

Explore your future.



CAREER CENTER

Illinois State University

STUDENT CAREER RESOURCE

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Opportunities and Services Offered by the **Career Center**

- One-on-one career advisement counseling
- Job fairs and career events
- eRecruiting—online job search tool
- On-campus interviews
- Internship and job search assistance
- SIGI 3—online skills and interests self-assessment inventory
- Resume/cover letter critiques
- Mock interviews

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

September

Career Night Live!
Fall Job and Internship Fair

October

Nursing and Health Professions Job Fair

November

Fall Educators' Job Fair

February

Career Night Live!
Spring Internship Fair
Spring Job Fair
Mid-America Educators' Job Fair

March

Professional Etiquette Dinner

For more dates, times, and locations visit
www.CareerCenter.ilstu.edu

CULTURAL CAREER NETWORK PROGRAM

To educate students and provide networking opportunities

CCNP serves Illinois State students and alums. A particular focus is given to students of diverse backgrounds.

Ethnicity
Nontraditional
Disabilities
International
Culture
Sexual orientation
Gender
Unique



How to Choose a Major

THE VIEW INWARD

First, think about what YOU want. This is your choice, and it will initially help determine YOUR path in life. Of course, making the “major” decision can be complicated by having only a few choices in shades of gray that stand out as attractive options, or also if you have many interests and see many possibilities.

Consider that some students...

- Pick a major because they want to use it to prepare for a specific job, career, or industry
- Pick a job, career, or industry, then choose the major that will best meet their career goals
- Pick a major because they enjoy it, never intending to directly “use” it in a future career—many jobs are open to students with any major, and any major can be a springboard to graduate or professional school

Tips

- Did you begin college with a major, job, or career in mind? What are your skills, abilities (“gifts”), strengths, interests, and values related to work (yes, including income, but think of other factors that motivate you)? Even the most “undecided” students have some ideas from parents/family, teachers, friends, etc. What does this evidence seem to suggest? Has this feedback been helpful?
- Review your educational background. What have you liked about school? What subjects haven’t you liked? What do you excel in? What were your previous summer and part-time jobs? In the broadest sense, do you want to work with people (advising, persuading, or organizing), data (and related information or systems), things (equipment, tools, even other species), or ideas (imagining, writing, promoting), and why?
- Would you prefer to view work as an extension of play or hobbies, or do you see yourself pursuing a mainline “profession”? Do you have a sense—even a vision—of what you would really like to accomplish?
- How important are salary (and lifestyle considerations), benefits, job stability, teamwork vs. autonomy, geographic location, time off, and related issues? Evaluate your values, strengths, and aptitudes by utilizing SIGI 3, a self-assessment (interests and skills) inventory available at www.CareerCenter.ilstu.edu.

LOOKING OUTWARD

You are encouraged to visit www.findyourmajor.ilstu.edu for information about finding a major and university policies that pertain to the major selection process. Learn more about what you can do with your major at www.CareerCenter.ilstu.edu or other comparable career-related sites such as CareerOverview.com and Wetfeet.com.

Take a variety of classes

As a part of your exploration, try coursework in unfamiliar areas; general education classes will provide excellent opportunities for you to experience a variety of academic options.

Learn about jobs and career fields in which you are interested, or are at least curious about

What are typical job titles and the skills required to perform them? What are the usual entry-level jobs in specific career fields? What are typical and atypical career tracks? What are the typical demands and the rewards of this type of work? The Occupational Outlook Handbook (a link on the Career Center Web site) is a reliable and comprehensive source of such information.

SUGGESTIONS AS YOU BROADEN

YOUR EXPLORATION

- Network with professors/advisors, professionals (including Illinois State University senior professionals), friends and relatives, plus Alumni Relations to better research careers and majors.
- Browse the University course catalog! Read up on all the course offerings, at least in the college of greatest interest to you. Check the minor or area of concentration that might be the best complement to the major(s) you are considering. Find out all the requirements (upper-level, as well as 100- and 200-level), including hours needed to graduate.
- Talk with students in the major(s) that interests you. Their perspectives may help you determine if you want to pursue that major.
- Join pre-professional organizations.
- Attend Illinois State’s numerous career fairs and talk with a variety of employer recruiters from a variety of employers.
- Find out the key sets of skills required in the jobs/fields that most interest you.
- Try out different summer and part-time jobs to determine if you like the atmosphere, a specific organization, even the particular tasks that the job demands. Internships provide the same kinds of beneficial “insider knowledge.”
- Make an appointment with a professional in the Career Center to discuss options.
- Utilize the wide variety of resources, academic advisors (in University College Academic Advisement and academic departments), counselors (Student Counseling Services), and assistance (University Center for Learning Assistance) available across campus.
- Narrow your focus by examining your strongest preferences and researching the job options that seem like the best fit for you.
- Make your best assessment of your dream job—is it realistically attainable with your very best efforts, applying yourself in the right major? If so, then go for it!

By involving yourself in these proactive moves, you will be better able to choose a major that is a good, fulfilling fit for you. Life isn’t fully “plannable”—it requires occasional tinkering, adjusting, or, sometimes, wholesale changes. But these recommendations may offer you a path to chart a course forward!

Career Planning

A four-year—sometimes more!—process

FIRST-YEAR/TRANSFERS

(0–30 credit hours)

Start on the right foot

Develop/refine time-management skills. Understand your “preferred learning style.” Attend seminars presented by the University Center for Learning Assistance (UCLA).

Set academic goals—grades are important

Ask for help EARLY if you need it. Tutors are available through academic departments and UCLA. Use your professors’ office hours to ask questions or communicate with them via e-mail.

Take the System of Interactive Guidance and Information (SIGI 3) Assessment Inventory

SIGI 3 is a series of online interest, values, and abilities assessments that assists students in exploring occupations and careers. It also provides a wealth of detailed information about a wide variety of careers. SIGI 3 may be helpful for any student trying to better define what to do with his or her major. At a more basic level, it certainly could be useful for any student trying to determine what his or her major should be! SIGI 3 is available at www.CareerCenter.ilstu.edu 24 hours a day. You are encouraged to review results with a career counselor.

Browse “What Can I Do With This Major?”

Discover the variety of career options available. View video clips of various career fields/industries on the Career Center Web site at www.CareerCenter.ilstu.edu.

Start researching careers/majors to focus your academic work

Employers prefer candidates who are able to articulate short-term goals and, preferably, longer-term goals. This is a process that deserves a lot of thought and consideration.

Suggestions: Attend department events and listen to speakers, read professional journals, talk to faculty, take advantage of field trips/tours of the industry, and attend career fairs. You can also find resources at www.CareerCenter.ilstu.edu.

Get involved

Employers are more interested in job candidates who have developed effective interpersonal and communication skills.

Suggestions: Check out professional organizations, community service, student government, residence hall government, social organizations, etc.

Start your professional portfolio

Keep track of all your accomplishments inside and outside the classroom.

Suggestions: Save any certificates, commendation letters, and special academic projects that document your involvement. Save evidence of other important projects.

SECOND-YEAR/TRANSFERS

(31–60 credit hours)

Meet early in the fall with your academic advisor

Plan your schedule and discuss the best options for your choice of major. Keep in mind the new university “75-hour” policy.

Join a professional organization

Start to develop a network of faculty and friends. Continue to strengthen interpersonal skills. Begin to consider references when you graduate.

Explore careers

Take advantage of internship or externship programs. Conduct informational interviews with professionals to help you focus on a specific career, or types of jobs within the field.

Learn how to build an effective resume

Contact or visit the Career Center and find out how to put your resume on eRecruiting.com.

Suggestions: Use your professional portfolio as a reference and keep updating it.

THIRD-YEAR/TRANSFERS

(61–90 credit hours)

Meet with your academic advisor

Track your academic progress.

Develop your leadership skills

Increase your involvement.

Suggestions: Run for a position in your student organization, chair a committee, organize an event, or supervise a project, etc.

Continue to network

Seek contact with peers, faculty, and professionals in your field.

Suggestions: Attend career fairs and the Professional Etiquette Dinner. Professional organizations often have “mixing” socials with employer representatives.

Look for internships or related work experience

Most departments offer internship opportunities. Each program has an internship and/or clinical or field experience coordinator for you to talk with regarding GPA requirements, course credit, and more. Contact the Career Center for additional internship information at (309) 438-2200 and check eRecruiting.com for available internship opportunities!

Suggestions: Employers prefer students who graduate with some related experience. Find an internship related to your field of interest—practice your networking skills, develop a professional resume, and bring several copies to the internship and job fairs. Proactively interact with the employer representatives at these fairs.

Continued on page 4

Learn how to conduct a well-planned job search

Resources are available in the Career Center, located in 185 Student Services Building, or at www.CareerCenter.ilstu.edu. Become familiar with additional Web sites that will assist your job search readiness and/or provide listings in the field(s) you wish to pursue. Attend a Career Night Live! program for tips from employers and from Career Center staff—they are scheduled early in each semester.

Ask for a FREE Academic Progress Summary

These summaries, available for free through the iCampus portal or at the Student Service and Referral Center (SSRC) in Moulton Hall, will help you determine what requirements you still must complete in order to graduate. Discuss your academic progress summary with your academic advisor.

FOURTH-YEAR/TRANSFERS

(91–120 credit hours)

Register or update your information with the Career Center's eRecruiting.com

Make sure your resume is online at eRecruiting.com. If you want to participate in campus interviews, you must be registered!

Review your graduation plan with your academic advisor

Polish your job-search skills

Keep your resume updated, practice your interviewing skills, strengthen your network of job-search contacts, and ask for letters of recommendation! Attend a refresher Career Night Live! program. Mock interviews can be scheduled at the Career Center. Additionally, check eRecruiting.com for job postings and on-campus interview opportunities.

Attend job and internship fairs and/or other fairs, depending on your major and job objectives

Dress professionally and bring several copies of your resume.

File your application for graduation

You can pick up an application for graduation at the Student Service and Referral Center (SSRC) in Moulton Hall. You must pay a \$25 fee at Student Accounts when you submit the form, or you may drop the form and payment in the Student Accounts dropbox at the SSRC.

Four-year plan adapted from Illinois State University College of Business and Career Center, "Building Students' Futures," Business Career Planning: A Four-Year Process, 2004–2005.

SIGI 3

System Interactive Guidance Information (SIGI 3) integrates self-assessment with in-depth and up-to-date career information that is easy to use and provides you with a realistic view of the best educational and career options for future success.

- Create a career plan that is right for you!
- Self-directed, flexible, and easy-to-use
- Saves your work in SIGI 3 for your future use
- Saves you money, time, and energy
- Free, accessible 24/7 from any PC on or off campus that is connected to the Internet

Section I. Starting: Overview of SIGI 3

- Includes Introduction, My SIGI Plan, and Quick Reference
- Explains how to navigate through the system
- Provides a suggested plan based on your specific needs
- Allows you to find answers to questions in the quick reference area

Section II. Assessment: What do I want?

- Includes Values, Interests, and Activities
- Looks at work-related values and interests and decides what is important to you
- Examines various activities and allows you to decide what you like and what you can do well

Section III. Occupational information: What occupations might I like?

- Includes Search by Title, Major, Factor, and Compare Occupations
- Creates a personalized list of occupations based on values, interests, skills, and level of education
- Searches careers by title, major, or matching factors
- Compares just two occupations, or up to eight occupations based on selected factors or your assessment results

Section IV. Analysis: Can I do what is required?

- Includes Deciding, Preparing, and Skills Check
- Describes in detail the education or training typically required for any of the occupations and the work tasks you will need to know how to perform

- Highlights skills required to perform important tasks in any occupation and assesses whether or not you have those skills
- Offers information and advice on many practical concerns, like financing education, managing time, finding daycare facilities, and getting credit for learning through experience

Section V. Getting there: How do I put my plan in action?

- Includes Coping and Next Steps
- Directs you in planning an immediate course of action by establishing short-range goals and the steps to achieve those goals
- Provides a sample resume

CONNECT TO SIGI 3

- Go to www.CareerCenter.ilstu.edu
- Click on SIGI 3
- Select Self-Assessment from the drop-down menu
- Click on ISU Student
- Enter your ULID and password
- Create a new SIGI login or enter your existing SIGI login
- Follow-up: Print your results after each section and discuss your profile with a career counselor at the Career Center

eRecruiting Student Quick Start Guide

If you do not find the answer to your question(s) in the following information, contact the Career Center or download the more detailed documentation in the Help section of the eRecruiting site.

Update your profile

- Log into your eRecruiting account
- Select View/Edit Profile Data under the Profile tab on the navigation bar
- Select the desired view: Personal Info, Academic Info, Career Preferences, Continued Academics, or Administration
- Click the Edit link at the top of the section you wish to edit
- Update your profile information
- Click Save

Upload your documents

- Log into your eRecruiting account
- Select Upload a Document under the Documents tab on the navigation bar
- Choose the document type on the Upload a Document page and click Next
- Click Browse to select your document
- Choose the correct document and click Open
- Click Upload

Publishing a resume to a resume book

- Log into your eRecruiting account
- Select Publish a Resume under the Documents tab on the navigation bar
- View the Resume Books in the Additional Resume Books section
- Choose your Resume from the Publish Resume drop-down on the coordinating Resume Book entry
- Click Save

Searching for jobs, internships, and co-ops

- Log into your eRecruiting account
- Select Job Search under the Jobs & Internships tab on the navigation bar
- Use the Basic Search to search by Keywords, Job Function, and/or Location, or select one of the other searches in the More Searches section
- After selecting your job search criteria, click Search
- Use the yellow toolbar to further refine your search results
- Click on the Job Titles to view the details of the jobs
- For other quick, easy job searches, use the 1-Click Searches on the Job Search page

Searching for employers

- Log into your eRecruiting account
- Select Employers Search under the Employers tab on the navigation bar
- Search alphabetically by selecting the first letter of the employer name

- Search for a specific employer by typing the name of employer in the Employer Name field
- Search for an employer by industry by selecting one industry or multiple industries in the Industry field
- Click Search
- Click on the Employer name to view the employer profile

Creating and using search agents

- Log into your eRecruiting account
- Select Job Search under the Jobs & Internships tab on the navigation bar
- Use the Basic Search to search by Keyword, Job Function and/or Location, or use one of the other searches in the More Searches section.
- After selecting your job search criteria, click Search
- In the More Search Options box, select to Save Your Search
- Name the search in the Saved Search Name field
- Choose whether to receive e-mail notifications of job matches
- Select the job source from the Show Me Jobs... section
- Click Save

Applying for a job

- Log into your eRecruiting account
- Search for jobs (See Searching for Jobs section in column at left)
- Select a Job Title from Search Results page to open the Job Details
- Locate How to Apply section at the bottom of the Job Details page
- Click Apply
- Select a Resume, Cover Letter, or Other Document that meets the requirements
- Click Submit

Signing up for an interview

- Log into your eRecruiting account
- Select Your Active Applications under the Applications tab on the navigation bar
- The status of your active applications is displayed in the Employer Decision column
- Once an employer has accepted your application and the interview sign-up date has arrived, you may sign up for an interview slot
- Click on Details...
- On the Application Details page, under Employer Decision, click on Sign Up for Interview
- On the Interview Sign Up page, find the schedule date you would like to sign up for and select the Time Radio Button associated with the time slot you desire
- Click Save and your slot will be reserved

Creating a favorite jobs folder

- Log into your eRecruiting account
- Search for jobs (see Searching for Jobs section in column at left)
- The Search Results page displays all relevant positions

- Select the checkbox to the left of the jobs you would like to save to a folder
- Locate the Save Jobs As Favorites drop-down box in the lower left-hand corner of the results page
- Choose Create A New Folder from the drop-down box or select an existing folder
- Click Go
- Enter a name for the new folder
- Click Save

Searching for a Career Center or employer event

- Log into your eRecruiting account
- To browse all events, select Career Center Calendar under the Calendar tab on the navigation bar

- To find events on a specific day, use the Monthly Overview and click on the desired numeric day link
- To search for a specific event by event type or employer name, select Calendar Search under the Calendar tab on the navigation bar
- Search using the By Event Type drop-down box to search for a specific type of event
- Search by Employer Name to search for events hosted by a specific employer
- From any calendar search results, click on the Event Name for more event details

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How do I sign up for this system

If you are a student at Illinois State University you have automatically been subscribed a username and password for the eRecruiting system.

Username: Your ulid with @ilstu
Example: jrander@ilstu

Password: Date of Birth (YYMMDD)
Example: June 6, 1980 = 800606

If you experience complications, it is possible an administrator in the Career Center may need to reset your password. Contact the Career Center at 438-2200 or CareerCenter@IllinoisState.edu

I can't get past the 'Choose your school' or 'Login' screen:

This is probably related to your Web browser settings. Please make sure your browser's "cookies" are set to enabled. The "cookie" settings can be found under the preferences section of the Web browser.

How do I upload a document to the system?

Please make sure you have a valid Microsoft Word document in *.doc or *.rtf formats, or an Adobe PDF document. You can upload documents (resumes, cover letters, or writing samples) to your account under the "Documents" section. There is no limit to the number of documents you can upload, and the employer does not see the filename, just the type of document (i.e. resume, cover letter, etc.).

I uploaded a document, but the formatting was altered during the PDF conversion. Why?

When creating Microsoft Word documents that will be uploaded to eRecruiting, use the following guidelines:

- Do not use the space bar to achieve indented formatting. Instead, use tab stops and paragraph indents.
- When sentences span lines, use hanging indents or automatic bullets/numbers to align them.
- When saving documents, do not use special characters in the document name (ex: */&%[]).
- Make sure your margin settings are at least .3 on each side and .5 on the top and bottom.

- Try to avoid using special text boxes, customized borders, or multiple columns.
- Do not upload password-protected documents.
- Do not upload documents that use merge fields.
- Once you have uploaded a document, it's a good idea to display and print the document to ensure the formatting appears exactly as you intended. This is how prospective employers and career administrators will see the document.

Why can't I view online documents?

If you cannot view online documents, you may need to install Adobe Acrobat Reader.

If you have any questions or problems regarding the setup and configuration of Acrobat Reader, refer to www.adobe.com.

How do I change my interview time slot?

You can change your interview time slot using the following procedure:

1. Click the "applications" button on the main navigation bar.
2. Select "your active applications".
3. Locate the interview for which you want to change your time slot; click "Details"
4. Click "Choose a different interview slot".
5. Select an available time slot on the Interview Schedule page displayed.
6. Click the Save button.

Why can't I apply for a particular job?

You cannot submit an application for certain jobs because:

- The current date does not fall within the starting and ending dates when applications may be submitted.
- You do not meet the employer's qualifications for the position.
- The job is restricted to applicants who meet certain criteria (major, skills, etc.).

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I was accepted for an interview, but I cannot select a time slot. Why?

You may only sign up for an interview between the specified starting and ending interview sign-up dates.

I submitted the wrong document(s) with my application. How can I change them?

You may change your application documents using the following procedures:

1. Click the “applications” button on the main navigation bar.
2. Select “Your active applications”.
3. Locate the application to which you submitted the wrong documents; click “Details”.
4. Click the corresponding “Withdraw this Application” hyperlink.
5. Re-apply for the position using the correct documents.

Who should I contact for eRecruiting Assistance?

Career Center staff members are available to answer your questions about the system during business hours, 8–4:30, Monday through Friday, including the summer. You may reach us by calling (309) 438-2200. In addition, you may contact us through e-mail at CareerCenter@IllinoisState.edu anytime. (Response time averages about 24 hours)

TIPS FOR UPLOADING DOCUMENTS TO eRECRUITING

The success of uploading your document in the eRecruiting system begins with the document you create in Microsoft Word.

We require uploading a Microsoft Word document, so the document can convert properly into both PDF and HTML versions to allow for viewing by all employers.

Here are just a few guidelines to make that process go smoothly.

- Use Microsoft Word Version 5.0 (or higher) or save to Rich Text Format for best results.
- Use only original Microsoft Word files. If your document has been cut and pasted into MS Word from Claris or WordPerfect, you will have a problem uploading. Use Microsoft Word Version 5.0 or higher for best results.
- Documents typically uploaded are resume, cover letter, and writing sample.
- We do not encourage uploading transcripts because they are more complex documents that can cause problems when uploading. If it is necessary to upload a transcript, you may need to copy and paste into Notepad and then copy back into a new Word document to strip the document of any troublesome coding. Save the document under a new name and try to upload again. Also, remove any Web links that may be listed on your transcript. Make sure you are uploading your transcript as type “Other Documents”, rather than “Resume” or “Cover Letters”.
- Your resume should be one page unless you are a graduate student with a CV or an alumnus with accumulated work experience.
- Create a document of maximum file size 500KB (512,000 bytes). As a benchmark, a 500KB document is approximately 20-22 pages long, using 12-point font and double-spacing. To check the file size of your document, open your document in Microsoft Word, click File Properties to display the Properties box, and then click the General tab. Check the size of the document to ensure that it is under 500KB.

- Use a common font, not one with an unusual typeface. Some examples of common fonts are Times New Roman or Arial.
- A minimum of 12 point font is preferred. Anything below 12 point is difficult to read. Sometimes font size can create problems. If you get an error when uploading, you might want to try to change your whole document to 10, 11, or 12 point to see what looks best and works successfully.
- The upload process will process bullets, bold face, underscore and italics. If you get dollar signs in place of bullets, copy and paste your document into Notepad and then back into a new Word document and save again. This will strip the document of any coding that may be causing uploading errors.
- Indents should be preset. Do not use the spacebar or multiple tabs for spacing.
- Do not use password protected files, macros, frames, or tables. Also, be sure your document isn’t set to track changes under the Tools menu. This will cause an error when uploading.
- Do not use headers or footers.
- Do not use pagination (adding page numbers).
- Do not set excessive page breaks. Do USE your “enter” key to create a more natural break for formatting and to avoid a page break leaving a hanging word or sentence on the next page.
- Do not force your margins. A minimum margin of one-half or three-quarters of an inch is recommended.
- If you continue to receive an error or have trouble uploading successfully, copy your document and paste into a new Word document. Save the document with a new name and try uploading again. This strips the document of any unnecessary coding or text that may cause problems when uploading.

Preparing for Career Events

Research employers

Learn about the employers that will be attending each event in advance. The list of registered employers will be posted on the Career Center Web site.

- Do your research; visit employer Web sites
- Develop a prioritized list so your visit to the fair will have focus

Prepare yourself for the event(s)

- Consult with a career counselor in the Career Center for a resume review and interview preparation (general resume critique sessions and mock interviews are offered each semester).
- Review your resume ahead of time and be able to highlight your experience, skills, and qualifications with employers; use a positive approach in preparing to “make your case” for the type of job or internship you are seeking
- Prepare a “30-second commercial” (see page 10) of your background, achievements, and career interests
- Bring plenty of resumes copied on good resume paper

Maximize your effectiveness

- Dress the part (first impressions do count!); act like you want to get the job
- Plan to arrive early; inevitably some employers do leave before the fair closes
- Don’t forget to smile as you meet the employer representatives and do remember your manners
- Gear up to approach the employers with confidence and reasonable assertiveness

Show you have done your research

- Have relevant questions for each recruiter reflecting your research and knowledge; make sure to also show your interest
- Try to establish the match between you and the position you are seeking
- If time permits, consider talking with additional employers with whom you may not be as familiar, in order to determine if you could add to your list of possible job opportunities

Follow-up steps

- Ask the representative what the next steps will be, and what you can do in following up this contact, particularly in regard to any online application procedures
- Ask for business cards from the recruiters, shake their hand, and sincerely thank them for their time
- Write key thoughts on the back of their business cards (when you are alone) for use in writing follow-up letters
- Do send thank-you letters (or e-mails) within two or three days to those recruiters with whom you discussed positions of interest
- In each letter/message, remind the employer that you met them at the Illinois State University career event, and reiterate your interest
- Include a copy of your resume and any other appropriate documentation they may have requested

Developing a 30-Second Commercial for Career Fairs

Promoting oneself in an appropriate way is a crucial skill needed to successfully make the transition from college to career! Practice by developing a 30-second commercial for yourself.

- Provides a starting point for more in-depth conversation at job fairs
- Helps you focus; gives you more confidence
- Begins to answer the ultimate question: “Why should we hire you?”

OUTLINE

5 seconds

Greeting: “Hello, my name is ____.”

5 seconds

Educational background: “I’m majoring in (or I’m graduating in May with a degree in) _____,” perhaps including an area of concentration or your minor.

5–10 seconds

Description of interest: “I am especially interested in _____ opportunity in your company/organization because of my experience _____,” which can include mention of related internship, summer job, a class research project, etc.

5–10 seconds

Strengths and accomplishments related to your job target.

5–10 seconds

Summary or goal statement: Reasons you would be a good fit for position, organization, etc. This is a good time to show you have done some research on the organization—deeper than just the home page.

SAMPLE 1

“I am studying (major), with a minor (or concentration) in _____. These areas have prepared me for (particular entry-level job) in a company/organization such as yours.”

“I believe my strong GPA shows I’m willing to work hard and that I was successfully able to juggle working up to 20 hours per week on campus while taking a full course load.”

“Because of my interest and experience in this field (note special academic project or even a summer internship already completed), I think I will be a very good fit for (type of job).”

“Could we talk a bit about entry-level opportunities in (geographic preference—e.g., mid-state/Chicagoland/Quad Cities, etc.)?”

SAMPLE 2

“I would like to explore management opportunities with your company. While my major in _____ is not directly related, I do have two specific experiences that convince me a _____ program in _____ is my best career target.”

“My part-time (or summer) jobs at _____ and _____, noted on my resume, have given me a great foundation in (career target). At (first job), I started as _____, and then was promoted to _____, often serving as the trainer of new staff. At (second job) I had more experience in _____, and found I was consistently able to (meet goals).”

“I have taken electives in _____ and _____, which have provided a good background in (career target).”

“Based upon your Web site’s description of what is required of entry-level candidates, I am confident I can contribute to the future growth of the company.”

ADDITIONAL DETAILS

Whatever highlights/strengths you select, use your own words. The objective is to get your message across naturally, without sounding over-rehearsed.

While it is important to outline and practice your commercial in advance of job fairs, it may not end up being delivered as a monologue with no interruptions! The employer may want to take the lead in asking questions about your background or what they see on your resume. The commercial can help in getting across your major points as the conversation begins to develop, but go with the direction the recruiter wishes to establish.

A successful 30-second commercial will focus on what you have to offer the organization(s). It is not about what they can do for you in terms of a paycheck, a great professional opportunity, the prospect of getting your graduate degree paid for by the company, or other great benefits. Those things are the outcome of, or the rewards for, what candidates have in the way of talents, training, motivation, and experience—plus being able to articulate a connection between what you have to offer and what they have to gain!

To make an appointment with a career counselor who specializes in your major or field of interest, call (309) 438-2200 or e-mail CareerCenter@IllinoisState.edu.

Constructing an Effective Resume

This is a vital tool in an effective job search, providing important details of your qualifications, background, and what you can offer an employer, all in a concise outline.

Always present significant facts and selected experiences (chosen with the employer and your objective in mind) in a format that is easy to read and visually pleasing. Resumes are generally organized by categories, with the most important ones listed first. Here are some you should consider.

Identification

Indicate your name, address (present and/or permanent), phone number(s), and e-mail. Be wary of tiny template fonts for this important contact information, but don't be shy about posting your name in a larger font (and in bold) than the rest of the text!

Objective

Optional, but employers generally expect to see one from most candidates. State the position you are seeking (or the industry/field) and/or state the skills you want to utilize. Individuals with a variety of possible career options may choose to write several versions of their resume, each slanted towards different job targets or markets. Non-specific or fuzzy objectives are best left on the "cutting-room floor."

Education

Students and new/recent graduates usually place this section next. List the institutions attended, location (city/state), and date (month/year) of graduation (most recent first), or dates of attendance if no degree earned. Omit colleges where you only earned a few credits; many juniors/most seniors will omit high school information, unless it's truly special. Include degree received (or to be received), major(s), and areas of concentration/minors. If your GPA (cumulative or major) is an asset, include it. Graduate students should briefly describe areas of specialization and thesis topic; other research and related publications and presentations are listed in a separate section.

Academic honors

Includes special scholarships, dean's list, honor societies, and awards. An award's name may be less important than its purpose or, perhaps, how selective its criteria.

Relevant coursework

An optional category, which could help expand upon your academic breadth or depth. List no more than six to eight in order of importance; columns are preferable to "paragraph" style. Course numbers usually are not helpful to recruiters. If you simply list courses every other student in your major typically takes, then this section will probably have less value.

Descriptions of classes or projects

These may be listed alone or in addition to course titles.

Senior seminar in (your major)

Studied the interconnections between ___ and ___, including a comparison of ___, ___, and related ___.

Special project in (your field)

Laboratory research protocols, plus analysis of human factor ___ and ___ –make sure your wording choices are effective!

Internship

Demonstrates you have performed the work for which you are now applying. Use the key skill or "buzz" words of the industry/field you plan to enter.

Work experience

Jobs (part-time, summer, full-time) are usually listed in reverse chronological order, or sometimes, in order of importance. Include positions or job titles, name of the organization, location, dates of employment, job duties, responsibilities (even accomplishments!), using action verbs; bullet points are often more effective than paragraph format. If you wish to list several jobs, consider splitting them into separate sections: "Related Experience" and "Additional Experience" as appropriate. Military service/experience may be included. *College Expenses Earned/Financed:* You may wish to draw attention to this if you worked (earned) or borrowed (financed) to pay for a considerable portion (more than 50%) of your education; probably best included as a subheading or as an opening or closing sentence in the "Experience" section.

Related skills

Related skills can be courses (which include an internship), summer or part-time job, clubs, and sorority/fraternity activities. Name and/or describe the skills and abilities (supervision, research) you have developed. For example, **Computer Skills:** Desktop, "Word" packages, Web design, etc. Qualities such as dependability, creativity, or strong "people skills" are often easier to describe (and more effective) in cover letters!

Activities or memberships

Organizations and activities may be used to point out professional interests, community service, or qualities of leadership and teamwork, which call attention to more of your strong points. Explain the purpose of any community/campus organization(s) mentioned (if not clear from the name, spell them out, don't abbreviate), and list any offices held or committee contributions. Interests in "Sports" or "Music" are too general and just don't add very much. Coached an intramural or youth team? Written or sung tunes for (or promoted) a band? This additional involvement/display of talent will likely sound more impressive.

References

"Available upon request" is OK, but mention of references is optional in most fields. *Ask permission before using someone as a reference;* the same applies in regard to actually listing their names and contact information on the page. Don't use relatives as references!

Format and style tips

- One page is often sufficient for undergrads. Remember, this is meant to be a summary of your qualifications; however, don't

Continued on page 12

shortchange descriptions of your experience and skills in order to squeeze everything on one page.

- 10 point font is a standard minimum size (perhaps only for bullet point info); 11 or 12 is much easier to read.
- Arial and Times New Roman are typical font choices; Verdana also is easy for employers to convert to pdf.
- Follow usual guidelines for electronic resumes for best transmission, printing, and database storage.
- Write in short phrases unless your resume is brief and you need to extend your copy with complete sentences.
- Use the active voice and action verbs; avoid the use of “I” (and other pronouns) and excessive use of italics.
- Dates often look better placed in the text or right-justified, NOT at the left margin with the heading titles.
- Utilize clear heading titles, plus adequate page and text margins for a quick read and attractive appearance.
- Be consistent in how you organize, format categories, and use indentation, caps, and/or underlining.
- Use 8.5" x 11" resume paper in plain white, off-white, or neutral colors for your resume and cover letter.
- Do not use odd-sized paper, folders, or binders, because they are awkward for the recipient to handle and to photocopy.
- Avoid abbreviations except in addresses; don't “left-justify” every line; indent text tab 1" to 2" right of heading tab.
- Check your e-mail address (and phone greeting/message) for inappropriate humor or sexual references.
- Be careful what you post on Facebook, myspace, and other similar sites, employers do browse them.
- Check for correct spelling and punctuation! Don't rely on spellcheck – have someone proofread final copy.

The Career Center can help

A well-written resume takes time to develop; however, it may have just 20 to 30 seconds to initially impress a recruiter! Make these first impressions count! Visit the Career Center Web site and/or the office for more information, plus some samples of good resumes.

Better yet, contact a professional in the Career Center for expert assistance and specific feedback on how to make your resume better reflect you and what you have to offer a future employer. The same goes for cover letters! Make an appointment to discuss and have them reviewed. A time-saving, popular option is to attach either or both documents to an e-mail and send them requesting a critique. Also, watch for “Last-Minute Resume Critiques” held in the Career Center—they provide instant feedback usually a week or so in advance of major career fairs each semester.

Keep in mind there is always room to customize your resume—prioritize heading titles, make format choices, and organize the content.

7 STEPS OF A JOB SEARCH

1. **Identify what YOU want:** What can you do? Know your skills, abilities, interests, strengths, and values. Review your educational background. What did you like about school? What did you excel in? What were your summer, part-time, internship, and previous jobs? Do you want to work with people, data, things, or ideas—and why? How important are salary, benefits, employer size and/or geographic location? Utilize SIGI 3—an online interest skills inventory.
2. **Network/informational interviewing:** Find out where and what the jobs are. Contact the Career Center, use www.CareerCenter.ilstu.edu or www.eRecruiting.com or other appropriate Web sites. Use newspapers and trade magazines; network with professors, professionals, Alumni Relations, friends, and relatives. Join pre-professional organizations and contact employers directly. Attend the Career Center Job Fairs.
3. **Learn about jobs and careers:** Learn about jobs that interest you and are suited to your skills. What are typical job titles? What are entry-level jobs in specific career fields? What types of educational background and/or job skills do you need or have? The Occupational Outlook Handbook (online) is an excellent source of information.
4. **Research companies, organizations, and industries:** Find out what organizations have the jobs that interest you. Where are they located? What are their products and/or services? What types of skill sets are they looking for? Check www.CareerCenter.ilstu.edu or www.eRecruiting.com and organizations' Web sites.
5. **Resume:** Prepare a resume that reflects your skills, abilities, interests, education, and work background that will be of interest to employers. You may have more than one resume. Have it critiqued by a Career Center professional. Upload and publish it to www.eRecruiting.com.
6. **Cover letter:** Write a cover letter to accompany and expand upon your resume reflecting your skills, abilities, and interests in the type of position for which you are applying. Show the employer you have done your homework on their organization. Have it critiqued by a Career Center professional.
7. **Interview:** Arrive early; dress appropriately. Be prepared to ask questions and to answer questions about yourself, your skills, interests, and knowledge of the job and organization. Show interest, and write a thank-you letter.

ACTION WORDS FOR YOUR RESUME AND COVER LETTERS

These are some action words that can help you dress up your resume. Adapted from: www.quintcareers.com

Communication/

People Skills

Addressed Advertised
 Arbitrated Arranged
 Articulated Authored
 Clarified Collaborated
 Communicated Composed
 Condensed Conferred
 Consulted Contacted
 Conveyed Convinced
 Corresponded Debated
 Defined Developed
 Directed Discussed
 Drafted Edited
 Elicited Enlisted
 Explained Expressed
 Formulated Furnished
 Incorporated Influenced
 Interacted Interpreted
 Interviewed Involved
 Joined Judged
 Lectured Listened
 Marketed Mediated
 Moderated Negotiated
 Observed Outlined
 Participated Persuaded
 Presented Promoted
 Proposed Publicized
 Reconciled Recruited
 Referred Reinforced
 Reported Resolved
 Responded Solicited
 Specified Spoke
 Suggested Summarized
 Synthesized Translated
 Wrote

Creative Skills

Acted Adapted
 Began Combined
 Composed Conceptualized
 Condensed Created
 Customized Designed
 Developed Directed
 Displayed Drew
 Entertained Established
 Fashioned Formulated
 Founded Illustrated
 Initiated Instituted
 Integrated Introduced
 Invented Modeled
 Modified Originated
 Performed Photographed
 Planned Revised
 Revitalized Shaped
 Solved

Data/Financial Skills

Administered Adjusted
 Allocated Analyzed
 Appraised Assessed
 Audited Balanced
 Budgeted Calculated
 Computed Conserved
 Corrected Determined
 Developed Estimated
 Forecasted Managed
 Marketed Measured
 Netted Planned
 Prepared Programmed
 Projected Qualified
 Reconciled Reduced
 Researched Retrieved

Helping Skills

Adapted Advocated
 Aided Answered
 Arranged Assessed
 Assisted Clarified
 Coached Collaborated
 Contributed Cooperated
 Counseled Demonstrated
 Diagnosed Educated
 Encouraged Ensured
 Expedited Facilitated
 Familiarized Furthered
 Guided Helped
 Insured Intervened
 Motivated Prevented
 Provided Referred
 Rehabilitated Represented
 Resolved Simplified
 Supplied Supported
 Volunteered

Management/Leadership Skills

Administered Analyzed
 Appointed Approved
 Assigned Attained
 Authorized Chaired
 Considered Consolidated
 Contracted Controlled
 Converted Coordinated
 Decided Delegated
 Developed Directed
 Eliminated Emphasized
 Enforced Enhanced
 Established Executed
 Generated Handled
 Headed Hired
 Hosted Improved
 Incorporated Increased

Initiated

Instituted
 Merged
 Navigated
 Originated
 Oversaw
 Presided
 Produced
 Reorganized
 Restored
 Scheduled
 Selected
 Strengthened
 Terminated

Organizational Skills

Approved
 Catalogued
 Charted
 Coded
 Compiled
 Corresponded
 Executed
 Generated
 Inspected
 Maintained
 Obtained
 Ordered
 Prepared
 Provided
 Recorded
 Reserved
 Reviewed
 Scheduled
 Submitted
 Standardized
 Updated
 Verified

Research Skills

Analyzed
 Collected
 Conducted
 Detected
 Diagnosed
 Examined
 Explored
 Formulated
 Inspected
 Invented
 Located
 Organized
 Reviewed
 Solved
 Surveyed
 Tested

Inspected

Led
 Managed
 Motivated
 Organized
 Overhauled
 Planned
 Prioritized
 Recommended
 Replaced
 Reviewed
 Secured
 Streamlined
 Supervised

Teaching Skills

Adapted Advised
 Clarified Coached
 Communicated Conducted
 Coordinated Critiqued
 Developed Enabled
 Encouraged Evaluated
 Explained Facilitated
 Focused Guided
 Individualized Informed
 Instilled Instructed
 Motivated Persuaded
 Simulated Stimulated
 Taught Tested
 Trained Transmitted
 Tutored

Technical Skills

Adapted Applied
 Assembled Built
 Calculated Computed
 Conserved Constructed
 Converted Debugged
 Designed Determined
 Developed Engineered
 Fabricated Fortified
 Installed Maintained
 Operated Overhauled
 Printed Programmed
 Rectified Regulated
 Remodeled Repaired
 Replaced Restored
 Solved Specialized
 Standardized Studied
 Upgraded Utilized

Curriculum Vitae, C.V., Vita, or Vitae

This is biographical information about one's educational and work background. The origin of the term is Latin and means "the course of one's life or career." Individuals with a Ph.D., M.D., J.D., M.A., M.S., M.F.A., or M.S.W. often use vitae, as well as some individuals with a B.A., B.S., and/or professional experience. It is used primarily for educational institutions, applications for professional (academic/teaching or administrative) positions, admissions to a professional- or graduate-level program, and/or for professional positions in which advanced levels of education and experience are required. Most B.A. and B.S. graduates in business, industry, government, and education (K–12) positions do need to prepare one.

A two-page resume is not a Vitae, though two pages can constitute a Vitae. It is not just the length but the types of information on the pages that constitute the difference.

There is no one perfect way to construct a Vitae or one perfect way for it to look, but there are a few agreed-upon guidelines. It should be

- Well organized
- Physically attractive
- Easy to skim
- Easy to read
- Clearly defined
- Error free

Name and contact information

Should be on first page; the following pages should include name and page number.

There is no need to type Vitae on first page.

Professional/Career/Vocational/Research objectives

Can be brief (one sentence stating general goals) or as long as a paragraph (both short-term and long-term goals).

Education

Names of universities, colleges, and professional schools attended. List these in reverse chronological order, most recent first and/or most important first. Include degrees, diplomas, certificates, dates of graduation and/or attendance, major, minor, emphasis, concentration, and GPA(s). High school omitted.

Thesis/Dissertation abstract

Brief description of a thesis or dissertation, full title, and date (term) of completion. Consult with an academic advisor regarding appropriate wording of this statement. Some disciplines (chemistry or psychology) have specific editorial formats for abstracts.

Honors/Achievements/Awards

List and describe departmental, athletic, and dean's awards; scholarships and fellowships; and community and professional awards. In reverse chronological order or in order of importance, may briefly describe what the award is based upon.

Coursework

Lists courses in groups, with course titles and descriptions where appropriate. Do not list course numbers or abbreviations.

Research interest(s)

Be as specific as possible regarding the description of research interest(s).

Research and/or laboratory experience

Provide detailed descriptions of experience, and the ways in which experience fits into a profession or a laboratory's ongoing research. Give the title of each project and information concerning its actual or potential publication. List the names and titles of professors or individuals supervising.

Teaching interests and experience

Describe teaching, tutoring, and group learning experience. Include writing the syllabi, text used, level of class (freshman, sophomore, graduate level, etc.).

Instrumentation experience

Include computer hardware, photographic, or audio-visual programs.

Special skills

Foreign language, computer software, leadership, organizational, and/or analytical skills.

Publications/Presentations/Works-in-progress

Works authored or co-authored with faculty or other colleagues. Provides appropriate bibliographic descriptions (list unpublished manuscripts only if they are being considered for publication). Artists and musicians should provide descriptions of works-in-progress. Provide detailed descriptions of presentations, particularly for being academic societies and professional associations. List title, organization name, location, and date.

Professional associations/Learned/Scientific societies

American Chemical Society, Modern Language Association, American Psychological Association, etc. Include role, level of involvement, offices held.

Work experience

This can include full-time, part-time, internship, volunteer, summer, and on-campus experiences—listed together or separated into each area. You may also separate by types of activity, or by order of importance. Include job title, company or organization name, location (city and state), type of organization, dates, job duties and responsibilities, and promotions.

Community service

Memberships, volunteerism, role, level of involvement, offices held.

Background

Usually for graduate and professional school applications (e.g., prolonged residence abroad and/or unusual educational work experiences). Do not include information on race, ethnicity, religion, gender, age, or political preference.

Co-curricular activities

Campus programs; may include role, level of involvement, offices held.

Interests

Avocations; do not get too personal.

Travel

Usually international or extensive throughout the United States. Include descriptions and length of visits.

Computer

May include hardware and software.

Special areas

Psychology; tests you can administer and interpret.

References/Recommendations

Optional. References should be those willing to be contacted directly without direct communication from you.

Transferable skills

As you begin your job search, it is important that you know your own qualifications. Over the years you have developed many skills from coursework, extracurricular activities, and your total life experiences. If you've researched topics and written, edited, and presented papers for classes, you've used skills which are not limited to any one academic discipline or knowledge area but are transferable to many occupations. A prospective employer expects you to be able to apply the skills you have learned in college to the work environment.

EXAMPLES

Server in restaurant seeking entry-level marketing position

"In addition to my marketing coursework, I have employed marketing and customer-service skills in the restaurant field. In my most recent position, I marketed appetizers, desserts, and other add-ons to customers and added value to their dining experience. I would like to apply the same sales savvy and interpersonal skills in the marketing position you have open."

Retail associate seeking teaching position

"As a sales associate in a retail store, I successfully handled customers' needs every day. To succeed, I had to be a patient and diplomatic problem-solver. Because the same kinds of patience and creative problem-solving are required of teachers, I am confident I will be an effective third-grade teacher at your school."

Office clerk seeking entry-level accounting position

"The office clerk job I held every summer throughout college demanded a high degree of organization and detail-orientation. My former employer can affirm that I am fully capable of applying these important skills at your accounting firm. My experience also taught me the importance of fitting into the office culture, and I stand ready to become a contributing member of your team."

Babysitter/nanny seeking position as management trainee

"As a former caregiver to three active youngsters, I certainly know the importance of good time management. I've gained that skill, along with exemplary leadership, organizational, and communication talents that would contribute to our mutual success when I join your management trainee program."

Bank teller seeking entry-level position in a stock brokerage

"I seized the opportunity in my bank teller position to learn as much as possible about personal finance and investments, while simultaneously honing the 'people skills' that are crucial to success as a stockbroker."

Fitness instructor seeking entry-level position in health care

"Having worked my way through college as a fitness instructor, I have already demonstrated my commitment to good health. Further, I have developed the solid customer-service skills that would enable me to effectively interact with patients."

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TOP 10 SKILLS/QUALITIES EMPLOYERS SEEK

Use your resume to show prospective employers that you have the skills they're looking for in candidates:

- Communication skills (verbal and written)
- Honesty/integrity
- Teamwork skills (works well with others)
- Strong work ethic
- Analytical skills
- Flexibility/adaptability
- Interpersonal skills (relates well to others)
- Motivation/initiative
- Computer skills
- Detail-oriented

Source: Job Outlook 2006, National Association of Colleges and Employers

Campus computer-lab assistant seeking position in consulting

“My work-study position as a computer-lab assistant involved solid knowledge of the technology within the labs, the ability to teach that technology to fellow students, and the skills to assist those who had problems with the software and hardware. To me, that’s what consulting is all about — possessing the knowledge to teach and assist clients and the interpersonal skills to do so successfully.”

Resident advisor/resident assistant seeking sales position

“I am very excited about contributing my talents in the field of professional selling. I have heard a number of times that sales skills are taught, and there is no such thing as a natural-born salesperson. I couldn’t agree more! I have served as a resident advisor for two years, and I was very surprised at how much selling goes on. I have learned quickly that the more you know about your customer, your product, and how to adapt to each situation, the easier the sale becomes. My success in selling my ideas to residents and administrators makes me an ideal candidate for your training program.”

Telemarketer/phone survey taker seeking position in hotel management

“My work as a telemarketer required me to communicate with a diverse array of people, some of whom represented difficult challenges. I refined my communication skills to the point where I was nearly always able to smooth ruffled feathers, solve problems, and provide satisfaction to customers. These are exactly the skills that are vital to effective hotel management, and I am eager to apply my talents at your hotel.”

Adapted from Dynamic Cover Letters for New Graduates, by Katharine Hansen. http://www.quintcareers.com/transferable_skills_examples.html.

Cover Letters

TYPES OF JOB SEARCH LETTERS

Application letter/cover letter

- Used to get your resume read/reviewed and to generate interviews
- Used in response to specific job advertisements and vacancy announcements
- Demonstrates that your qualifications fit the requirements of the position
- Links major job dimensions with your related past experience and performance
- Shows you have done your homework on the position/organization
- Demonstrates you have the ability to write well!

Prospecting letter

- Similar to the application letter, but instead of using position information, focuses on broader occupational and/or organization dimensions to describe how your qualifications match the work environment
- Used to seek out possible vacancies in your occupation
- Used to get your resume read/reviewed and to generate interviews

Networking letter

- Designed to generate informational interviews—not job interviews
- Used to meet individuals who can give you specific information about your intended career field

Thank-you letter

This is one of the most important, yet least-used, tools in a job search.

- Used to establish goodwill, express appreciation, and/or to strengthen your candidacy (you may want to reiterate a point, or mention something you forgot during the interview)
- Everyone who helps you in any way gets a thank-you letter (don’t forget “informational interviewers” and your references)

Acceptance letter

- Confirms the terms of your employment (salary, starting date, etc.)
- Positively reinforces the employer’s decision to hire you

Withdrawal letter

Once you accept a position, you have an ethical obligation to inform all other potential employers of your decision

- Used to withdraw your employment application from consideration
- Expresses appreciation for the employer’s consideration and courtesy

Rejection letter

Employers aren’t the only ones to send rejections. You may decline employment offers that do not fit your career objectives or interests, but do so diplomatically. You might want a job with this employer at some point in the future!

- Indicates you have carefully considered the offer and have decided not to accept it—you do not need to provide a specific reason
- Thank the employer for the offer and for considering you as a candidate

LETTER STYLES

Block style

- The most common choice; easiest to set up
- All text is set at the left margin of the paper
- Single-space writing; double-space between paragraphs

Semi-block style

- Body of letter, salutation, and recipient's name/address tabbed at the left margin of the paper
- Single-space writing; indent and double-space between paragraphs
- Return address, date, closing, and signature line are a little right of the center of the page

Modified block style

- Body of letter, salutation, and recipient's name/address tabbed at the left margin of the paper
- Single-space writing; double-space between paragraphs
- Return address, date, closing, and signature line are a little right of the center of the page

RECOMMENDATIONS

Things to DO

- Type each letter individually
- Proofread
- Address the employing official by name and, if possible, by title
- Use power words to relate your accomplishments
- Keep to one page, use 1" to 1 1/2" margins

- Expand on your resume
- Provide examples of skills, top qualities
- Be honest and sincere; give the impression of modest confidence
- Do not overuse the personal pronoun "I"
- Proofread again
- Use an easy-to-read font, no smaller than 10 point
- Use white or off-white paper to match your resume

Things NOT to do

- Simply repeat what is in your resume
- Use a reproduced form letter or pre-printed letter
- Be too formal (stilted) or too casual
- Use stereotyped, trite phrases; write naturally and sincerely
- Use company stationery
- Boast
- Fail to proof read!
- Also: Don't always default to "Times New Roman"—other fonts get the job done too, such as Arial or Verdana. (However, these fonts could raise some spacing or sizing issues. Font must be compatible with electronic formatting requirements.)

What is Networking?

network / nĕtwĕrk n. & v. a group of people who exchange information, contacts, and experience for professional or social purposes. *The Oxford Dictionary*

Ask 10 different people what networking is and you may get as many as 10 different answers. A person's definition of networking probably depends upon his or her use of this important personal and professional activity. However, whether you network to make new friends, find a new job, develop your current career, explore new career options, obtain referrals or sales leads, or simply to broaden your professional horizons, it is important to focus on networking as an exchange of information, contacts, or experience.

In any industry or at any career level, networking helps you make connections in a personal way and builds relationships of support and respect to discover and create mutual benefits. It is a skill set no serious professional individual of the 21st century can be without.

Networking "how to's"

- Start with a purpose. Define your objectives to know why you are at the networking function.
- The name tag is worn on the right side to provide an easy sight-line to your name when shaking hands.

- Have an effective handshake. This may appear obvious, but you have probably been on the receiving end of at least one "bone-crusher" and one "limp fish." Practice your handshake to avoid giving one of those yourself!
- Be sure to introduce yourself!
 1. Say your name clearly. "Hello, my name is Juanita Curtiz. It's a pleasure to meet you."
 2. Shake hands.
 3. Use an "elevator" speech: describe who you are or what you do in 10 seconds or less.
 4. When appropriate, offer a business card and ask the other person for one of his or hers. Sometimes, it is more appropriate to exchange business cards only when you depart from one another.
- Once the event is over, your networking doesn't stop! Be sure to follow up with those you've met, keep in contact, share information, and offer to help in any way you can.
- Be sure to send a written acknowledgement or "thank-you" note to your networking contacts.

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Tips for working a room

- In many networking events, you will find yourself with time to “mingle” among the other attendees before the formal program begins. Spend some time planning and preparing how you will “work the room” to get the most from your efforts.
- Start with small talk.
- Don’t stay too long in one place. After eight to ten minutes, excuse yourself with a pleasantry such as, “It was nice meeting you ... “
- Let preparation and practice be your guide. Spend some time planning your conversation generators.

Tips for working a table

- Many networking events will feature a meal, if held during mealtime hours. It is crucial to practice good table etiquette to make the best impression.
- Make the introductions. Proceed as if you are host of the table.
- Sit and listen to learn. Start the conversation by asking questions: why people are there, what they hope to gain, how they found out about the event. Avoid monopolizing the conversation.
- Keep your business cards handy. Do not deal them out impersonally.
- Practice good table etiquette. Let common sense and consideration of others be your guide.

Networking/informational interviews

See page 22 for more about informational interviews

The informational interview is a tried-and-true method used to gather information and gain insights when searching for career opportunities and exploring new options.

When asking for an informational interview:

- Be clear on your mission. Be honest with people by respecting their time, and don’t have a hidden agenda.
- Make sure you have the right person. Sometimes your initial contact can direct you to someone more appropriate to your mission and purpose. Be open to suggestions as to who else you might contact.
- Be prepared and interested. Prepare your personal introduction, and plan your questions. Take notes, and try to keep the meeting to a half hour.
- Always send a “thank-you” note!

Adapted from “How to Use Interviews and Networking,” by Deb Koen, vice president of career development services, as it first appeared in the Rochester Democrat and Chronicle, Sunday, January 19, 2003. Used by permission.

Conclusion

Networking can be a fun and easy way to enrich your life, broaden your horizons, and enhance your career. But it can also be potentially devastating if you act rudely, insensitively, or ignore the needs and desires of others. Remember, crucial to your success is that you treat networking as an exchange of ideas, information, and experience. You are not selling or simply telling or “sponging” off others for your own benefit. Be generous in sharing your talents, experiences, and ideas, and always be respectful of those around you.

Contributed by Diane Mashia, patron member, Rochester Women’s Network, is president and lead consultant for Learning Out Loud, a professional development organization dedicated to performance improvement through active participation.

Internships

Why intern?

- Gain a competitive edge
- Employers look for students with “real-world” experience
- Gain exposure to a professional industry
- Create relationships with people already working in the field
- Gain confidence in your profession
- Internships may turn into full-time jobs
- Gain “hands-on” learning

About Internships at Illinois State University

- **What exactly is an “internship”?**
It is a carefully monitored work or service experience for students that provides intentional learning goals and reflects actively on the learning experience; this can be part-time or full-time and can be paid or unpaid. Tuition and fees are assessed in the usual manner for all credit earned in internship experiences.

- **Internships at Illinois State University are defined as professional practice courses in your major.**

Check out your major requirements with your academic advisor, your internship coordinator, or the assistant director for professional practice in the Career Center.

- **What is an internship/professional practice at Illinois State University?**

Professional practice consists of one or more credit-generating, academic/career related, paid or non-paid work experiences. Professional practice work sites are located on the Illinois State University campus and with businesses industries, government, and other agencies and organizations outside the University.

Professional Practice courses are designated by the numbers 198, 298, 398, 498 and 598.

Significant information in obtaining a successful internship

- With the assistance of your department faculty/internship coordinator, select an internship that closely matches what you want your future career to be like. Check out the Career Center Web site for your faculty/internship coordinator's contact information.
- Be prepared to go outside of your immediate geographical area for a great internship experience—don't limit yourself!
- Find out pertinent information about an employer's internship program application deadlines and requirements.
- Seriously consider unpaid internships—the benefits can be extremely rewarding.

- Work like your career depends on it—because it does!
- Use your networks during your internship experience. Networking is often the key to moving your career forward!

Check out the Career Center Web site: www.CareerCenter.ilstu.edu for information and/or resources on how to get the internship you want!

Interview Information Questions most commonly asked

The most frequently asked request in ANY interview is "Tell me about yourself." How will YOU respond?

Goals: personal and professional

- What are your short-term career objectives? Long-term career objectives? When and why did you establish these goals?
- How do you plan to achieve your career goals?
- What are the most important rewards you expect in a career?
- What qualities do you admire most in others?
- How do you determine or evaluate success?

Skills and abilities

- What do you consider to be your greatest strengths and weaknesses?
- What do you do for fun?
- If you were describing yourself, what five words would you use?
- What two or three accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction? Why?
- What is the most important lesson you have ever learned in or out of school?
- What frustrates you the most? What was your greatest disappointment?
- Tell me about a difficult decision you had to make. How did you go about making it?
- What kinds of people do you find it difficult to work with? How do you usually deal with conflict?
- Give me an example of a problem you solved and how you solved it.

Education

- Tell me how you chose your major. Why did you select the college/university you attended?
- Describe your most rewarding college experience.
- Which academic subjects did you enjoy the most? Least? Why?
- What is your GPA? Do you think your grades are a good indication of your academic achievement?

- What have you learned from participation in extracurricular activities?
- How have your education and/or training prepared you for this job?
- Do you have plans for continued study? An advanced degree?

Work experience, in general

- Tell me about your past work experience.
- Of the positions you have held, which did you enjoy the most? The least? Why?
- What work experience has been the most valuable to you and why?
- How do you work under pressure?
- Describe the kind of supervisor you like to work for.
- What have you learned in previous jobs that you can transfer to this job?
- Tell me about the most challenging/interesting job you ever had? The most boring job?
- Describe an innovative change you implemented in your last job.
- How, specifically, do you contribute toward an atmosphere of teamwork?

Most recent position

- What are your key responsibilities or objectives in your most recent position?
- Describe a typical day in your most recent job.
- What have been your major accomplishments while in this position?
- What impact have these accomplishments had on the organization?
- What aspects of your current position do you enjoy most? The least? Why?
- What aspects of your supervisor's management style/philosophy do you like most? Least? Why?
- If we talked to your current supervisor, references, or co-workers, how would they describe your performance?
- Why do you wish to leave your current position? What factors have led to this decision?

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Questions about the target job...

- In general, how qualified do you feel to perform this position? Why?
- With which aspects of the position do you feel most comfortable? Least comfortable? Why?
- What would you look for if you were hiring a person for this job?
- Why should we hire you?
- Why are you interested in this position? What is it about this job that appeals to you the most?
- What do you know about this company? What is it about our company that interests you the most?
- In what ways do you think you can make a contribution to our organization?
- For which part or parts of this position would you need additional training?
- Are you willing to travel? Do you have a geographical preference? Why? Will you relocate? Does relocation bother you?

Management effectiveness

(Use only for supervisor or management positions)

- Describe your management style.
- Describe your leadership style. How do you motivate others?
- How would you go about establishing rapport with your staff?
- What qualities should a successful manager possess?
- What do you consider to be your greatest strength as a manager? Greatest shortcoming? Why?
- How do you delegate responsibility? Give me an example.
- Tell me about a rewarding supervisory experience you have had.
- Tell me about a supervisory experience that did not turn out well and why.
- How would your staff describe you?

Interview tips

- Know when, where, and how the interview is to be conducted. Know the full name of the company and the correct pronunciation of the interviewer's full name. Have knowledge about the company and the job for which you are applying.
- Arrive at least 15 minutes early and have extra resumes. Dress conservatively and be well groomed.
- Greet the interviewer by name. Shake hands using a firm grip without being excessive (but only if the interviewer makes the first gesture).
- If you are nervous, you can mention it. Saying, "I'm a little nervous about this. It's very important to me" will help create a more relaxed situation.
- Don't chew gum or smoke.
- Have direct eye contact, but avoid staring. Smile frequently. Look alert and interested. Sit with good posture and body positioning.
- Don't copy the interviewer's body position for position because it might be noticed and seem as if you're making fun of them. You can match the general posture of the interviewer to become more physically comfortable.
- Beware of tapping feet, playing with you hair, nervous laughter, and other habits.
- Have a positive attitude. Be friendly and respectful. Enter every interview with an open mind.
- Use your sense of humor; it will make the interview more enjoyable.
- Listen carefully to the interviewer and assume nothing. Adjust your behavior according to their mood.
- Take a few seconds to reflect on a question that requires a complex response.
- Don't take notes during the interview. It can be annoying or distracting to the interviewer. Immediately after the interview, write down everything you want to remember.
- Don't make the interviewer do all the work, but don't monopolize the conversation. Don't talk too much about your past or boast about what you've done.
- Don't exaggerate your skills or accomplishments.
- Don't avoid answering any questions. Don't answer with just a yes or no.
- Be open and honest in your answers. Don't lie – even if asked questions that do not present you in the most favorable light. Don't try to cover it up.
- Answer concisely, effectively, and enthusiastically.
- Control the interview by knowing in advance what you want to say and look for opportunities to say it. Also, expand your answers to include points that may not be asked about. Make your answers meaningful. Back up all your responses with examples. Relate your comments to the employer's needs.
- If put on the defensive (e.g. "why did you change jobs?"), answer as simply and briefly as possible—and keep smiling.
- Emphasize your strengths and goals. Mention your best qualities in relation to something concrete. Try to appear factual and sincere. Stress your achievements. Be positive about everything and everyone.
- Don't explain your shortcomings or failures with excuses or by blaming others. Don't criticize a former employer or professor. Don't talk negatively about past jobs or co-workers' behavior.
- Don't bring up salary, vacations or fringe benefits. Wait for the interviewer to introduce these subjects. If asked for your salary requirement, offer a salary range in order to leave yourself room to

negotiate, or indicate you're more interested in a job where you can prove yourself than you are in a starting salary.

- Ask questions about the position to help you determine if it is suitable for you. Ask about the job duties early in the interview so you can target your abilities to do the job. As the interview progresses, ask questions about the company to show your interest and help you decide if you really want to work for them.
- Thank the interviewer for the time and consideration given to you. Ask what the next steps are in the hiring process.
- Send a thank you note to the interviewer as soon as possible. (preferably within 24 hours)

- If you get the impression the interview isn't going well and you've already been rejected, don't let your discouragement show. Continuing to appear confident and determined can make a good impression.
- If you don't get the job, keep trying. Reflect over the positives and negatives of the interview and use them to prepare for your next interview.

Developing a 30-second summary for interviews

Developing a “30-second Summary” as a basis for responding to “Tell me a little about yourself.”

Provides a starting point for more in-depth interview conversation. Helps you focus, gives you more confidence. Begins to answer the ultimate question: “Why should we hire you?”

OUTLINE

Cover the essential facts/background information, beginning w/:

5-10-second

Education Background: “I’m majoring in (or I’m graduating in May with a degree in) _____,” perhaps including an area of concentration or your minor. If there is an interesting story about how you selected this major, briefly include that.

5-10-second

Description of Interest: “I am especially interested in _____ opportunity in your company/organization because of my experience _____, which can include mention of related internship, summer job, a class research project, etc.

5-10-second

Strengths, Accomplishments—related to your job target.

5-10-second

Summary or Goal Statement: Why you think you would be a good fit for a certain position in this organization, etc.—a good place to show you have done some research on the organization.

- This can easily expand to one minute or more if you elaborate with details about why you chose to attend Illinois State and/or your major, what skills you have and how you developed them, etc. There is NOT a 30-second time limit in responding to this request for background information!! It’s about displaying some focus in response to a rather open-ended inquiry, so that the interviewer(s) can get a sense of your motivations, purposefulness, and how clearly you can express yourself on a topic that ought to be quite familiar—YOU.

SAMPLE 1

I am studying “my major”, with a minor (or concentration) in _____. These areas have prepared me for (a particular entry-level job) in a company/ organization such as yours. I was really drawn to this field because: of a “particular experience”; the inspiration of _____; I have always been very good at _____.

I believe my strong GPA shows I’m willing to work hard and that I was successfully able to juggle working up to 20 hours per week on campus, while taking a full course load. (Further discussion about your organizational skills, good work habits, and/or being very goal-oriented would be OK too.)

Because of my interest and experience in this field (note special academic project or even a summer internship already completed), I think I will be a very good fit for (this type of job) in your organization.

SAMPLE 2

If your major doesn’t necessarily match your job target: While my major in _____ is not directly related, I do believe I have the talent to be successful in your management training program. I do have two specific experiences that convince me a management training program in sales (or _____) is my best career target.

My part-time (or summer) jobs at _____ and _____, as noted on my resume, both have given me a great foundation in customer service, sales, and people management. At (1st job), I started as _____, and then was promoted to _____, often serving as the trainer of new staff. At (2nd job) I had more experience in direct sales, and found I was consistently able to meet and surpass my monthly sales goals.

I have taken electives in (this) and (that) which have provided a good background in (marketing, communications, etc.). In fact, an elective in Mass Communication last year convinced me to pursue this career path, instead of something more related to my actual major.

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Based upon your Web site's description of what is required of entry-level sales candidates, I am confident I can contribute to the future growth of the company.

[An Education major seeking a job in a social service agency could make a similar case, based on a change in goals, related experiences, etc.]

Whatever highlights/strengths you select, try to use your own words. The objective is to get your message across naturally, without sounding over-rehearsed!

In summary, a successful 30-second Summary will focus on what you have to offer the organization(s) you are trying to impress. It is not about what they can do for you, in terms of a paycheck, a great professional opportunity, the prospect of getting your graduate degree paid for by the company, or other great benefits. Those things are the outcome of, or the rewards for, what candidates have in the way of talents, training, motivation and experience—plus being able to articulate a connection between what you have to offer and what you have to gain. Thus, promoting oneself in an appropriate way in interviews, as well as at job fairs, is another skill needed to successfully make the transition from college to career!

Informational Interview

Why set up an informational interview?

One of the most important steps a student can make during their career information search is to have informational interviews with professionals in the field! Through the informational interview you can learn about an industry or company in general, typical and atypical career paths, and specific job opportunities. The more you can learn about an organization prior to an interview the more it will benefit you!

How do I set up an informational interview?

- Find out the name of the supervisor of the department in which you are interested
- Use the phrase “professional career advice” when asking for an informational interview
- Dress professionally and be prepared to ask intelligent questions about the organization and types of positions

What questions should I ask in the interview?

- Would you describe typical first-year assignments?
- What educational and work backgrounds are you looking for?
- Is this the type of resume you would like to see if you had any openings?
- Would you describe some typical entry-level positions within your organization or industry?
- Would you tell me about your training program?
- What are your expectations for new hires?
- If there were any openings, how or to whom would I apply?
- What is the entry-level salary range?
- Is there anyone else you could suggest I talk with to learn more?
- What educational and work backgrounds are you looking for?

Don't forget to write a thank-you letter

This can be the start of a networking opportunity that will lead you to other possible positions within the field!

Questions for Employers

The employer should provide an opportunity for you to ask questions at or near the end of the interview. Some tips:

- Always prepare questions to ask before the interview.
- Some of the questions may be answered during the course of the interview, before you are offered the opportunity to ask. If so, you can simply state, “I was very interested in knowing about... but my questions were already addressed during the interview.” You could ask for additional clarification if applicable.
- Do not ask questions that are clearly answered on the employer's Web site and/or in any literature provided by the employer in advance.
- Never ask about salary or benefit issues until the employer raises those subjects.
- Don't ask a question unless you are truly interested in the answer

If you have trouble developing questions, consider some of the following questions:

- What are the opportunities for personal and professional growth?
- What is the realistic time frame for advancement?
- How is an employee evaluated and promoted?
- What is the retention rate of people in the position for which I am interviewing?
- What makes your firm different from its competitors?
- How would you describe your corporation's personality and management style?
- What are some of the skills and abilities necessary for someone to succeed in this position?
- What kind of work can I expect to be doing the first year?
- How would you describe the work environment?
- Why do you enjoy working for this company?
- How important does upper management consider the function of this department or position?
- Could you explain your organizational structure?

Dress tips for interviews and career fairs

MEN AND WOMEN

- Two piece matched suit is always the best and safest choice
- Everything should be clean and well pressed
- Keep jewelry to a minimum
- No visible body art. Cover tattoos with clothing if possible
- Breath mints -- use one before greeting the interviewer, employer representative
- No gum, candy or cigarettes
- Use perfume/colognes sparingly.

Women

- Suit with a skirt or a business pantsuit are both acceptable
- Stick with navy, blue, tan, gray, burgundy, black and beige as clothing color choices. Try to use solid colors or conservative prints
- Tailored blouse with a conservative neckline that coordinates nicely with your suit preferable white, off-white, or neutral colored
- If you wear pants, they should be creased and tailored, not tight or flowing
- Skin-colored hosiery or hosiery that coordinates with your suit
- Shoes should be closed-toe with low moderate high heels. Try dark leather, low-heeled pumps
- Briefcase or portfolio in place of a handbag or purse
- No excessively long fingernails. Use conservative nail polish; avoid unusual colors (e.g., green, blue, lavender)
- Small stud earrings instead of dangling or oversized earrings
- Use accessories in moderation. Use the Rule of 13: If you can count more than 13 accessories including buttons, bracelets, rings, earrings, and watch, you are overdoing it

Men

- Long sleeved dress shirt (even in summer) in white or light blue
- Two-piece business suit (solid dark blue, gray or other dark color is best)
- Dark socks, mid-calf length; avoid light colored socks with a dark suit
- Business style leather shoes (lace-up or slip-on) polished and buffed.
- A watch and possibly a ring are the only pieces of jewelry you should wear. No earrings (if you normally wear one, take it out)
- Match shoe and belt color; don't mix black and brown
- Briefcase or portfolio
- Make sure your tie, when knotted, comes to the middle of your belt buckle

GENERAL PROFESSIONAL ATTIRE

Do's for women

- Shirts should be loosely fitting and not reveal undergarments
- Skirts and dresses should be approximately 2 inches above or below the knee and side slits should not exceed 1 inch
- Shoes should have closed toes and the heel less than 2 inches
- Keep the makeup light and natural looking
- Use perfume sparingly
- Wear pants that fit comfortably with or without a crease

Don'ts for women

- Spandex or tight clothing
- Shorts or skorts
- Halters, tube tops, or sheer shirts
- Sandals
- Tacky or oversized jewelry
- Bare feet or legs
- Spaghetti-strap dresses

Do's for men

- Always wear a tie
- Shoes that are polished
- Belts that properly match the shoes
- Facial hair should be neat and clean
- Shirts that are loosely fitting
- Pants that fit comfortably with or without a crease

Don'ts for men

- Ties which include cartoon characters or inappropriate pictures
- Excessive jewelry
- Belts that have large buckles
- Scuffed or worn shoes
- Shoes without socks

Don'ts for men and women

- Visible body piercing, including nose, eyebrow or multiple earrings in one ear
- Baggy, sloppy, tight or ripped clothing
- Athletic wear such as sweats, t-shirts or sneakers
- Excessive perfume, cologne or after-shave

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BUSINESS CASUAL ATTIRE

(Acceptable at many career fairs, but when in doubt, dress up!)

Do's for women

- Dress "casual" style pants (i.e., Dockers or Gap) and a collared shirt, golf shirt, turtleneck shirts and/or sweater
- Dress slacks instead of dress casual slacks
- Skirt and a collared shirt, blouse, turtleneck or sweater
- Same as above, but add a blazer
- Appropriate business style dresses

Do's for men

- Dress "casual" style slacks (i.e., Dockers or Gap) and a collared shirt, golf shirt, turtleneck shirts and/or sweater
- Dress slacks instead of dress casual slacks
- Same as above, but add a sport coat

General business casual don'ts

- Denim jeans
- Warm up suits, sweat pants
- Open-toed sandals
- Provocative clothing, including excessively short skirts or dresses, tube tops
- Clothing with insignias /slogans

- Spandex
- Sneakers/tennis shoes
- Bare legs/feet, shorts
- Shoes without socks
- Skorts
- Capri pants
- Sweatshirts
- Hats or caps
- Hiking Boots
- Thong shoes/flip flops
- Tank tops or T-shirts

ADDITIONAL TIPS

1. Clothing should always be neat (pressed and clean) and professional.
2. It is best to be overdressed instead of underdressed
3. Don't neglect personal hygiene
 - Overall look should look professional and clean
 - Hair should be clean, trimmed, and combed or styled
 - Fingernails should be neat, clean and trimmed
 - Teeth should be clean
 - Perfumes and colognes should be applied sparingly

Portfolios

Portfolios are especially important for students studying Communications, Fine Arts, Writing, Education, Public Relations, and Marketing.

Why have portfolios?

Because it is one of the main tools in order to obtain a good position. As the old saying goes: "a picture is worth a thousand words." Your portfolio shows a potential employer what you have actually done. For some careers a portfolio can be "the frosting on the cake" but for you it is the whole cake, from the cake plate, the cake, the layers in between, the frosting, to the decorations on the top.

What does a portfolio look like?

- Nice quality three-ring binder (with pockets, front and back.)
- Usually fits 8.5" x 11" pieces of paper but it can be bigger.
- Well organized with dividers in order to easily find the different types of materials within it.
- There is no one perfect way to organize a portfolio. It may have all of one type of subject; e.g. flyers together, or be organized by project or event. The key is for the owner to be able to easily access materials.
- Has a style of its own – fonts, colors scheme. All fonts match, all backing pages match for the entire portfolio or for each subject.

What does it contain?

- Table of contents
- Clear plastic sleeves
- Copies of your work
- Inside front cover: holds extra resumes
- Inside back cover: holds anything to give away
- Copies of letters of recommendation/references

Types of materials you may want to include:

- PSA's: actual release, radio spots, date it ran
- Press releases: actual release and resulting coverage—newspaper articles, press conferences, number of attendees, etc.
- Brochures: front and back, folded and/or laid out flat
- Newspaper articles: cut neatly, name of paper, date, pasted on colored paper
- PR audit: bind it separately or include table of contents
- PR campaign: bind it separately or include table of contents
- Newsletters: shows design, layout, writing and photos
- College/course samples—no grades
- Flyers
- Essays

- Technical writing
- Writing speeches
- Poems
- Radio tapes/video/disk
- Story boards
- TV tapes
- Commercials
- Special projects

What if you don't have much to put in your portfolio? Make it up!

Make up or take actual ads, flyers, brochures, newspaper stories, etc. and re-do them, show the actual subject and your revision. Make more than one; show your versatility, different styles, etc.

When do you use it?

- Take your portfolio to all serious interviews!
- Use it to supplement your answers during an interview or ask the interviewer "may I show you my portfolio?" or "may I show you some samples of my work?"
- Don't be offended if they say "no" or "not at this time." They may not be the person to show it to, they are not ready in the interviewing process to see an applicants' work, or they simply may not have time. You can always ask if you can leave some samples of your work with them.

Additional tips.....

- By having your portfolio with you, you will look professional and prepared.
- A good portfolio is VERY neat—no uncut edges or sloppy writing.
- If you are including a team project be sure to highlight your work: the writing, photos, formatting, etc. You may want to indicate your contributions with an asterisk (*) or a special sign or your initials in a box. This can be indicated in the table of contents.
- Your portfolio can be scanned or copied into a computer and sent electronically.
- Do not leave your portfolio with the interviewer. You may not get it back!
- You should have two complete copies of your work – just in case.

As you grow professionally, you will either be adding to your existing portfolio or starting new ones. Keep the old ones, you never know when you might want to review your previous work, need an idea or just get a laugh, when you see how much improved you are!

Job offer and salary negotiation

THE NEGOTIATION PROCESS

Step 1. Receiving the offer

This may occur on the telephone, or in written form.

- The important thing to remember is to be enthusiastic and gracious, no matter what the details of the offer are. Sample response: "I am delighted you have extended me this offer."
- Make sure you get all of the terms at this point so you will have as many details as possible to consider.
- Be clear as to when they expect you to get back with them. Allow yourself a minimum of one week. Sample response: "I'm sure you understand this is a major decision for me, and I want to be sure I have enough time to think it through carefully."
- Make sure you know who to call back for more information.
- Thank them, for the offer. Sample response: "Thank you so much for calling and presenting me with this opportunity. I look forward to discussing it with you further after I have had time to think it through."

Step 2. Evaluating the offer

This is the time for you to sit down and consider the things that are important to you in a career.

- Review your values and career goals and determine if this is a company you would like to work for.
- Determine the minimum you would need to make this job offer acceptable.

- Do as much research as possible so that you can justify any arguments you intend to make on behalf of salary or benefit increases.
- Consider trade-offs you will be willing to make (i.e. better medical leave for less salary).
- Prepare an agenda for your next conversation with the employer so you will appear confident and knowledgeable.
- Pick your battles. You shouldn't negotiate more than 2 or 3 major issues.

Step 3. The negotiation

Now it is time to call the employer back and gather all of the information you can in order to make an informed decision about the offer. You can also use this time to negotiate salary and benefits.

- Approach is very conversational. Make sure this is a discussion where both you and the employer have the opportunity to talk and be heard.
- Don't expect a resolution during this step. This is simply an information exchange. It is likely that the company will have to get back to you with the answers to your questions, and possibly a revised offer.
- Sample responses: "I really appreciate the offer, and have spent some time thinking about it. I have a few questions and concerns that will help me make my decision."
- Be direct and listen carefully to the information that is given. State your question first, then listen.
- Be honest. Don't suggest that you have other offers if you don't.

- This is the time to find out how flexible they are with the offer they made. Some companies are not allowed to negotiate, and this will be obvious in their responses to your questions at this point.
- Show you have done your research, and justify your requests as confidently as you can. Close the conversation with courtesy. Sample dialog: “Thank you for your time to listen to my requests and concerns. I look forward to hearing back from you.”

Step 4. The company response

- Again, be as courteous as possible. Sample dialog: “Thank you very much for the information. I really appreciate your getting back to me so quickly.”
- If the revised offer is not what you expected: “That is not what I was hoping for, but I certainly understand.” “Could you tell me why _____?” or “That will help me a lot in my decision, thank you.”
- Let the company know when you will get back to them. Be gracious. At this point, you have already taken time to think about the offer and the company, so you shouldn’t take an extreme amount of time. One or two days is appropriate.
- Sample dialog: “I need some time to think about the offer. Thank you for your time and help with this.”

Step 5. Your decision

- If possible, you should accept the position to a person instead of an e-mail address or voicemail.
- If you are accepting, you want to do so as soon as possible. Taking a long time to respond can indicate you are not serious about the position.
- If you are declining the offer, do so in a timely manner, with respect, and courtesy. You do not want to ruin your report with the company. You also do not want to ruin the company’s impression of your school for the sake of future students.
- Sample dialog: “It was a difficult choice, but I have decided I will not be accepting your offer. I was impressed by the people I met, and I truly appreciate your extending me the offer.”

NEGOTIATING

- Evaluate benefits. They are often one-third of the total compensation value and may be negotiable. Good ones to look for and understand are the following:
 - Cafeteria plans or medical/dependent reimbursement plans
 - Pension or 401k
 - Medical, dental, vision insurance
 - Profit sharing, employee stock plan
 - Signing bonus
 - Stock options or performance bonuses
 - Life, disability insurance
 - Promotion and raise schedule
 - Vacation, sick, personal time off

- Flex hours, telecommuting
- Tuition reimbursement
- Company assets—car, computer/laptop, cell phone
- Health club membership
- Relocation expenses
- In a group evaluation, use those you connected with during the interviews to help negotiate for you internally
- Make sure to negotiate based on the cost of living in the city you will be living and working in. You can check this at www.betterplaces.net
- Study salaries of comparable jobs with similar companies. Knowing your market value will strengthen your negotiating position.
- In evaluating offers, consider title, opportunity for advancement, company reputation, culture, and ability to work with potential manager.
- Don’t accept any offer on the spot. Show interest but ask for time to think it over. Refrain from disclosing your need to discuss the job offer with your spouse. Get the offer in writing.
- Contact companies with whom you’re interviewed. Give them a chance to match the competing offer or top it.

Resource: Rapid Guide to Job Hunting. Illinois State University Career Center Copyright 2005 by Rapid Guide

TOP 10 JOB EVALUATION TIPS

1. Never mention a salary number or range without doing the research.
2. Never make the first offer unless absolutely necessary.
3. Never respond to an offer immediately on the spot.
4. Don’t immediately think there is no room for negotiation.
5. Be enthusiastic, courteous, and professional during negotiation.
6. Never stop selling yourself.
7. Get the offer and all of the details in writing.
8. Prioritize what is important to you, and negotiate accordingly.
9. Be sure you want to negotiate.
10. Consider the negotiation process a win-win opportunity.

Resource: COBA, Office Employer Relations. <http://coba.usf.edu/services/career>

30 Salary Negotiation Mistakes to Avoid!

By Caryl and Ronald L. Krannich Ph.D.

Courtesy of Impact Publications

If you're planning to negotiate a salary or ask for a salary raise, make sure you don't make any of these 30 mistakes:

1. Avoid facing the salary issue until the question about "your salary requirements" is raised by the employer.
2. Fail to deal intelligently with salary questions and issues by not doing research on salary comparables and employers.
3. Don't know how much you're really worth.
4. Specify a single salary figure when asked "What are your salary requirements?"
5. Assume your "qualifications" and "performance" will automatically determine your salary level.
6. Think salaries are predetermined by employers.
7. Believe you are indispensable to an employer who will give you substantial raises rather than risk losing you to the competition.
8. Under-value your worth.
9. Over-value your worth—may even think you are irreplaceable to the employer.
10. Think the employer is in the driver's seat when it comes to negotiating salary.
11. Approach salary negotiations from a perspective of need or greed rather than as a process of assigning value to your qualifications and promises of performance.
12. Personalize salary issues by believing a salary is assigned to you rather than to your position. Focus primarily on yourself rather than on the position to which salary is normally assigned.
13. Fail to compile supports for a negotiating position.
14. Prematurely discuss salary before acquiring information on the job or before communicating your qualifications to employers.
15. Don't know how to close and follow-up the salary negotiation interview.
16. Forget to calculate benefits as part of the compensation package.
17. Put too much emphasis on benefits rather than concentrate on the gross salary figure.
18. Project an image that is not commensurate with the salary being negotiated.
19. Put too high a price tag on themselves without providing supports to justify the salary figure, such as previous salary history or indicators of performance.
20. State a specific salary expectation figure on either their resume or in their cover letter.
21. Negotiate salary and benefits over the telephone.
22. Accept employers' first or second offers too quickly.
23. Don't know how to use timing as a part of establishing your value in the eyes of employers.
24. Fail to adequately assess the employer's needs and develop a strategy to meet those needs as well as relate the strategy to your salary requirements.
25. Fail to raise intelligent salary questions about the job and the employer.
26. Don't know how to handle employers' salary questions or say the wrong things.
27. Don't give themselves much room to negotiate.
28. Don't know when to leave a job or company for opportunities elsewhere that will pay better.
29. Try to play "hard to get" when you have little or nothing to leverage.
30. Lie about your past salary history or alternative salary offers.

Resource: Caryl and Ronald L. Krannich Ph. D, Impact Publications
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ON-CAMPUS AND MOCK INTERVIEW RESPONSIBILITIES

Participation in on-campus employment interviews and mock interviews is a PRIVILEGE for an Illinois State University candidate. Candidates are expected to meet their scheduled interview obligations in a timely and professional manner. If a candidate must cancel the interview, it is the candidate's responsibility to notify the Career Center 24 HOURS IN ADVANCE of the scheduled interview by telephone, (309)438-2200, or in person. Candidates who cancel an interview with less than 24 hours notification and/or fail to keep the interview appointment without canceling are recorded as a No-Show and will have their eRecruiting account deactivated, which includes any published resumes being withdrawn from resume books.

To be reinstated, an appointment must be made with a Career Center professional staff member, within TWO BUSINESS DAYS of the missed interview, or any remaining scheduled interviews will be cancelled. A "PROFESSIONAL" letter of explanation and apology written to the employer with a stamped business-size envelope (not addressed) MUST be presented to the Career Center professional staff member at the time of the appointment. The Career Center professional staff member will make the determination on your continued use of the services provided by the Career Center. The Career Center recruiting manager will then mail the letter to the employer and reinstate the candidate's interviewing privileges and eRecruiting account. The candidate is responsible for re-publishing their resume to any eRecruiting resume books.

Notes

Notes

CONTACT INFORMATION

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E-mail: CareerCenter@IllinoisState.edu
www.CareerCenter.ilstu.edu

HOURS OF OPERATION

Monday–Friday
8 a.m.–4:30 p.m.



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