Engineering Career Development Handbook

UMass Amherst

College of Engineering

Career Development and Experiential Learning Center

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WELCOME TO THE ENGINEERING CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING CENTER

The Engineering Career Development and Experiential Learning Center is here to help prepare students for career and professional opportunities and to provide a place where engineering students, faculty, and employers can meet and develop mutual and beneficial relationships.

Planning for your engineering career is key to being prepared when opportunities for internships, co-ops, and jobs arise. The Career Center offers workshops for resume and cover letter writing, career fair preparation, and interview skills. Located in Marston 112, the staff provides help with resumes, cover letters, and other resources to assist you as well as one-on-one counseling M-F, 8:30-5:00.

Throughout the year we hold a variety of corporate information sessions for companies such as ExxonMobil, AbbVie, Tighe & Bond, General Dynamics, Verizon and Pratt & Whitney. They also work closely with companies to organize networking events, workshops, and plant tours. When you are ready to gain relevant engineering experience, check out UMass.JoinHandshake.com, the searchable job database which includes internship, co-op, and full-time positions.

**ENGINEERING CAREER DEVELOPMENT
AND EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING CENTER
MARSTON 112, Monday – Friday, 8:30 AM – 5:00 PM
Drop in or schedule an appointment through Handshake.**

https://engineering.umass.edu/careers

" The Engineering Career Center was instrumental in the search for my dream job. I started visiting freshman year, dropping in for resume edits in the hopes of improving my chances of hearing back from online job applications. The staff is incredibly friendly, knowledgeable, and encouraging! I quickly realized it's much more than resumes and interviewing skills – the Engineering Career Center provides many opportunities to learn about different fields and receive mentorship through internship experience. They helped me land three internships in varying industries and roles through which I discovered my passion for product development! With a clear sense of direction, it was much easier to focus my job search on roles I knew I would like. I now work in product development at Bose and I couldn't be happier! "

Monika Sudol, *ME, Mechanical Engineer, Bose Corporation*

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Career Development and Experiential Learning Center
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CAREER DEVELOPMENT HANDBOOK

Engineering Career Development and Experiential Learning Center

CAREER CHECKLIST

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

USE HANDSHAKE *and* **READ YOUR EMAIL** from the Engineering Career Center so you have timely information about jobs, fairs, recruiting and networking events, and workshops.

First Year

❑ **Join Handshake!** (UMass.JoinHandshake.com)

❑ Attend company information sessions to learn more about the various engineering careers and begin to build relationships with recruiters.

❑ Assess and develop your skills in critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, and teamwork through both academic and extracurricular activities.

❑ Begin your resume—attend a resume workshop.

❑ Begin building a network of support through friends, mentors, upperclassmen, staff, and faculty.

❑ Work hard in your academic classes—companies often base internship offers on student grades.

❑ Plan a related work experience for the summer between your first and second year. While a research position or an internship would be ideal, other experiences can also be useful. For example, if you are a civil engineer, look for a construction or landscaping job. If you are a mechanical engineer, jobs in manufacturing or at the hardware store could prove helpful.

❑ Join and participate in engineering student societies or other student organizations or community service.

Second Year

❑ Update your resume—add any experience or soft skills that you gained over the previous semester or summer.

❑ Attend company information sessions to learn more about what companies in your field of interest are doing.

❑ Attend the Engineering Career Fair, Life Sciences Fair, Civil & Environmental Fair, Technology Fair, all majors Career Blast, or any other career fair related to your interests.

❑ Attend various workshops on resume writing, interviewing, networking and career fair preparation to hone your skills.

❑ Join and participate in engineering student societies or other student organizations or community service.

❑ Check out the National Science Foundation's website: www.nsf.gov/crssprgm/reu/. Make a list of Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) program sites you are interested in and make a plan to apply (note deadlines!).

❑ Ask faculty for letters of recommendation for REU applications and follow up with a thank-you letter.

❑ Explore internship opportunities through the Engineering job board at UMass.JoinHandshake.com.

Third Year

❑ Update your resume—add any experience or soft skills that you gained over the previous semester or summer.

❑ Attend various workshops EARLY in the semester so that you will be prepared for the career fairs.

❑ Attend the Engineering Career Fair, Life Sciences Fair, Civil & Environmental Fair, Technology Fair, all majors Career Blast, or any other career fair related to your interests.

❑ Attend company information sessions and begin thinking about the type of work you would be doing for a company, the company culture, ability to gain and utilize a variety of skills, as well as the company locations.

❑ Check out the National Science Foundation's website: www.nsf.gov/crssprgm/reu/. Make a list of REU sites you are interested in and make a plan to apply (note deadlines!)

❑ Ask faculty for letters of recommendation for REU applications and follow up with a thank-you letter.

❑ Explore internship opportunities through the Engineering job board at UMass.JoinHandshake.com.

❑ Continue to participate in student societies and organizations —begin to take on leadership roles.

❑ Attend the Graduate School information session and talk with faculty advisors or College of Engineering Career Center advisors to help make this decision.

❑ If you decide on graduate school, set up a timeline for studying and taking the GRE, LSAT, or GMAT and for meeting all grad school deadlines.

Fourth Year

❑ Polish your resume.

❑ Attend various workshops to fill any gaps in interview or networking skills, job-search techniques, etc.

❑ Attend the Engineering Career Fair, Life Sciences Fair, Civil & Environmental Fair, Technology Fair, all majors Career Blast, and any other career fairs and information sessions related to your interests. Make sure you know what recruiters are looking for and be prepared to present your technical and communication skills at these various events.

❑ Regularly check for engineering jobs at UMass.JoinHandshake.com.

❑ Follow up with companies you meet at information sessions, career fairs, or interviews. Make sure you present yourself in a professional manner—through phone conversations, email, thank-you notes, or in person.

❑ Prepare to take the FE exam before leaving school—many companies require this for employment. The FE is a computer-based exam that is administered year-round by NCEES (National Council of Examiners for Engineering and Surveying) at NCEES-approved test centers. Advance registration is required and is available at http://ncees.org/exams.

FIND JOBS AND EVENTS
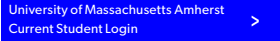
UMass Engineering

ꭍꭍ Handshake

Find jobs, internships/co-ops and connect to the UMass Engineering Career Center for recruiting events, career fairs, workshops, helpful resources, and appointments!

Signing up is easy!

1. Go to UMass.JoinHandshake.com

2. *Click* [University of Massachusetts Amherst Current Student Login >] and login using your ***UMass Net ID and Password***

3. Complete your profile. Some information is already pre-loaded, so check it for accuracy. Profiles are automatically set to private, so if you want your profile to be viewable by employers you need to change it to public. A public profile is only viewable by employers connected with UMass. You can have a public profile and keep some information (GPA, for example) private. Here's how to change your setting:

Profile Privacy Setting
a.   Click your name in the main drop down menu in the top right corner
b.   Select Settings & Privacy
c.   Select Account Information in the upper left side of the page. Then in the privacy section, *Select* the option that meets your privacy preference

GPA Privacy Setting
a.   Click your name in the main drop down menu in the top right corner
b.   Select My Profile
c.   Click the edit symbol ([edit icon]) in the Education section and Select options that meet your privacy preference

Resume Privacy
You have the option to make documents "Visible" on your profile, allowing employers to view and download them. For a visible/ public resume, we suggest you do not include personal information such as cell phone number, address, or email address. Resumes not set as visible can be attached to specific job applications so only the employer who receives the application will be able to view it.

4. Start searching for your future career!
Handshake has a great help center full of Q & As, short videos, tutorials and materials to help you find your way!

https://support.joinhandshake.com/hc/en-us
Trouble with sign in? Need help?
Contact the Engineering Career Center at coecareers@engin.umass.edu or 413-545-4558.

FIND OPPORTUNITIES ON HANDSHAKE

UMass students enjoy free access to Handshake, a career development software system featuring a password-protected database of jobs, internships, and co-ops. Handshake offerings are updated daily. Opportunities on Handshake are geographically distributed across the country, and include some international opportunities as well. When it comes to searching for opportunities, we recommend using Handshake as a starting point.

In addition to providing a searchable index of jobs, internships, and co-ops, Handshake allows you to save and repeat detailed searches, follow specific employers of interest, upload resumes and cover letters, apply for opportunities electronically, find and sign up for events such as career fairs and on-campus interviews, curate a professional online profile for public display to employers, and locate helpful career development resources.

Some Filters Are Better Than Others

Searching by major is helpful for seeing the broad range of opportunities available to you. You can also search by adjacent majors, (e.g. Computer Engineering students might also search under Computer Science). However, students typically find keyword searches, (e.g. robotics, geotechnical, design) are highly effective in accessing the most relevant opportunities. If you aren't getting many results, try reducing the number of filters you are using at one time.

Scan Search Results and Read Descriptions

Your search results will show the location and whether each opportunity is an internship, co-op, or a job, and whether it is full-time, or part-time. Click a listing to open its full description. Here you will find details such as duties, the range of desired majors, required qualifications, the number of hours per week, and instructions for how to apply.

Save Your Searches and Follow Employers

When you've adjusted your search filters and have a relevant set of results, add this search to your Saved Searches. The next time you log in, simply click on your saved searches to get updated results using the same filter settings. You can also follow particular employers to see their new listings each time you log in.

Check What's Recommended for You

Handshake has an algorithm that learns your interests from the searches you run, and then recommends specific opportunities to you. The more you search, the more accurate the recommendations will be. You can improve these recommendations by describing Career Interests in your Profile (under your name at the top right), and by marking opportunities, employers or events using the Favorite and Not Relevant buttons. Periodically check your Home page to see what relevant opportunities might be there for you.

Set Your Notification Preferences

Based on your settings, Handshake will send notifications about jobs, interviews, events, and more. Choose interests and how you want to be notified. Under your name at the top right, click "User Settings" and set your Notification Preferences.

Check the Events Calendar Frequently

Career development events, including job fairs, workshops for students, and on-campus employer information sessions, are posted to the Handshake events calendar throughout the year. Get in the habit of checking for new events weekly by clicking on the "Events" tab, then the calendar icon at the top right.

Go Beyond Handshake

When searching for off-campus internships or jobs, Handshake is a good place to start. But there are far more ways to find opportunities out there. For example, you can visit an employer's website directly and look for a link to "Employment," "Careers," or "Join Us." Once you've drilled down to the page showing actual open positions, bookmark that page. A list of bookmarked job boards, customized to your professional interests, will be your best resource for periodically checking on new opportunities. The Engineering Career Center can also assist you with other job search resources.

Designating AND or OR
When Searching Two or More Keywords

If you enter two keywords, Handshake assumes that you meant to connect them with "and." To do a search using "or" you will actually have to conduct separate searches on each keyword.

Your Entry	Handshake Returns
Process Automation	Only results that include both words
Process	Any results that include the word "Process"
Automation	Any results that include the word "Automation"

Adapted with permission from The Career Development Handbook *by Nessim Watson, Assistant Director for the College of Natural Sciences Career Center at UMass Amherst.*

GETTING THE MOST OUT OF A CAREER FAIR

UMass hosts numerous career fairs throughout the year where students can meet employers from a wide variety of industries recruiting for internships, co-ops, and full-time positions.

CAREER FAIR	RELEVANT MAJORS	DATE
Engineering Career Fair	All Engineering	September & February
Tech Jobs & Internships Fair	Computer, Electrical	September & February
Isenberg School of Business	All Engineering	September
Civil & Environmental Engineering Career Fair	Civil, Electrical, Industrial, Mechanical	October & February
Building and Construction Technology Career Fair	Civil, Electrical, Industrial, Mechanical	October & February
Life Sciences & Biotech Career Fair	Biomedical, Chemical, Computer, Electrical, Industrial, Mechanical	October
Career Blast	All Engineering	February

5 THINGS TO TAKE *TO* THE CAREER FAIR

1. **Information about the organizations attending and a plan.** Use the event link or app to see the list of employers attending, majors they are seeking and types of opportunities they have available. Decide who you want to meet with and then prioritize your list. To maximize the brief time you have with each employer, you need to know how your skills and interests match their needs. Don't just concentrate on the "big names." There are great opportunities with smaller companies and those you are not familiar with.

2. **A 30-second professional introduction.** This is often called an "elevator pitch." Share information about yourself, your most relevant skills and experience, the type of position you are seeking, and why you are interested in the organization. For example, *"Hi, I'm Taylor Smith. I'm a junior mechanical engineering major here at UMass. I also work in the Innovation Makerspace where I help other students learn proper design techniques for additive manufacturing and create 3D printed parts. I enjoy design and 3D modeling and have used Creo and SolidWorks for many course projects, as well as independent projects. The work your company is doing with 3D printed turbine blades really caught my interest. Can you please tell me more about your Design Engineering internship and what you look for in top candidates?"*

3. **Your resume.** Bring 10 – 30 copies of your resume, depending on the size of the event. Your resume should effectively represent your knowledge, skills, and abilities. It needs to look professional, be in an easy-to-read format and be free of typos. If you are looking at several career options, you may want to have two or more targeted resumes based on career objectives. Stop by the Engineering Career Center for resume help, from creating a first draft to the final polish!

4. **A smile, a firm handshake, and a positive attitude.** First impressions are important. Approach an employer, smile, and offer your hand when you introduce yourself.

5. **Energy!** Career fairs require you to be on your feet for a long time talking to lots of people. Each time you meet someone, be at your best. Employers value enthusiasm and a positive attitude!

5 THINGS *NOT* TO DO AT THE CAREER FAIR

1. **Don't "wing it" with employers.** Do your homework! Research the companies just as you would for an interview. Focus on why you want to work for the organization and what you can do for them. Ask informed questions that show your interest in the company and position, not ones you can easily answer from their website.

2. **Don't dress casually.** A career fair is a professional activity—perhaps your first contact with a future employer. Dress to impress in business professional attire. See page 30 for tips.

3. **Don't carry your backpack or extra stuff.** Carry your resume in a professional-looking portfolio or folder. It will keep your resume neat and handy and will give you a place to file business cards of recruiters that you meet. Stow your coat, backpack, and other gear in a coatroom.

4. **Don't talk to your dream company first.** Visit your lower priority employers first so you can warm up and practice. While you are in line, observe how employers and students interact. Once you feel comfortable, head to your top priority companies!

5. **Don't forget to thank recruiters after you speak with them.** Ask for their business card or contact information. After each employer, write down some notes.

5 THINGS TO TAKE HOME *FROM* THE CAREER FAIR

1. **Business cards and/or contact information from the recruiters you have met.** Send thank you notes to recruiters from the organizations in which you are most interested. If you cannot get contact information, try to get the full name of the recruiter so you can send them a thank you through LinkedIn.

2. **Notes about contacts you made.** Write down important details about particular organizations, including names of people who may not have had business cards.

3. **Information about organizations and application instructions.** Most recruiters will have information for you to pick up, such as company brochures and position descriptions. Promptly follow any application instructions provided by employers.

4. **A better sense of your career options.** If you have used the event correctly, you will have made contact with several organizations that hire people with your skills and interests. In thinking about their needs and your background, evaluate whether each company is a good match for you.

5. **Self-confidence in interacting with employer representatives.** A career fair gives you the opportunity to practice your interview skills in a less formidable environment than a formal interview. Use this experience to practice talking about your experience, skills and interests.

Adapted from "HOW TO SELL YOURSELF AT THE CAREER FAIR." Courtesy of NACE (National Association of Colleges and Employers.)

" The Engineering Career Fair was an instrumental tool in acquiring both my internship and full-time position. One of the most important things to know as an undergrad is that the companies at the career fair are actively looking to hire and the fairs are a great place to put your time and resources if you are looking for a job or internship. Many of the companies have "intern to hire" programs and will offer full-time positions to people who complete their internship programs. At the beginning of my senior year after completion of my internship at Sensata, I received a full-time offer. The Career Center was extremely helpful comparing this offer to others so I could decide which job would be the best fit for me. "

Jake DeGrace, *ME, Mechanical Design Engineer, Sensata Technolgies*

8 Rewarding Reasons to Join the **38** UMass Alumni at Sensata:

- Get recognized for getting results.
- Collaborate with talented people who inspire you.
- Own it. From end to end.
- Grow personally and professionally.
- Create powerful solutions.
- Change the world for the better.
- Own your career—where and how you work.
- Be valued for all the ways you contribute.
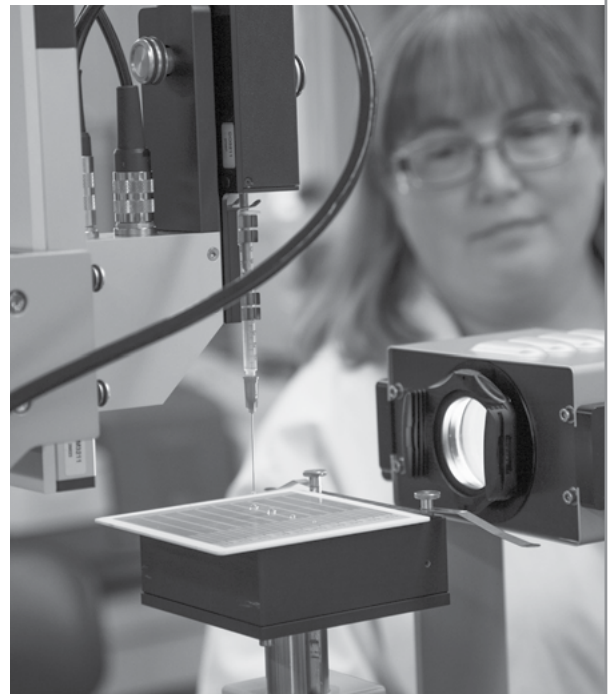
Sensata Technologies | Smarter**Together**

Check out sensata.com/careers for open positions.

TIPS FOR NETWORKING

What is Professional Networking?

Networking is about making connections. It involves the exchange of information between you and another person in your field of interest.

Who do I "network" with?

In addition to obvious people such as recruiters who come to the career fair, think outside the box in terms of networking. There is a wide range of people who can help you connect to or advise you about opportunities in your professional field such as:

- On-campus recruiters (these folks come to career fairs, corporate information sessions, technical talks, formal networking events)
- Alumni (they come back to campus for events such as reunions, technical presentations, award ceremonies, and fundraisers. Many schools, including UMass, have an alumni association that offers an online connection to alumni. Ours is called Connect UMass—connectumassalumni.com)
- Faculty/Staff
- People you meet at professional conferences
- Family, friends, neighbors, acquaintances from religious institutions, sporting teams, the gym, etc. (Does your uncle work for an engineering company? How about the family whose pet you cared for or lawn you mowed? Keep in touch, talk about your classes, projects, interest)
- Co-workers (Other students, especially lab or teammates will be key connections in your future. Ask yourself: what kind of teammate am I? Would a current teammate recommend me to their employer in a few years? Why or why not?)
- LinkedIn, other social media that is directly related to your field of interest (AICHE, ASME…)

What kind of results can I expect from networking?

Don't expect that someone else is going to "get you a job." You must get yourself the job by presenting your skills, competencies, knowledge and personality well. However, networking CAN help provide:

- Leads on openings at specific companies
- "Inside information" on what a company is looking for
- The name of a contact within the company such as a hiring manager or HR person
- Career advice on what type of path to choose in order to meet your career goals
- Names of companies who are doing the type of work you are interested in

What do I say when I am "networking?"

Many people feel awkward at networking events, not knowing what to say or how to present themselves without sounding like a salesperson. However, being prepared with some general information will help you feel more confident in talking about your career interests. Possibly the best thing to remember is to "keep it real." Start as you would any conversation, by introducing yourself, then be prepared to follow up as the

conversation progresses. Don't forget to ask about them as well. Questions like, "What is your job like," "What does a typical day on the job look like for you," "How long have you been in the field" or "What types of problems do you encounter" make the conversation a two-way street. Make sure you have thought about the following things in advance and practice them out loud.

- Name, major (or degree), and school level (senior, junior, sophomore)
- Your career area of interest. It is important to find the balance between being very specific yet staying open-minded about career fields. For example, if you are interested in working with high-end sound systems and you are at a networking event with BOSE, you should be very specific about your interest. However, if you are talking with a neighbor who works at a company that manufactures medical devices, you should broaden the conversation to talk about your interest in gaining experience in a manufacturing environment.
- A brief summary about the relevant classes you have taken. This will vary depending on the person you are talking with. For example, if the person works for a specialty materials company, you might talk about your polymer class. However, if the person works for an oil refinery, you might talk about your process design or controls class.
- A brief summary about any relevant projects or internships you have had.
- Activities that demonstrate teamwork, technical writing, and leadership skills.

Examples: Depending on the nature of the networking event, your level of preparation will vary. If you are going to a formal networking event, career fair, or professional conference, you should definitely spend some time researching who will be in attendance so that you will be able to tailor your conversation to match the needs of the various attendees. For example: Imagine that you are going to the Society of Women in Engineering Conference and you are participating in the Abbott Networking Night.

Your "pitch" could sound something like this:

Hi, my name is Jessica and I'm a senior Chemical Engineering student at the University of Massachusetts. I am very interested in the pharmaceutical field and am doing a biochemical engineering concentration that includes specialty classes in bioprocessing. Last year, I went on a plant tour of Bristol Myers Squibb which really got me interested in working on the manufacturing side of bioprocessing.

Or, if you are at a sporting event and find yourself sitting next to the town engineer, you could say:

Hi, I'm Dan, I will be graduating next year with my degree in Civil Engineering from UMass Amherst. I am interested in structural engineering and am looking to gain some hands-on experience in the field. I've had classes in concrete design, soil mechanics and water/wastewater systems. I'm also the captain of the concrete canoe team. I would love the opportunity to apply some of these principles to a real-world environment.

Other General Tips for Networking
- If you will be attending a formal networking event or career fair, ask the event coordinators for a list of attendees so that you can research the type of work they do
- Know the dress code for the event (business casual vs. suit). Bring breath mints!
- Remember to ask for business cards
- Follow up with contacts after the event. A nice email or LinkedIn note goes a long way!

BUILDING AN EFFECTIVE LINKEDIN PROFILE

As more and more recruiters turn to social media sites for their recruiting efforts (studies suggest that approximately 94% of recruiters use these sites), it is clear that students need to spend time creating an effective online profile.

Fully "Complete" Your Profile
According to LinkedIn, your profile will get significantly more views if you complete the following sections:
- Industry and location
- Current Position (include description)
- Education
- Skills set
- Profile Photo
- Have at least 50 connections

Your Professional Photo
Your LinkedIn profile picture should be a headshot of you in a professional, straight-forward position. Don't include props, scenery, etc. Keep it simple and professional, but also remember to smile and look friendly and approachable. Ask a friend or colleague to take the picture (no selfies!) or come by the UMass Engineering Career Center and ask one of our staff to help.

Your Customized Headline
Use industry-specific terms to highlight your key skills and competencies to market yourself to recruiters. LinkedIn gives you 120 characters to set yourself apart from the competition!

Your Summary Statement
The Summary serves as an "Opening Statement" to recruiters about why they should hire you. This section should summarize what background, skills, achievements and interests you bring to the table. Remember that skills and competencies included in the Summary Statement should be demonstrated in the following "Experience" section. You should be able to back-up any claims you make about yourself in the Summary Statement with evidence from your experiences.

Your Experience
This is the largest section of your LinkedIn profile, and it should show clear and concise examples of professional experiences you have had that demonstrate your technical and professional skills. It is not necessary that every "experience" be a paid one—class projects and research are excellent examples of places where you may have gained technical proficiencies, trouble-shooting, teamwork and presentation skills. Many large companies use a Key Word search when reviewing candidates. Make sure your Experience Section includes the Key Words for any specific position you are applying to.

Education
As a student, you will be looking for a position while you are still completing your degree. Make sure that you have included your "Anticipated Graduation Date" so that employers know when you expect to graduate and when you would be available for work.

Recommendations
One important component of networking is to begin to build credibility in a professional capacity. Consider asking faculty or colleagues who can comment on your technical competencies, work ethic, teamwork, writing or presenting skills to provide a recommendation for you.

Joining and Following Groups and Companies
Joining discipline-specific groups helps you to connect with other like-minded professionals in your field. Make sure that you are joining groups that you can both benefit from and contribute to. LinkedIn is a community, not just a one-sided search site. In addition, "Follow" companies that you might be interested in applying to. Knowing about upcoming recruiting events or recent projects will give you an edge in the recruiting process.

Let's engineer the future together.

We're proud to sponsor the UMass College of Engineering Career Development & Experiential Learning Center — a valuable resource for students looking to connect with the perfect internship or full-time position after graduation. Speaking of rewarding careers, there are many exciting opportunities to explore right here at Verizon.

Discover where your skills could take you by visiting verizon.com/campus

verizon✓

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING:
INTERNSHIPS, CO-OPS, RESEARCH, EXTRACURRICULARS

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

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

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

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

Internship
An internship is a work experience, usually in the summer, related to your major. Most engineering internships are paid and the terms of payment are worked out between the company and the student. Internships are regularly posted on **Handshake** (UMass.JoinHandshake.com).

Co-op
An engineering co-op is a paid, semester-long position that occurs during the academic year. While on co-op, you will maintain your status as an enrolled UMass Amherst student. When you complete the co-op and submit the co-op contract, it will appear on your transcript. Go to https://engineering.umass. edu/current-students/ career-development/internships-coops-research for directions and appropriate forms.

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

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

Student Societies
In the College of Engineering there are approximately 20 official student organizations with various missions including serving humanitarian causes, participating in community service and outreach initiatives, developing leadership skills, and making connections with engineering professionals, faculty and other students within the college. For more detailed information about engineering student societies, go to https://engineering. umass.edu/current-students/student-organizations.

International Undergraduate Students Interested in Experiential Learning
In order to participate in an internship or co-op, international students must follow specific processes and obtain proper authorization to maintain F visa status. This includes application for CPT (Curricular Practical Training) through the International Programs Office and an EXPERIENCES contract in Handshake. Internships also require enrollment in a one credit independent study. Learn more about the steps required for authorization at the Engineering Career Center https:// engineering.umass.edu/current-students/career-development/ internships-coops-research and review the International Programs Office CPT application process at https://www.umass. edu/ipo/iss/curricular-practical-training-cpt.

> **"** *The best part about working at ISO New England is the people you get to work with. From accountants to engineers, all of ISO-NE works together towards a common goal: to keep the lights on in New England for years to come. Whether you are interested in the technical side or the business side of operating a power system, you will be part of a friendly team that wants to help you learn and ultimately grow as a professional in your respective field. An internship through ISO-NE offers the unique opportunity to gain an understanding of the electrical industry as a whole through hands on projects, all while networking with professionals from different backgrounds in the process. You will also have the chance to learn about the exciting future of the electric industry such as new solar and wind farms. Throughout your internship at ISO-NE you will learn about how a large scale power system is run from the people who know how to run it best. Your internship experience at ISO-NE will no doubt prove to be a rewarding one.* **"**

Eva Mailhot, *EE, Assistant Engineer, ISO New England*

TURNING YOUR INTERNSHIP INTO A FULL-TIME POSITION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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CREATING AN EFFECTIVE RESUME
BUILD THE RESUME EMPLOYERS WANT

The resume—an essential tool for any job search. Although a lot of time, effort, and thought has gone into trying to crack the secret, there is no "perfect" resume. Your resume's job is to move you to the next step in the job-search process—the interview. Since each job and organization is different, with different requirements and expectations, the resume that opens the door to an interview in one company might not get you an interview with a different organization. You need to tailor your resume to the job to meet the needs of the potential employer.

Connect What You Have to What the Employer Wants

It's critical to understand up front that, in your resume, interviews, and in all interactions with employers, the responsibility rests with you to make the match between what you have to offer and what the employer needs. Through your resume, you want to demonstrate how your academic, extracurricular, and work experiences connect to the job and offer the employer some evidence that you have the potential to be a good fit for the job and organization. It's up to you to convince the employer that you are worth an interview.

To achieve this, you must research the organization and position so that you'll have a clear idea of what to showcase as you tailor your resume to the specific job. Read the job description carefully: Use it to identify keywords, skills, and requirements. Find the similarities between the job and your experience and qualifications.

What the Employer Wants	What You Have to Offer
Experience with CAD	Designed scale model of product in SolidWorks
Prototyping experience	Created 3D printed prototypes of all product components
Ability to work in a team	Worked in a team of five to create solar powered phone charger

Examine the organization's website for information about its priorities, initiatives, and company culture. **Attend company-hosted information sessions** to get firsthand tips from recruiters. In tailoring your resume, highlight the skills specific to the job at hand and use the keywords and verbiage you've gleaned from the job description and your research. Make matches between your knowledge, skills, and experience apparent.

Showcase Relevant Experience and Key Skills

Relevant **work experience**—often gained through an internship or co-op—gives you a big advantage over candidates who lack such experience. Employers place a high value on experience that relates to the job at hand. Highlight your relevant work experience on your resume. Draw connections between what you did as an intern, for example, and what the job requires.

Demonstrating **key skills** is also critical. Employers hiring engineering students look at a resume for evidence that the job seeker has worked in a team and has leadership abilities, written communication skills, problem-solving skills, and technical acumen. Pay close attention to all technical and soft skills mentioned in the job description and provide examples on your resume.

Other relevant experiences, paid and unpaid, can also be used to demonstrate these essential skills, as well as your technical acumen. Look at your class projects, other work experiences, extracurricular activities, independent projects, research, community service, and other activities for examples of hands-on engineering and key attributes.

The **STAR** (**S**ituation, **T**ask, **A**ctivity, **R**esult) Method can help you create impactful bulleted statements on your resume that highlight your relevant skills and experiences. See an example on .

First Impressions Matter

What does your resume say about you? Ideally, it says you warrant a closer look and an interview. But your resume can also say negative, unintended things about you that may lose you the interview. Your resume can say you don't pay attention, don't care about details, and/or aren't interested in the company or job. Instead of showcasing your skills, your resume might be a showcase of typos, spelling errors, misplaced punctuation, and poor grammar—any of which may lead the employer to put you in the "no" pile. Details count: Spellcheck and proofread your resume and have someone else proofread it, too. Bring it by the Engineering Career Center and let us take a look!

Adapted from "Build The Resume Employers Want". Courtesy of the National Association of Colleges and Employers.

RESUME OUTLINE

NAME

CURRENT ADDRESS   **PERMANENT ADDRESS**
PHONE NUMBER   **EMAIL**

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

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

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

OTHER
- Use this section to highlight any additional skills, qualifications or experiences. Label this section appropriately (Computer Skills, Certifications, Volunteer Experience, etc.).
- Computer Skills should contain programs you are familiar with, especially those mentioned in the job description. If you are applying for technology positions and have extensive computer skills, consider placing this section between the Education and Experience sections.
- Volunteer Activities can be listed here or with your experience.
- If you held a leadership position with an organization, consider including your notable duties/accomplishments.

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

SAMPLE FRESHMAN RESUME

Michael Martinez

17 Verona Street, Sharon, MA 02067
mzmartinez@umass.edu   (781) 555-1234

Summary

Well-rounded, driven electrical engineering student with excellent communication and teamwork skills along with an interest in computer hardware and software design.

Education

University of Massachusetts Amherst   Anticipated May 2022
Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering, GPA: 3.4
Abigail Adams Scholarship

Relevant Courses

Java Programming, Intro to Electrical & Computer Engineering, Physics I & II, Calculus I & II

Academic Projects

Intro to Electrical & Computer Engineering   Fall 2018
- Worked in a team to create hardware buzzer system for four person game show that would accept first contestant response only
- Designed circuit using D flip-flops, AND gates, switches, and LEDs
- Wrote project report including description of internal circuitry
- Constructed successful circuit and demonstrated to faculty and peers

Work Experience

Tech Connections**,** Sharon, MA   October 2017 – May 2018
Customer Consultant
- Worked with business and consumer clients providing technical support for computer and hardware, software, and mobile devices
- Diagnosed and solved networking, device security, and backup problems
- Supported tech team that earned first place in corporate wide customer satisfaction survey

YMCA Camp, Sharon, MA   Summer 2018
Camp Counselor
- Coordinated and lead the daily activities of 20 elementary aged children
- Planned camp events with other counselors and assessed activities for safety, skills development and fun

Skills

Java, C, MATLAB, Microsoft Office Suite

Volunteer Experience

Sharon Community Food Basket   Summer 2018
- Helped serve meals to over 150 low-income individuals and families
- Assisted with food intake and inventory

Affiliations & Activities

Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE)
Society of Hispanic Engineers (SHPE)
Travel, team cycling, swimming

SAMPLE SOPHOMORE RESUME

Sarah James

15 Belle Rd, Troy, NY 12180
sqjames@umass.edu
(413) 555-1234

Summary

Diligent, reliable civil engineering sophomore with strong academic track record and demonstrated leadership and communication skills.

Education

University of Massachusetts Amherst   Anticipated May 2021
Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering, **GPA: 3.7**
Dean's List

Coursework

Strength of Materials, Thermodynamics, Statics, Systems Analysis and Economics in Civil Engineering, Programming for Civil Engineers, Civil Engineering Measurements, Probability and Statistics

Relevant Projects

Concrete Mix and Testing   Spring 2019
- Developed concrete mix to meet compressive strength of 4,000 psi based on properties of fine and coarse aggregates including particle-size distribution, moisture content, and specific gravities
- Prepared the concrete by batching and mixing and performed compressive and splitting tensile strength tests on the cured specimens
- Detailed process and results in written lab report

Surveying & Measurements   Spring 2018
- Created topographic map of local public park as part of a four member team
- Measured elevations and surfaces features using total station
- Used AutoCAD to create a topographic map from data collected
- Wrote a technical report including project details and final map

Engineers Without Borders, Kenya   Fall 2017
- Traveled with UMass EWB group to help improve water quality in Kenyan village
- Constructed new spring boxes and repaired existing boxes using local tools
- Collected water samples at various sources and analyzed quality with a bacteria agar
- Educated local community on safe water storage, disinfection, and hygiene

Work Experience

ABC Building & Remodeling, Troy, NY   Summers 2017, 2018
- Worked with construction crew electrician, plumber and carpenters on residential renovations
- Gained hands-on experience from a wide range of projects including barn construction, support beam replacement, and kitchen remodels

Leadership

Co-captain, University of Massachusetts Intramural Soccer   Fall 2018-Present
- Organize team, schedule games, reserve fields and communicate with members

Skills

AutoCAD, MATLAB, Microsoft Excel, PowerPoint, Total Station, construction hand tools

Activities & Interests

Engineers Without Borders, hiking, intramural soccer, skiing, guitar

SAMPLE JUNIOR RESUME

Brent Riff
(413) 555-1234
briff@umass.edu

Permanent Address	**School Address**
49 Pelly Rd.	16 Montam Rd.
Sudbury, MA 01776	Amherst, MA 01002

Summary Statement:
Technically strong engineering student with hands-on experience in mechanical design and analysis in independent and team-based projects. Effective communicator motivated by new challenges.

Education:
University of Massachusetts Amherst   Anticipated May 2020
Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering, 3.2 GPA
Additionally, pursuing Certificate in Material Science

Relevant Courses:
Physical & Chemical Processing of Material, System Dynamics, Manufacturing Processes, Heat Transfer, Circuits, Fluid Mechanics, Design of Mechanical Components, Dynamics, Thermodynamics, Strength of Materials, Probability/Statistics, Statics

Work Experience:
Adler Controls, Sudbury, MA – Mechanical Engineering Intern   Summer 2018
- Conducted force characterization analysis on aircraft circuit breakers to determine cause of low first pass yield rates on production line.
- Designed test plan and implemented, testing circuit breakers at various current levels per device specifications.
- Used high speed and thermal imaging camera and real time x-ray machine to test devices.
- Analyzed data and recommended re-design to improve first pass production yield rates.
- Compiled final report of the findings and delivered results in a PowerPoint presentation to senior managers.

Academic Projects:
Carbon Fiber Composite Sandwich Design   Fall 2018
- Group leader for lab project in which the highest specific flexural modulus of a composite was to be attained by use of carbon fiber facing and a foam core with specific dimensional constraints.
- Researched foam core materials, contacted vendors and acquired samples of ridged PVC foam.
- Prepared specimens, conducted three-point bend test and Charpy impact test in accordance with ASTM 790D-07.
- Collected data and complied formal PowerPoint and technical report and presented to course instructor and lab.
- Final result was a composite material that was determined to have the highest specific flexural modulus.

Rocket Prototype Modeling & Design   Fall 2016
- Group leader for engineering project in which the trajectory of a water rocket at varying initial pressures, water loads, and launch angles was mathematically modeled with MATLAB.
- Coordinated logistics of meeting times/locations, deadlines, and final presentation.
- Constructed prototype rockets and launch pad with ProEngineer.
- Physically built three rocket types and launch pad for field testing based on ProEngineer specs.
- Collected data on the varying launch distances and compared them to the MATLAB model.
- Delivered a PowerPoint presentation and submitted a technical paper to professor, TAs, and class.

Research Experience:
Independent Study – Wind Turbines Effect on Radar Interference   Spring 2019
- Researched the effects wind turbines have on radar interference to assess and eliminate issues facing the wind industry.
- Learned ways to prevent wind installations from being denied permission to be built due to radar interference.
- Delivered a final research paper on the subject explaining the various forms of radar interference, the causes of the various radar interferences as well as mitigation techniques to minimize wind turbines negative effects on radar.

Technical Skills:
ProEngineer, MATLAB, Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook, Instron tensile & Charpy impact testers, drill press, table saw, chop saw, band/jig jaw, pneumatic drills, soldering. Currently learning: ANSYS Workbench.

Interests:
General fitness, community service, snowboarding, boating, and fishing.

SAMPLE SENIOR RESUME

Samuel T. Mitchell

smitchell@umass.edu
(413) 555-1234   Townsend, MA

Chemical engineering senior experienced in both manufacturing and research and development in an industrial setting. Effective problem-solver with solid technical skills and demonstrated leadership interested in pharmaceutical processing.

Education:
University of Massachusetts Amherst   May 2019
Bachelor of Science in Chemical Engineering, GPA: 3.5
Concentration in Biochemical Engineering

Additional Coursework:
Cellular and Molecular Biology, Biochemistry for Chemists, Intro to Biochemical Engineering, Bioprocessing Engineering Lab, Tissue Engineering (Graduate Level)

Engineering Experience:
Bioprocessing Lab, University of Massachusetts Amherst   January 2019 - Present
- Synthesizing, purifying and analyzing a novel protein (hPP1) with potential cancer treatment applications.
- Used PCR to engineer primers for the gene encoding the protein of interest, inserted completed gene into pET-42 inducible expression plasmid and transformed plasmid into bacterial cells via Petri dish cell culture.
- Cultured the engineered cells to produce protein of interest in 5L bioreactor, monitored batch information through growth and production phases and adjusted agitation, temperature, and pH as needed.
- Currently designing a process to purify hPP1 from the fermentation broth using various forms of chromatography.
- Performed assays to determine if cells contained DNA for hPP1 by PCR and gel electrophoresis. Will quantify amount and activity of protein present in the purified fermentation product.

Byers PharmaTech, Boston, MA
Manufacturing Engineering Co-op   August 2017 - January 2018
- Coordinated the review and updating of over 500 electronic records of the Clean In Place/Steam In Place (CIP/SIP) systems as Engineering teams identified necessary modifications to the CIP/SIP routes.
- Created and presented a Plant Hazards Training Seminar to over 25 professionals including the site-wide First Aid/Safety Team (FAST) and Environmental Health and Safety Department (EH&S).

Steam In Place Validation Engineering Intern   May - August 2018
- Executed over 100 Steam in Place Performance Qualification tests on biopharmaceutical manufacturing equipment including Bioreactors, Liquid Filters, Chromatography skids and an Ultra-Filtration device.
- Troubleshot failed tests, analyzed data and compiled extensive data packages that will be used by the FDA during their final review of the plant.

Leadership & Activities:
President of *American Institute of Chemical Engineers (AIChE)* UMass Student Chapter   April 2018 - April 2019
- Organized Executive Board and General Chapter Body of over 80 students to decide the direction of the society.
- Interacted with leadership of other school's societies, organized a delegation to the National Student Conference.

Chem-E-Car Team - American Institute of Chemical Engineers (AIChE) Competition   2016
- Worked on team of four to build hydrogen fuel cell powered model car to travel specified distance at set weight.
- Applied pressure-distance curve to predict travel distance based on varying pressures of hydrogen vessel.
- Produced chassis components to ensure optimal structural integrity using 3D printer.
- Earned 1st place among 40 cars in the AIChE regional competition.

Skills:
Proficient in MathCAD, MATLAB, AutoCAD, and Microsoft Office Suite. Working knowledge in Aspen.

RESUME ACTION VERBS

ANALYTICAL & FINANCIAL
Accelerated
Adjusted
Administered
Allocated
Analyzed
Appraised
Assessed
Audited
Balanced
Budgeted
Calculated
Clarified
Collected
Compared
Computed
Conserved
Controlled
Decreased
Determined
Developed
Estimated
Evaluated
Examined
Experimented
Explored
Extracted
Forecast
Formulated
Gathered
Identified
Interpreted
Interviewed
Investigated
Managed
Marketed
Maximized
Measured
Minimized
Organized
Planned
Prepared
Programmed
Projected
Proved
Purchased
Reconciled
Reduced
Researched
Retrieved
Screened
Searched
Solved
Specified
Studied
Summarized
Surveyed
Systematized
Tested
Validated

CREATIVE
Composed
Conceptualized
Condensed
Constructed
Created
Designed
Edited
Entertained
Established
Formulated
Illustrated
Initiated
Integrated
Introduced
Modeled
Originated
Performed
Photographed
Revised
Revitalized
Shaped

INTERPERSONAL
Adapted
Advised
Advocated
Answered
Assessed
Coached
Collaborated
Contributed
Cooperated
Counseled
Demonstrated
Enabled
Encouraged
Ensured
Expedited
Facilitated
Focused
Furthered
Guided
Initiated
Interacted
Intervened
Listened
Mediated
Mobilized
Moderated
Motivated
Negotiated
Provided
Referred
Rehabilitated
Represented
Resolved
Simplified
Supplied
Supported
Volunteered

LEADERSHIP
Advanced
Administered
Appointed
Approved
Assigned
Attained
Authorized
Chaired
Completed
Coordinated
Decided
Delegated
Developed
Directed
Diversified
Enforced
Enhanced
Established
Founded
Generated
Headed
Implemented
Improved
Incorporated
Increased
Initiated
Integrated
Introduced
Managed
Mobilized
Motivated
Organized
Oversaw
Planned
Presided
Prioritized
Produced
Recommended
Recruited
Reorganized
Replaced
Reviewed
Secured
Selected
Solidified
Stimulated
Streamlined
Strengthened
Supervised
Sustained

COMMUNICATION
Addressed
Advertised
Articulated
Authored
Clarified
Collaborated
Communicated
Composed

Consulted
Contracted
Convinced
Corresponded
Debated
Defined
Demonstrated
Described
Directed
Discussed
Drafted
Edited
Explained
Familiarized
Formulated
Illustrated
Incorporated
Informed
Interpreted
Interviewed
Marketed
Mediated
Moderated
Outlined
Participated
Persuaded
Presented
Promoted
Proposed
Published
Reconciled
Recruited
Referred
Reinforced
Reported
Responded
Solicited
Specified
Summarized
Synthesized
Translated
Wrote

ORGANIZATION
Approved
Arranged
Catalogued
Centralized
Classified
Collected
Compiled
Coordinated
Corrected
Corresponded
Distributed
Edited
Executed
Generated
Implemented
Incorporated
Maintained

Monitored
Obtained
Operated
Organized
Planned
Prepared
Processed
Provided
Recorded
Registered
Reserved
Responded
Restructured
Reviewed
Scheduled
Screened
Set up
Submitted
Supplied
Standardized
Synthesized
Updated
Unified
Validated
Verified

MARKETING
Accelerated
Achieved
Attained
Completed
Conceived
Delivered
Earned
Exceeded
Expanded
Generated
Increased
Improved
Launched
Led
Marketed
Maximized
Minimized
Promoted
Resolved
Restored
Saved
Succeeded
Surpassed
Transformed

TEACHING
Adapted
Advised
Appraised
Coached
Communicated
Conducted
Coordinated
Critiqued

Developed
Educated
Enabled
Encouraged
Evaluated
Facilitated
Focused
Guided
Individualized
Informed
Instructed
Motivated
Simulated
Stimulated
Taught
Tested
Trained
Tutored

TECHNICAL
Adapted
Applied
Assembled
Automated
Built
Calculated
Computed
Conserved
Constructed
Controlled
Converted
Designed
Developed
Diagnosed
Drafted
Engineered
Inspected
Installed
Maintained
Manufactured
Measured
Monitored
Operated
Overhauled
Programmed
Regulated
Remodeled
Repaired
Restored
Specialized
Standardized
Upgraded
Utilized

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WHAT HAPPENS DURING THE INTERVIEW?

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

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

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

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

It Starts Before You Even Say Hello

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

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

How's Your Small Talk Vocabulary?

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

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

The Recruiter Has the Floor

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

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

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

It's Your Turn to Ask Questions

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

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

The Close Counts, Too

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

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

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

Expect the Unexpected

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

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

Evaluations Made by Recruiters

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

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

10 RULES OF INTERVIEWING

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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ARE YOU READY FOR A BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEW?

"Tell me about a time when you were on a team, and one of the members wasn't carrying his or her weight." If this is one of the leading questions in your job interview, you could be in for a behavioral interview. Based on the premise that the best way to predict future behavior is to determine past behavior, this style of interviewing is popular among recruiters.

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

Behavioral vs. Traditional Interviews

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

✔ Instead of asking how you would behave in a particular situation, the interviewer will ask you to describe how you did behave.

✔ Expect the interviewer to question and probe (think of "peeling the layers from an onion").

✔ The interviewer will ask you to provide details and will not allow you to theorize or generalize about events.

✔ The interview will be a more structured process that will concentrate on areas that are important to the interviewer, rather than allowing you to concentrate on areas that you may feel are important.

✔ Most interviewers will be taking notes throughout the interview.

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

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

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

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

"What class did you like the most? What did you like about it?"

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

"Can you give me an example?"

"What did you do?"

"What did you say?"

"What were you thinking?"

"How did you feel?"

"What was your role?"

"What was the result?"

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

How to Prepare for a Behavioral Interview

✔ Recall recent situations that show favorable behaviors or actions, especially those involving coursework, work experience, leadership, teamwork, initiative, planning and customer service.

✔ Prepare short descriptions of each situation; be ready to give details if asked.

✔ Be sure each story has a beginning, a middle and an end; i.e., be ready to describe the situation, your action and the outcome or result.

✔ Be sure the outcome or result reflects positively on you (even if the result itself was not favorable).

✔ Be honest. The interviewer will find out if your story is built on a weak foundation.

✔ Be specific. Don't generalize about several events; give a detailed accounting of one event.

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

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

Use the STAR Method As You Prepare

	STAR Answer	Example from Above
S	Describe a **Situation**	Working on a team
T	Describe a **Task**	Building a canoe out of concrete
A	Describe the **Action** you took	Offered help to teammate who was struggling (leadership), arranged tutoring (problem solving).
R	Describe the **Result**	Teammate was supported, project completed for a B grade.

Don't Forget the Basics

It will always be important to put your best foot forward and make a good impression on the interviewer with appropriate attire, grooming, a firm handshake and direct eye contact. Since the behavioral interviewer is looking for past actions only, all you need to do is remember your own past. Using your STAR stories, highlight the skills the employer is seeking that you possess. There is no substitute for promptness, courtesy, preparation, enthusiasm and a positive attitude.

THE SITE VISIT/INTERVIEW: ONE STEP CLOSER

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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FREQUENTLY ASKED ENGINEERING INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Tell me about yourself?
2. What do you know about this company?
3. Why do you want to work here?
4. Why should I hire you?
5. What is your greatest strength/greatest weakness?
6. Tell me about a conflict you had with another person and how you dealt with it.
7. Tell me about the most challenging engineering project that you have been involved with during past year.
8. Describe the most significant written technical report or presentation that you had to complete.
9. What is your most/least favorite class and why?
10. Think of a specific engineering project when you answer this question. What could you have done to be more successful in achieving your goal(s)?
11. Describe a time when you confronted a problem that really tested your engineering know-how.
12. What is your overall career objective? Where do you see yourself in 5-10 years?
13. Give me an example of a time in which you were effective in doing away with the "constant emergencies" and "surprises" that engineers often face.
14. Describe a time when you used your engineering knowledge to solve a problem for which there appeared to be no answer.
15. I expect the engineer that I hire for this position to be precise— detail oriented in everything he or she does. What checks and balances do you use to make sure that you don't make mistakes?
16. Give me an example of a time when you had to teach a skill to other engineers.
17. Some of the best-engineered ideas are born out of an individual's ability to challenge others' ways of thinking. Tell me about a time when you were successful in doing this.
18. If I offer you a position as an engineer with us, how do you plan to get off to a quick start?
19. Give me an example of something that you have learned from a mistake that you made on a project or at an internship.
20. Tell me about a time when a project team effort that you were involved in failed.
21. Describe a time when you had to interact with a variety of people.
22. What resources do you use when you run into technical problems?
23. Why did you choose engineering and your specific major?
24. Give me two examples of technical decisions that you had to make in a class project or at an internship.
25. In the field of engineering, priorities often change quickly. Give me an example of a time when that happened. How did you handle it?
26. What personal characteristics do you feel are necessary to be a successful engineer?
27. What single technical skill or ability is your best asset?
28. Tell me about a time when you surpassed all expectations by going "above and beyond" in a class project or at an internship.
29. How do you feel about the workload in the engineering department at school or in an internship?

" By using resources at the Engineering Career Center, I learned how to showcase my skill set and because of that I've had so many incredible career opportunities. Early in my college career I utilized the walk-in cover letter and resume help. This helped me keep my resume up to date and ready for any career fair or networking night. In order to improve on my verbal presentation skills I had a mock interview with a Career Center staff member. After this I felt extremely prepared to talk about my resume and qualifications. All of this preparation paid off at an AbbVie networking night where I attended an information session, submitted my resume, and had a quick on the spot interview. During this time I must have made a good impression because I was eventually offered the internship and enjoyed it so much that I now work at the company full-time. The services offered by the Career Center have been so valuable and I would recommend them for every engineer at UMass. Whether I needed to write a cover letter, update my LinkedIn profile, or just discuss my future, I knew that the Career Center staff would be happy to help! "

Sarah Duquette, *CHE, Associate Scientist, Manufacturing Sciences, AbbVie*

QUESTIONS TO ASK EMPLOYERS

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

ADVICE FROM THE EXPERTS

INTERVIEWING TIPS FROM ON-CAMPUS RECRUITERS

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

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

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

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

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

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

DRESSING FOR THE INTERVIEW

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

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

Even though many companies have adopted the "office casual" dress code, or recruiters at the career fair are dressed casually in jeans or khakis, don't try to set new standards in the interview. Unless an employer has specifically told you otherwise, "business professional" is the expected dress code for an interview!

Here are some guidelines:

Suits/Dresses: Examples of appropriate attire include a two-piece suit with jacket and pant/skirt, a coordinated pant/skirt and blazer, or a career style dress. Solid, conservative colors (navy, dark grey, neutrals) or simple, minimal patterns are suggested. Skirts and dresses should be knee length and necklines should be conservative.

Shirts: With suits, pair a long sleeve, button down, collared shirt and a tie, or a tailored blouse or sweater with a modest neckline.

Accessories: Wear professional-looking business shoes, keeping heels flat to modest in height. Shoes should be clean and polished. If socks are worn, they should be dark colored and high enough so no skin is visible when you sit down and cross your legs. Keep jewelry simple and professional.

Grooming: Good personal hygiene is critical including clean and well-trimmed hair, facial hair, and fingernails. Also avoid strong perfumes or colognes and keep any make-up minimal and professional.

Polished and Professional!
Remember, you want your experience and qualifications to shine. Your appearance should enhance your presentation, not overwhelm it!

DEALING WITH REJECTION IN THE JOB SEARCH

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

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

Eight Guidelines to Ward Off Rejection

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

JOB SEARCH LETTERS

Uses and Formats

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

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

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

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

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

Cover Letter Format

Your Street Address
City, State Zip Code
Telephone Number
Email Address

Date

Contact Name, Title
Name of Organization
Street or P. O. Box Address
City, State Zip Code

Dear Mr./Ms. Last Name:

Opening Paragraph:
The first paragraph should be brief, perhaps two or three sentences. Use this paragraph to identify the position you are applying for, how you learned about this position, and to identify any personal contacts you have with the company. Do some research so you can state your interest in this particular company/position.

Second Paragraph:
The middle paragraph(s) is used to expand upon your qualifications and how they match with the needs of the company. Identify your most relevant skills and qualifications, demonstrating how your background and experiences qualify you for the job. Be sure to focus on the reader's needs, not your own.

Third Paragraph:
The concluding paragraph should summarize why your background, experience, and personality would be a good fit for the position. State how you can be reached and express your willingness to come in for an interview or supply further information and thank them for their time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Your Signature

Your Name Typed

EMAIL CORRESPONDENCE

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

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

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

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

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

Written by John Martalo, a freelance writer based in San Diego.

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

Thank-You Notes

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

Dear Ms. Jones:

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

Sincerely,
John Doe

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

Tips

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

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

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

QUALITIES DESIRED IN NEW COLLEGE GRADUATES
By Businesses, Industries and Government Agencies

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

Adapts Textbook Learning to the Working World
- Quick learner
- Asks questions
- Analytical; independent thinker
- Willing to continue education and growth
- Committed to excellence
- Open-minded, willing to try new things

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

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

Leadership Skills
- Organizational skills and attention to detail
- Accepts and handles responsibilities
- Action-oriented and results-driven
- Loyal to employers
- Customer-focused
- Team-spirited; understands group dynamics

- Always willing to help others
- Mature, poised and personable
- Diversity aware; treats others with respect and dignity

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

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

JOB SEARCH RESOURCES

RESOURCE	INFO
HANDSHAKE umass.joinhandshake.com	Search for jobs, internships, co-ops, and recruiting events such as career fairs and info sessions.
ON-CAMPUS RECRUITING	One of the primary ways companies recruit for technical positions. This includes Career Fairs, Networking events and company sponsored information sessions, tech talks, workshops and resume drop tabling. Check for Engineering Career Center events at UMass.JoinHandshake.com.
YOUR UMASS EMAIL	UMass Engineering Career Center sends weekly emails highlighting job, internship/co-op, and research opportunities, and upcoming recruiting events and workshops.
UMASS AMHERST STUDENT EMPLOYMENT OFFICE	On-campus and local positions at https://www.umass.edu/umfa/seo.
SOCIAL MEDIA	LinkedIn, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter. Follow favorite companies and check for job openings. Complete your LinkedIn profile and highlight technical skills/experience and display an appropriate photo. Perform a search on your name to review your internet presence, clean up results if necessary.
NETWORKING	Talk to everyone you know to develop contacts; ask for information on jobs/companies/industries and circulate your resume. You may learn of unadvertised openings or get a courtesy interview.
OCCUPATIONAL INFORMATION NETWORK (O*NET) https://www.onetonline.org	The O*NET is the nation's primary source of occupational information, containing information on hundreds of jobs. The database provides the basis for the Career Exploration Tools that describe occupations in terms of the skills and knowledge required, typical work settings, and average salaries.
FEDERAL JOBS	Engineering undergraduates can search for Federally-sponsored opportunities including research and non-research based internships, scholarships, fellowships, etc. across many U.S. government organizations (http://stemundergrads.science.gov). The Federal government has hundreds of entry-level engineering jobs as well as internships across all engineering majors https://www.usajobs.gov.
INTERNATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES http://www.umass.edu/careers/jobsearch/workingabroad	Explore a variety of resources for international job opportunities as well as resources for international students looking to work in the U.S.

CHOOSING BETWEEN JOB OFFERS

The first question many of your friends will ask when you receive a job offer is "What does it pay?" For many college graduates this consideration is near the top of the list, which is not surprising.

In order to evaluate a salary offer you need to know what the average pay scale is for your degree and industry. The National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) is a good source of salary information for entry-level college graduates. Their annual Salary Survey should be available in your campus career center. Make sure you factor cost-of-living differences when considering salary offers. For example, you may need an offer of $76,000 in San Francisco to equal an offer of $40,000 in Huntsville, Ala.

Bonuses and commissions are considered part of your salary, so take them into consideration when evaluating an offer. It's also important to have a good understanding of an employer's policies concerning raises. Be sure to never make your decision on salary alone. Students tend to overemphasize salary when considering job offers. Money is important, but it's more important that you like your job. If you like your job, chances are you'll be good at it. And if you're good at your job, eventually you will be financially rewarded.

Factor in Benefits
Of course, salary is only one way in which employers financially compensate their employees. Ask anybody with a long work history and they'll tell you how important benefits are. When most people think of employer benefits, they think of things like health insurance, vacation time and retirement savings. But employers are continually coming up with more and more creative ways to compensate their workers, from health club memberships to flextime. The value of a benefits plan depends on your own plans and needs.

Who's the Boss?
Who you work for can have as much bearing on your overall job satisfaction as how much you earn and what you do. First, analyze how stable the potential employer is. If the company is for-profit, what were its earnings last year? What are its projections for growth? If the job is with a government agency or a nonprofit, what type of funding does it have? How long has the employer been around? You could receive the best job offer in the world, but if the job is cut in six months, it won't do you much good.

Corporate Culture
There are three aspects to a work environment: 1) the physical workspace, 2) the "corporate culture" of the employer, and 3) fellow co-workers. Don't underestimate the importance of a good workspace. If you are a private person, you probably will not be able to do your best work in a cluster of cubicles. If you are an extrovert, you won't be happy shut in an office for hours on end.

Corporate culture comprises the attitudes, experiences, beliefs and values of an organization. What's the hierarchy of the organization? Is there a dress code? Is overtime expected? Do they value creativity or is it more important that you follow protocol? Whenever possible, you should talk to current or previous employees to get a sense of the corporate culture. Ask yourself if the corporate culture is compatible with your own attitudes, beliefs and values. Your boss and fellow co-workers make up the last part of the work environment. Hopefully, you will like the people you work with, but you must, at least, be able to work well with them professionally. You may not be able to get a good sense of your potential co-workers or boss during the interview process. But if you do develop strong feelings one way or the other, be sure to take them into consideration when making your final decision.

Like What You Do
Recent college graduates are seldom able to land their dream jobs right out of school, but it's still important that you at least like what you do. Before accepting a job offer, make sure you have a very good sense of what your day-to-day duties will be. What are your responsibilities? Will you be primarily working in teams or alone? Will your job tasks be repetitive or varied? Will your work be challenging? What level of stress can you expect with the position?

Location, Location, Location
Climate, proximity to friends and family and local population (i.e., urban vs. rural) should all be evaluated against your desires and preferences. If you are considering a job far away from your current address, will the employer pay for part or all of your moving expenses? Even if you are looking at a local job, location can be important—especially as it relates to travel time. A long commute will cost you time, money and probably more than a little frustration.

Time Is on Your Side
It's acceptable to request two or three days to consider a job offer. And depending on the employer and the position, even a week of consideration time can be acceptable. If you've already received another offer or expect to hear back from anther employer soon, make sure you have time to consider both offers. But don't ask for too much time to consider. Like all of us, employers don't like uncertainty. Make sure you give them an answer one way or another as soon as you can.

Reneging on Offers
It is UNETHICAL to renege on an offer. If you accept an offer, you should stop your job search and cancel any scheduled interviews. If you would like to continue your job search in hopes of securing a higher salary, you should decline the offer and then proceed with your search.

It's Your Call
Once you make a decision, act quickly. If you are accepting a position, notify the hiring manager by phone followed by a confirmation letter or an email. Keep the letter short and state the agreed upon salary and the start date. When rejecting an offer, make sure to thank the employer for their time and interest. It always pays to be polite in your correspondence. You never know where your career path will take you and it might just take you back to an employer you initially rejected.

By Chris Enstrom, a freelance writer from Nashville, Ind.

ACCEPTING A JOB OFFER

When you accept an offer for an internship, co-op or full-time position, both the UMass College of Engineering Career Center and the employer expect that you are acting in good faith and will honor that commitment. Accepting an offer only as a precautionary measure and then reneging on that commitment is considered unprofessional, unethical, and may seriously damage your future job prospects, as well as those of other UMass students and alumni. It is your responsibility to thoroughly evaluate an offer and decide if the opportunity is right for you before accepting it, even if the company provides you with less time than you would actually like to make this decision.

Once you accept an internship, co-op or full-time job, or decide to go to graduate school, AND the employer has confirmed that any offer contingencies such as background checks, reference checks, or drug screens have been cleared, you should withdraw from the recruiting process. This requires that you stop applying for positions and withdraw from any interviews or discussions with employers that are actively considering you for a job. Employers expect and value this professionalism, and it allows them to engage with other students to fill the position.

If you have any questions or need help in evaluating an offer or managing offer decision timelines, please contact the Engineering Career Center, we can help!
COECareers@ecs.umass.edu

Adapted from "Playing Fair: Your Rights and Responsibilities as a Job Seeker," and "Can You Change Your Mind About A Job After You've Accepted?" by Kayla Villwock, Intern Program Manager for SAS. Courtesy of NACE (National Association of Colleges and Employers).

THE COST OF LIVING INDEX

The following is a selection of cities where many graduating students accept offers. The cost of living index is based on the composite price of groceries, housing, utilities, transportation, health care, clothing and entertainment in each city listed. Use the calculation to compare salaries in different cities. For further information about the data below, please refer to www.bestplaces.net/cost-of-living.

To compare information from other sources, refer to these websites: www.salary.com and www.homefair.com/real-estate/salary-calculator.asp.

Salary Comparison Equation

$$\frac{\text{City \#1}}{\text{City \#2}} \times \text{Salary} = \$\rule{2cm}{0.4pt}$$

What is the New York City equivalent of a $50,000 salary in Chicago?

New York City	168		
Chicago	103	$\times$	$50,000 = $81,553

Average City, USA	100	**Florida**		**Maryland**		**New York**		**Tennessee**	
Alabama		Miami	119	Baltimore	88	Albany	102	Chattanooga	88
Birmingham	78	Orlando	92	**Massachusetts**		Buffalo	74	Memphis	73
Montgomery	89	**Georgia**		Boston	161	New York City	168	Nashville	99
Alaska		Atlanta	97	**Michigan**		Syracuse	89	**Texas**	
Anchorage	143	**Hawaii**		Ann Arbor	111	**North Carolina**		Austin	107
Arizona		Honolulu	199	Detroit	73	Chapel Hill	128	Dallas	106
Flagstaff	119	**Idaho**		Lansing	82	Charlotte	94	Houston	98
Phoenix	99	Boise	107	**Minnesota**		Raleigh	101	San Antonio	92
Tucson	92	**Illinois**		Minneapolis	108	**North Dakota**		**Utah**	
Arkansas		Chicago	103	St. Paul	102	Fargo	98	Salt Lake City	115
Little Rock	88	Springfield	87	**Missouri**		**Ohio**		**Vermont**	
California		**Indiana**		Kansas City	94	Cincinnati	83	Burlington	124
Fresno	105	Bloomington	98	St. Louis	84	Cleveland	79	**Virginia**	
Irvine	215	Indianapolis	89	**Montana**		Columbus	82	Richmond	95
Los Angeles	164	South Bend	83	Billings	107	Dayton	76	Virginia Beach	110
Sacramento	113	**Iowa**		Missoula	110	**Oklahoma**		**Washington**	
San Diego	164	Des Moines	82	**Nebraska**		Oklahoma City	89	Seattle	154
San Francisco	243	Iowa City	105	Lincoln	91	Tulsa	85	**Washington, DC**	154
San José	197	**Kansas**		Omaha	88	**Oregon**		**West Virginia**	
Colorado		Kansas City	85	**Nevada**		Portland	126	Charleston	91
Boulder	155	**Kentucky**		Las Vegas	99	**Pennsylvania**		**Wisconsin**	
Colorado Springs	101	Lexington	95	**New Jersey**		Philadelphia	96	Madison	116
Denver	115	Louisville	87	Atlantic City	100	Pittsburgh	84	Milwaukee	85
Connecticut		**Louisiana**		Princeton	162	**South Carolina**		**Wyoming**	
Hartford	109	Baton Rouge	90	Newark	122	Charleston	109	Cheyenne	103
New Haven	113	New Orleans	99	**New Mexico**		Columbia	99		
Stamford	167	**Maine**		Albuquerque	101	**South Dakota**			
Delaware		Portland	118	Santa Fe	120	Sioux Falls	95		
Wilmington	98								

FEDERAL JOBS: WORKING FOR UNCLE SAM

So you want to work for the federal government? You are not alone. Uncle Sam employs approximately 2.1 million civilian workers worldwide. Federal employees receive a generous benefits package, and as of 2015 they earned an average salary of $84,153 ($94,444 as of 2018, U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis). As the largest employer in the U.S., the federal government offers a variety of career opportunities unparalleled in the private sector. Federal employees work with (and create) cutting-edge technology. They create policy, programs and services that impact the health, safety and welfare of millions of people worldwide.

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

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

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

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

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

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

If you are looking for engineering-specific federally-sponsored opportunities including research and non-research based internships, scholarships, fellowships, etc., across many U.S. government organizations then go to https://stemundergrads.science.gov.

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

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

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

Written by Chris Enstrom, a freelance writer from Nashville, Ind.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AND THE JOB SEARCH

Go to the UMass Engineering job board at UMass.JoinHandshake.com and filter your search by work authorization
Please make an appointment with one of our professional career staff for CPT assistance.

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

The following is an overview of the issues most relevant to international students in developing a job search strategy.

Bureau of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Regulations

As an international student, you should only obtain employment-related information from an experienced immigration attorney or your campus USCIS representative. *Advice from any other resource may be inaccurate.* Once you have decided to remain in the United States to work, contact the University of Massachusetts International Programs Office. International students interested in working in the U.S. post-graduation must apply for OPT (Optional Practical Training) work authorization through the UMass IPO. The most common path is for the F-1 student to apply for OPT 2 to 3 months before completing their degree requirements. OPT work authorization is for a maximum of 12 months with a possible one-time extension of 24 additional months available to certain STEM degree recipients. See details at www.umass.edu/ipo.

Importance of Skills and Career Field

Find out if your degree and skills-set are currently in demand in the U.S. job market. An advanced degree, highly marketable skills or extensive experience will all make your job search easier. Find out what region of the United States holds the majority of the jobs in your field; you may need to relocate in order to find the job you want. Learn all you can about your targeted career field by talking to professors, reading industry publications and attending professional meetings and regional conferences.

Role of Employers

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

The employer (through hiring managers, human resources staff or employment agencies) will most likely use several resources to find workers, including:

- College recruiting
- Campus or community job fairs
- Posting jobs on the company website or on national job posting sites on the Internet
- Posting jobs in major newspapers or trade publications
- Posting jobs with professional associations
- Resume searches on national online services
- Employee referrals
- Regional and national conferences
- Employment agencies ("headhunters")

Are you accessible to employers through at least some of the above strategies? If not, develop a plan to make sure your credentials are widely circulated. Notify as many people as possible in your field about your job search.

Strong Communication Skills

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

- Provide a well-prepared resume that includes desirable skills and relevant employment experiences.
- Clearly convey your interests and ability to do the job in an interview.
- Understand English when spoken to you and can effectively express your thoughts in English.

It's important to be able to positively promote yourself and talk with confidence about your education, relevant skills and related experiences. Self-promotion is rarely easy for anyone. But, it can be especially difficult for individuals from cultures where talking about yourself is considered inappropriate. When interviewing in the United States, however, you are expected to be able to explain your credentials and why you are suitable for the position.

Be sensitive to the interviewer's verbal and nonverbal cues. Some international students may not realize when their accent is causing them to be misunderstood. Interviewers are sometimes too embarrassed or impatient to ask for clarification, so be on the lookout for nonverbal clues, such as follow-up questions that don't match your responses or sudden disinterest on the part of the interviewer. Also, make sure you express proper nonverbal communication; always look directly at the employer in order to portray confidence and honesty.

If your English language skills need some work, get involved with campus and community activities. These events will allow you to practice speaking English.

Career Center

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

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

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

Written by Rosita Smith.

IS GRADUATE SCHOOL RIGHT FOR YOU?

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

1. Should I consider going to graduate school?

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

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

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

Work first if…
- you would like to get some real-world work experience before investing thousands of dollars in a graduate degree.
- you cannot afford to go to graduate school now, and you haven't applied for any scholarships, grants, fellowships and assistantships, which could pay for a great deal of your education.

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

3. I am broke. How will I pay for tuition, books, fees and living expenses?
- Most engineering PhD programs offer students a paid teaching assistantship or research assistantship. However, most engineering Master's programs do not. Check with individual departments to make sure you know how they handle funding.
- *Student Loans:* Even if you've taken out loans in the past, another $50,000 - $75,000 may be a sound "investment" in your future.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Written by Roslyn J. Bradford

GUIDELINES FOR WRITING YOUR PERSONAL STATEMENT

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1. Develop an outline of your statement prior to writing. It doesn't have to be detailed. It can be three or four main points in the order you want to make them.
2. Accentuate your strengths and what makes you unique.
3. Explain your weaknesses in positive ways. For example, refer to them not as weaknesses but as areas for improvement or growth.
4. Paint pictures and tell stories about what makes you special. In this way the admissions readers will remember you. The story can be happy or sad. The more feeling you can inject into your statement, the more you will stand out.
5. Find out the specific orientation and philosophy of the graduate program. Adapt and refine your statement to fit. This will make you stand out from other applicants who recycle the same personal statement with each application.

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

Paragraph 1	A personal human-interest story
Paragraph 2	Your academic interests and achievements
Paragraph 3	Your relevant work and/or research experiences
Paragraph 4	Your career interests
Paragraph 5	Why you are interested in this particular school
Paragraph 6	The qualities you will bring to this school

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

"Perfect Personal Statements" by Mark Alan Stewart. *Peterson's Guide 2004*

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

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

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

Candidates for employment, graduate school, scholarships or any activity for which others will evaluate their talents and abilities will need to request letters of recommendation. The content and quality of these letters, as well as the caliber of the people who write them, are critical to the selection process.

Selecting People to Serve as References

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

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

Try to Meet Face to Face

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

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

Help Them Help You

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

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

What's the Magic Number?

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

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

Maintain Professional Courtesy

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

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

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

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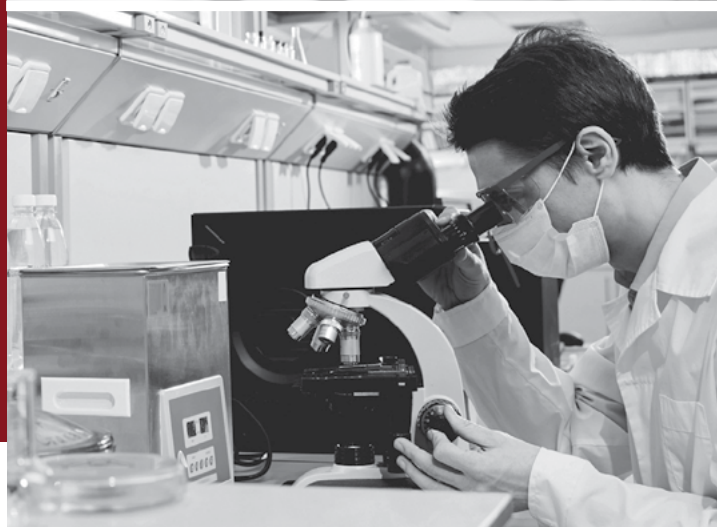
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