research Interests
- Honors and Awards
- Programs and Workshops
- Teaching Interests
- Professional Affiliations
- Creative Works
- Scholarly Works
- Languages
- Foreign Study
- Committees
- Administrative Experience
- Works in Progress

ALEXANDER B. CANDIDATE

Home Address
1234 5th Street
State College, PA 16801
(814) 555-1212 (mobile)

Business Address
111-C Burrowes Bldg
University Park, PA 16802
(814) 555-8635

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

Doctor of Philosophy in Comparative Literature, 20__
The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA
Dissertation: The portrayal of cities in 18th century French novels

Master of Arts in Comparative Literature, 20__
The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA
Thesis: 20th century writers and the industrial revolution

Bachelor of Science in English, 20__
Gettysburg College, Gettysburg, PA

WORK EXPERIENCE

Research Assistant, The Department of Comparative Literature
The Pennsylvania State University 20__ - Present

- Participate in three ongoing research projects. Conduct extensive literature reviews, write analyses, and submit research work for publication.
- Collaborate with History, Women's Studies, and Education Departments.

International Literature Collections Consultant
The Library of Congress, Washington, DC. 20__ -20__

- Co-ordinated the acquisition and archival of 16th - 18th century French literary works.
- Guided the Council of Mayors to information on the establishment of Cities.
- Gained experience using Oracle Database System.

Instructor, Comparative Literature 400 - Literary Critique Theory
The Pennsylvania State University Fall 20__

- Taught 25 students to develop, refine, and apply knowledge of literary critiques to a wide array of different forms of writing.

Orientation Leader
Gettysburg College, Gettysburg, PA Summer 19__

- Greeted new students during their arrival to Gettysburg College. Spoke to new students, family members, and community members about the educational opportunities at Gettysburg College.

Library Student Employee
Gettysburg College, Gettysburg, PA. 19__ - 19__

- Assisted students, faculty, and community members in accessing library materials. Re-shelved books, and updated new library additions.

ALEXANDER B. CANDIDATE

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PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

American Institute of Comparative Literature (AICL)
Society of Excellence in Comparative Literature
International Comparative Literature Association (ICLA)

COMMUNITY SERVICE

America Reads Program, The Pennsylvania State University (20__ - Present)
Mid-State Literacy Council, State College PA (20__ - 20__)
Study Abroad Volunteer, Gettysburg College, Gettysburg, PA 19__ -2001)

FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Fluent in French and Spanish
Conversational in Portuguese

PUBLICATIONS

Candidate, Alexander B., "The mission of our education." Journal of Comparative Literature, Vol. 14, no 3. October 20__, 14-19.

Candidate, Alexander B. and Ferguson, Darryl K., "Writing National Constitutions." Journal of Comparative Literature, Vol 12, no 2. April 20__, 32-39.

PRESENTATIONS

"The Mission of Our Education." Paper presented at The University of Pennsylvania Symposium on Comparative Literature, Philadelphia, PA. February 14, 20__.

"Writing National Constitutions." Paper presented at The National Comparative Literature Convention, Salt Lake City, Utah. June 24, 20__.

"The Value of a Major in Comparative Literature." Presentation offered at Spend a Summer Day, The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA. July 15, 20__.

"Navigating Graduate School Applications". Presentation offered at Career Services, The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA. October 20__

AWARDS AND HONORS

Outstanding Scholarship Award, American Institute of Comparative Literature, 20__
Outstanding Graduate Student Award, The Pennsylvania State University, 20__

CERTIFICATIONS

Class A Teaching Certificate for the State of Pennsylvania - 19__



Finding a Teaching Position in Academe

Before you begin an academic job search, it is important to think about your interests, professional goals, skills, and values. What are your areas of strength? At what level do you want to teach—undergraduate or graduate, a community college or a 4-year college, research or teaching focus? Where do you want to teach—large or small, urban or more rural, public or private? Is tenure a goal? And so on. These are just a few of the questions you should be able to answer before you send out your first application. Not only will you be able to conduct a more directed, successful job search, you will be in a better position to answer these questions in an interview situation and use the answers to these questions as criteria for evaluating job offers.

Application Materials

Your application will typically consist of your curriculum vita, a cover letter, and reference letters. Candidates under serious consideration may also be asked for writing samples, lesson plans, student evaluations, or even teaching videos. You do not send these materials initially, unless your discipline has specific expectations for you to do so.

Curriculum Vita

One of the most critical components of your application packet is your curriculum vita (CV). It is often the piece most readers read first when assessing applications. Your training and experience must favorably impress readers. Therefore it is imperative that your CV be an accurate, clear, and concise, yet, comprehensive representation of your qualifications and interests. Give serious consideration to the format as well as the content, as you want to enable the reader to find this critical information quickly and easily. Please refer to page 64 to learn about the contents and formatting of Curriculum Vitae.

Credentials/Dossier

Another supporting component of your search is the credential file, also known as a dossier. The dossier generally includes letters of recommendation, and transcript(s), but it may also include a writing sample, certificates of achievement, or any other relevant, supporting materials.

Career Services can help you organize your credentials through the eCredentials service, accessed via Nittany Lion Career Network. Please refer to page 41 to learn more.

Letters of Recommendation

Consider those who are most familiar with your academic background, work experiences and career interests as the best choices for writers of letters of recommendation. They may be faculty and/or administrators at your current institution or other employers from past positions. Be sure to extend your pool of letter writers beyond your committee members. Select those who can write about you in the most specific terms. For example, it would be better to have a junior faculty member write specifics as opposed to a senior faculty member who doesn't know you well and would write more generally. Letters that are most informative and helpful are those who know different aspects of your work and who are willing to support your candidacy enthusiastically and knowledgeably.

It is to your advantage to spend some time discussing your specific career interests and goals with these individuals prior to their writing your letters. This will enable them to address your qualifications more specifically as they relate to the types of positions for which you will be applying.

Cover Letters

The letter to accompany your curriculum vita should not merely summarize your vita; it should synthesize it, expand upon it, and explain connections, as well as talk about the skills and insights you gained from your experiences. Essentially search committees are looking to see why you are interested in that opportunity, and what you can bring to the opportunity beyond all the other applicants with similar experiences. A word of caution, though: a letter that is longer than two pages tends to be considered long-winded and is frowned upon. Most committees prefer one-page letters.

Please refer to page 26 to learn about the contents and formatting of cover letters.

Follow Through

The importance of adequate follow-through cannot be overstated. Some schools have a system where they will send you a checklist of the materials received so you can check on the status of what is missing. If they do not, it is appropriate and recommended that you call the institution to check on the receipt of your application materials. It is also appropriate to ask about the time frame, if not already provided.

Reviewing Job Listings

Advertisements for potential job openings may be found in professional associations' publications, journals, periodicals, or websites; on departmental bulletin boards; at conferences; Career Services; or through word of mouth via faculty and peers/alumni. Remember that job announcements are simply that—a way for the specific institution to make candidates aware of a particular opening. They do not generally reflect the full scope of specific interests of the search committee or department, nor do they tell you all you need to know about the department or institution.

You may need to dig a bit deeper before you begin applying. If the announcements are not clear in their terminology (e.g., fixed-term vs. adjunct, indefinite tenure vs. tenure track), clarify the language by reviewing their web pages or contacting the institution. What does it say about the specialization sought? Are they strictly looking for one specialization or does the ad indicate that a variety of combinations of specialties and subspecialties will be considered? What you find in the job announcement and in your investigation into the opportunity will not only help you decide if it is an appropriate job for you, it will direct the content and focus of your application materials.

Make note of the specific information provided about application procedures and deadlines, materials to submit, etc. Read all of this information carefully. Be sure to follow application procedures exactly. An oversight could result in your application being discarded.

Select Job Posting Sites for Academic Job Openings:

The Chronicle of Higher Education - chronicle.com/jobs

Higher Education Recruitment Consortium - www.njepadeherc.org

Academic 360 – www.academic360.com

Academic Employment Network - www.academploy.com

Academic Jobs Today - www.academicjobstoday.com

Academic Keys - academickeys.com

Higher Ed Jobs - www.higheredjobs.com

University Council for Educational Administration - www.ucea.org

PhDs.org - www.phds.org

National Postdoctoral Association - www.nationalpostdoc.org



Unadvertised Openings

Another strategy to utilize is networking—talking with faculty, department heads, alumni and fellow classmates within your field. Networking is a relatively time-consuming process but certainly a beneficial one. The more visible you make yourself, the more potential employers will recognize you, your abilities and interests. This is a proactive strategy that requires planning and follow-through. However, it will enable you to uncover opportunities prior to publication or that may otherwise never be published. It also provides you with the opportunity to get a feel for how the interview process works. In fact, often times referrals to other professionals result from this contact. With persistence, patience, and adequate follow-through, these strategies will undoubtedly bring positive results.

1. **Faculty:** As in your graduate career, faculty may be able to give you some direction in your post-graduate studies career. Through their own professional networks of colleagues, they often become aware of opportunities before they are published.
2. **Peers/Alumni:** Another method for building your network is to identify recent alumni from Penn State or your undergraduate college or university within your discipline. Set up informational interviews with them. More often than not, alumni are willing and eager to share with you their experiences and expertise.
3. **Conferences/Conventions:** Attending professional association conferences is a great way to begin to network effectively. Depending on the size and scope of the association, you will have the chance to talk with professionals from all over the country and perhaps abroad. As the opportunity arises, don't be afraid to initiate conversations in which you could discuss your career and research interests, your career goals, along with their careers and current work. Gather as much information as you can about their institutions, positions, and departments.

Questions that search committee members most often report having in mind as they peruse vitae:

- Does the candidate have the Ph.D. in hand? If not, how close is she/he?
- What is his/her area of specialization?
- How will this candidate's research interests enrich my own research, or lessen the teaching load of faculty in this institution?
- Does this candidate have a fair chance of producing tenurable work, so we don't have to go through the search process again, soon?
- Has this person taught students like ours before, either under supervision or, better yet, as the sole instructor/creator of the course?
- How can this candidate lessen my own workload?
- Do I know of anyone she/he has worked with? Has she/he had good mentoring? What kinds of people are willing to support this applicant's work record?

From Forno, Dawn M., & Reed, Cheryl (1999). *Job Search in Academe: Strategic Rhetoric for Faculty Job Candidates*. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing, LLC.

Finding a Post-Doc

Short for “postdoctoral fellow,” a post-doc is a research appointment of a fixed length of time for those holding a doctorate. It provides Ph.D.s with the opportunity to deepen their research in an area of expertise or acquire new areas of research expertise prior to pursuing an academic career or a career in industry. They often feature a lighter, if any, teaching load than faculty positions, providing young scholars more time to conduct more in-depth research and to publish.

Post-docs are generally sponsored by an academic institution, research center, government agency, or private industry. The post-doc has been a long-standing feature of academic careers in the hard sciences, and in many cases is considered a must. Although less common, post-doctoral positions do exist in the humanities and social sciences.

Finding a post-doc is similar to the job search for other academic positions. The key for post-docs is to start early, as some post-doc positions in top locations can be filled 1½-2 years in advance. Once you have any sense of when you might be completing your degree, you should be on the lookout. If you have the appropriate qualifications, a preceptor may be willing to hold a spot for you until you finish your degree.

Questions to Ask When Deciding and Evaluating Options

- Do you want to teach at a major research university or work in industry, and what kind of post-doc will best prepare you for that career goal?
- Do you want to dig deeper into your current area of research or would you like to become familiar with a slightly different area of research?
- What will be the Principle Investigator’s involvement with the lab? It is possible you will have very little interaction as high profile advisors are not necessarily very accessible.
- What is the reputation of the lab or research organization where the position is available, and where does the funding for the position come from? Will you be responsible for securing the funding for the position?
- How much freedom will the position give you to pursue your research interests?
- What is the feasibility of finishing the research, and finishing the research with publishable results, within the terms of the post-doc appointment?

Remember, you will need to prepare for future job-hunting once you start your postdoctoral training. You should begin to determine what types of jobs are out there; what type of job you want; and what skills you need to start developing now, to enhance your chances of landing this job in the future.

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