

**ITHACA
COLLEGE
CAREER
GUIDE**

**JOB
SEARCH**

RESUMES
INTERVIEW
JOB SEARCH
NETWORKING
ALUMNI ONLINE
COMMUNITY
INTERVIEW
PROFESSIONAL
ETIQUETTE
FILES
SCHOOL
RECRUITING
GRAD APPLICATIONS
CREDENTIAL

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Office of Career Services

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Office of Career Services Overview

A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Welcome to Career Services! Whether establishing a major, developing career direction, exploring future goals, looking for a job or internship or considering graduate studies, we are here to assist you. Career Services has staff members that are dedicated to providing the best resources possible to both help you explore and make the connections you need. We are committed to providing personalized services to help you achieve your goals. It was once said; **“The best way to predict your future is to create it” ...unknown.** Let us help shape your future as you begin your career journey.

John Bradac

MISSION/LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Career Services is committed to teaching the skills needed to make career decisions over a lifetime and to facilitating internships, employment and post-graduate opportunities. Ultimately, each person is responsible for their own career direction and decision-making. By utilizing our programs and services, students and alumni will learn to incorporate a multi-faceted approach to their career development.

Learn to:

- Define your career goal(s)
- Choose your major
- Learn your unique values, interests, skills and abilities
- Develop the skills to find a job or internship
- Learn the application process for graduate or professional school
- Identify and define your transferable skills and how to market them
- Understand that the educational experience takes place inside and outside the classroom

Career Services recommends starting your career development process early in your college career. We welcome the opportunity to be partners in this on-going process.

OUR SERVICES

Individualized Career Counseling

Professional counselors are available to discuss career issues during confidential one-on-one appointments.

Career Assessment Tools

The *Myers-Briggs Personality Type Indicator* and the *Strong Interest Inventory* are available to use with the counseling staff. These tools help to identify a possible academic major as well as a career area that might relate to the student's personality, preferences and interests.

Graduate School Resources

Career Services is available to assist students and alumni with graduate school decisions, including finding the right program, applications, entrance exams and personal statements.

iCareers (www.ithaca.edu/icareers)

iCareers offers quick access to the best online career tools and resources (for more details see page 4):

- *eRecruiting*: a source for thousands of job and internship opportunities
- *CareerSearch*: a database of over 4 million companies searchable by industry, location, size, etc.
- *Alumni Online Community*: network with alumni regarding professional interests, employment or internship possibilities
- *Internships.com*: search the world's largest internship database

Career Resource Center

Our resource center houses publications and electronic tools to help research career options, salaries, market trends, prospective employers, job descriptions and more. Graduate school guides and test registration materials are also available.



Credential File Service

Students and alumni are able to open and maintain a personal file to hold letters of recommendation.

Job & Internship Opportunities

IC maintains relationships with over 4,000 employers and graduate schools. We are always looking to build new relationships in order to make more opportunities available to students and alumni from all disciplines.

Resume and Cover Letter Assistance

Our trained staff of counselors and Peer Career Advisors are available to assist students with resume and cover letter development.

Interview Preparation

Our office offers a number of resources and services to assist in the interview process, including an interviewing checklist and mock interviews.

PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

Career and Internship Connection Fairs

During winter break, network with prospective employers in the morning and interview for jobs and internships in the afternoon. Held in Boston, Los Angeles, Washington DC, Chicago and New York.

CNY Communications Consortium

This event, held during the Spring, provides opportunities for jobs and internships at some of the top companies in the communications industry. Held in Syracuse, NY.

Etiquette Dinner

Provides information about proper dinner etiquette and attire when on an interview or a business meeting...what to wear, what to order, and everything in between.

Graduate and Professional School Fair

This fair, held in the Fall, allows students to meet with representatives from over 120 graduate programs. Medical and law school panels follow the fair.

Job and Internship Fairs

Held in the Fall and Spring, these fairs provide opportunities for students to find jobs and internships. Over 60 employers attend the fair.

Kaplan Practice Tests

Prepare for your graduate entrance exams by taking a practice GRE, LSAT, GMAT or MCAT for free!

Network Nights

During winter break, meet and mingle with alumni who share valuable insights and career advice to help expand your opportunities.

Speed Networking

Practice your networking skills with local alumni and other professionals. Learn about career options and build your network of professional contacts.

Take an Ithacan to Work Week

Job-shadow a professional in Ithaca to learn about a career and to network.

Teacher Recruitment Days

Held at SUNY Cortland in the Spring, students meet and interview with recruiters from school districts from across the country.



iCareers: Online Resources

For a complete list of Career Services online resources visit our website www.ithaca.edu/careers. Here is a highlight of our main online resources.

eRecruiting: a source for thousands of job and internship opportunities for IC students and alumni. You can also use eRecruiting to view attendees and register for upcoming career events. When logging in, your **username** is your **complete IC email address** and your **password** is your **student ID number**.

Alumni Online Community: a database of 50,000+ IC alumni nationwide and around the world. Network with alumni, learn about different career options, and get advice from experienced professionals. **NOTE:** Seniors, grad students and alumni can create a profile by clicking on “**first time login**”. Once you are logged in, click on “Career Center” then “Search” to choose the qualifiers you would like to search by. Underclassmen need to visit career services to log in.

CareerSearch: a database of over 4 million companies nationwide and around the world. Search for companies based on industry, product or service provided, and/or location. Search results include company descriptions and contact information. To log in, you will need to create an account. Contact Career Services for the client referral code.

Internships.com: one of the leading internship search sites. This free resource allows you to search for internship opportunities all across the U.S.

Occupational Outlook Handbook: a nationally recognized source of career information including job descriptions, anticipated growth, average salaries, related jobs, and more. The Handbook is revised every two years.

O-Net: a valuable source of occupational information including work tasks, tools and technology used in the job, required knowledge and skills, wages, employment trends and more. It is continually updated by surveying a broad range of workers from each occupation.

Additional online resources are available on our website by clicking on the section headers located on the left side of the page at www.ithaca.edu/sacl/careers/resources/. Included are:

- **Employment Resources**
- **Internship Resources**
- **Diversity Recruitment Services**
- **Teaching English Abroad**
- **Volunteering Abroad**
- **Working Abroad**



Choosing a Major

Choosing a major is an important decision that students need to make in college and Career Services is the place to come to for help. By utilizing the resources in this section and working one-on-one with a career counselor, you will be able to decide on a major that works best for your career goals.

Developing your career plans is an ongoing extensive process and it is normal to be unsure of what you want to major in. In fact, many people change their majors and occupations several times throughout life.

Here are some **STEPS TO DECIDING ON A MAJOR:**

1. Examine your interests, skills, and values

- Take a free assessment in Career Services: **Myers Briggs Type Indicator MBTI:** Get occupational-related information according to your personality and tendencies.
Strong Interest Inventory (SII): Get occupational-related information according to your interests.
- Occupational Information Network (O*Net) (www.onetonline.org). This resource provides information about the typical skills, interests, abilities, values and knowledge required for various occupations.

2. Research potential occupations

- View Career Services **Major Sheets** (www.ithaca.edu/sacl/careers/docs/WCYDWAMI/)
- Occupational Outlook Handbook (www.bls.gov/oco/). This resource gives you information for hundreds of jobs on the following: training and education, earnings, what you do on the job, related occupations and more.
- Shadow professionals
- Conduct informational interviews (see pg. 25 for more information)
- Use the Career Services Resource Center

3. Explore

- Try out different courses
- Join clubs, organizations and teams on campus
- Intern and volunteer for experience
- Work part-time and summer jobs for experience

4. Meet with a career counselor who can help you explore your interests, skills, values and options

SOME THINGS TO CONSIDER:

- You should choose your major based on *your* interests, abilities, and values - not those of other people
- Your major is only one factor in determining your career
- Choosing a second major or a minor makes you more marketable to employers
- You can always change your major
- For certain majors, the sooner you declare the better



Creating a Four Year Plan

First Year: Self-Assessment & Career Planning

- Meet with a Career Services staff member to learn how to develop and implement a personalized four year career plan.
- Assess your personal values, preferences and interests through career self-assessment tools such as the Strong Interest Inventory and Myers-Briggs Type Indicator.
- Visit Career Services to research various career fields and experiential learning opportunities such as summer jobs and internships.
- Get involved on and off campus. Join a student organization, volunteer, and/or get an on-campus job.
- Get a summer job that will provide you with an opportunity to learn about a career field that interests you.
- Do your best work academically!
- Attend Career Services workshops, fairs and networking events.

Sophomore Year: Career Exploration & Leadership Development

- Meet with a Career Services staff member to discuss your career plans and evaluate your four year career plan.
- Actively research career fields that interest you.
- Conduct informational interviews with professionals to learn about a particular career field.
- Take an active role in a student organization to develop your communication, teamwork and problem-solving skills.
- Develop a resume and have it critiqued by Career Services. Also complete a mock interview to prepare for your summer job or internship search.
- Secure an internship or summer employment related to your career goals.
- Attend career related workshops to learn about the process of choosing a major or career path.
- Attend Career Services workshops, fairs and networking events.

Junior Year: Career Goal Setting, Gaining Experience & Graduate School Planning

- Meet with a Career Services staff member to formulate your job or graduate school search timeline and plans.
- Join professional organizations to gain career information and to start networking.
- Research graduate/professional schools, their application procedures and deadlines.
- Register and prepare for graduate school admission tests and pick up a GRE, GMAT, LSAT or MCAT packet in Career Services.
- Participate in career fairs and career related events.
- Get to know alumni and actively network with professionals in your area of interest.
- Take on leadership roles on- and off-campus.
- Get professional experience through on-campus research, internships, on-campus employment, volunteer work or summer jobs.
- Attend Career Services workshops, fairs and networking events.

Senior year: Implementation & Transition

- Meet with a Career Services staff member to design a job search strategy or finalize your graduate/professional school search timeline and plans.
- Ask faculty and employers for references.
- Research companies/organizations and the career opportunities they offer.
- Prepare for job or graduate school admissions interviews with a mock interview in Career Services.
- Engage in an active job search in the Fall semester.
- Participate in career fairs and other related events.
- Revise and update your resume; draft a cover letter.
- Complete your personal statements and mail your applications to graduate schools.
- Complete an internship or career-related work experience if you haven't already.
- Formulate an alternate "Plan B" in case you need to make last minute career adjustments.
- Attend Career Services workshops, fairs and networking events.

Guide to Resume Writing

The first impression you make on an employer is often the one projected by your resume. The information you choose to include and the way you describe your experience and skills can determine whether you will have the opportunity to interview for a position. If the resume is strongly written and presented attractively, it will often open the door to an interview. A badly written, unattractive resume will close the door.

GETTING STARTED

To begin, make a list of all of your employment experience and the activities you have participated in. Pay special attention to the skills and abilities you bring to your chosen field. In addition, think of your past accomplishments and the skills you used to achieve success, regardless of the setting. Use the following **Reflection Questions** as a starting point.

GENERAL

- What are your three greatest accomplishments?
- What did you contribute to the organization?
- Have you ever supervised anyone?
- What does an employer or graduate program most need to know about me? Name only 3 things.

ACADEMIC REFLECTIONS

- Did you design or create anything lasting?
- Did you achieve a superlative such as highest grade level? Best test score? Strongest essay?
- Did you have expertise in any research areas?
- Did you participate in any academic forums (presentations, conferences, publications, etc.)?

EXPERIENCE REFLECTIONS

- What leadership position(s) did you hold? For each position, what skill(s) did you utilize?
- What was your greatest accomplishment in this role?
- Did you choose to take on additional responsibilities?
- What community service projects did you undertake?

- Did you use organizational, managerial or marketing skills in any way?
- What ideas did you come up with to improve your organization?
- Did you handle money or budgets? If yes, in what amounts?
- In what ways did you exhibit interpersonal skills?
- Did you train, teach or orient new members/employees?
- Did you speak in public or write for an audience?
- Did you employ problem-solving, conflict-resolution or mediation skills?
- Were you required to deal with the public?
- How did you demonstrate teamwork or individual drive and determination?

RESUME CONTENT

A resume is a very flexible document. It can be adapted to highlight your particular skills or experiences and information can be included or omitted according to your needs. The order in which you present this information can vary as well.

ESSENTIAL CATEGORIES

The content categories you choose for your resume will be determined by a number of factors, especially your strongest "selling points" relative to the type of position you are seeking. The following list provides an overview of the types of information normally included in the resume:

Identification Data: Name, current and permanent mailing address (with zip codes), phone number(s) including area code(s), and your email address. (Make sure that your email address is professional in nature; jgannett@ithaca.edu instead of jganetrocks@aol.com.)

Career Objective: This is your goal statement and is optional.

Education: Academic experiences should be listed in reverse chronological order, with your most recent degree or experience first. Include institution, location, graduation date, degree type and area(s) of study. Make sure to include any minors or concentrations. You may choose to list your cumulative grade point average and/or GPA in your major. (GPAs should be carried out two places after the decimal, 3.43 instead of 3.4, and they should NEVER be rounded up or down.)

Academic achievement is one of the areas in which employers have an interest, particularly if you do not have extensive work experience or extracurricular involvement. You may also list courses you have taken which relate specifically to your career, honors, international study, projects, or even presentations you participated in.

Experience: This can include not only full- or part-time positions but internships, volunteer work and extracurricular activities if they are relevant to the position you're applying for. For each entry, list the organization for which you worked, the city and state where it is located (no need to include the full mailing address), your job title, and dates of employment. Note: the order you list these in is up to you. List your most relevant or substantial experience first, regardless of the dates. Otherwise, list your experience in reverse chronological order. Briefly describe each experience using action oriented language. Descriptions should emphasize skills and accomplishments, not just duties. When appropriate, quantify information about the organization and your accomplishments (ex. Serve x # of customers per night in upscale restaurant).

To add emphasis and focus to your resume, consider listing related experiences together (ex. Related Experience or Teaching Experience) and additional experiences separately (ex. Additional Experience or Other Experience). This can help focus the employer's attention on your cumulative strengths as a candidate.

ADDITIONAL SECTIONS

You may choose to list other types of information, particularly if it relates to your career objectives and/or it

reflects any achievements in which an employer may have an interest. Here are some suggested headings although you are not limited to only these examples.

Certifications: This section is especially important for education majors. List your certifications and their respective dates, anticipated or received.

Honors and Awards: Consider academic, athletic, community and/or campus recognitions.

Athletics or Extracurricular/Community Activities: Your involvement in clubs, athletics and social organizations indicate to an employer your interests, willingness to accept responsibility, and leadership abilities. This can be a significant factor when you are being considered for employment. Be sure to include offices or other positions of leadership you held. Avoid using abbreviations that may be unfamiliar to an employer.

Volunteer Experience: Include any experiences you have had with community service organizations or projects such as Habitat For Humanity, church choir, scout leader, etc.

Special Skills: Include any expertise you may have in foreign languages, computer operation and programming, TV/R production, technical writing or other areas of specialization.

Professional Affiliations: If you have joined a professional association which is related to the career field in which you are seeking a position, be sure to list this and dates of involvement.

Publications: List by title, any articles, books, stories or poems you have written which have already been published or are selected to be published.

Research: If you have done extensive research into a topic, particularly if it relates to your chosen career field, you may wish to state the title of the paper or thesis and a brief description of your conclusions or findings. This may give the employer or prospective graduate school additional insight into your professional abilities and training.

Additional Training: You should list any significant seminars or other training which has given you background or knowledge which will be helpful in your chosen career field.

Political, Religious, or Social: Activities that indicate affiliation with any of these types of organizations may be potentially discriminatory. If you are not concerned with the effect of listing such an affiliation, leave them on. If you are concerned, you could create a generic description for the activity such as “religious organization” for Methodist, Catholic, Jewish, Buddhist, etc. organizations; “health educator” for birth control/Planned Parenthood, AIDS work, etc.; “student activist” for gay/lesbian alliance, republican club, democrat society, etc., but be prepared to answer questions about them at a job interview.

LANGUAGE

- The language of a resume is **action oriented**. Most bullets should begin with action verbs. (See **page 11** for examples.)
- Use **short phrases** and clauses with **no subject**, rather than full sentences, in your descriptions. Eliminate extraneous words and irrelevant information.
- **Avoid** phrases such as "My duties included..." or "Responsible for..."
- Do **not** use personal pronouns such as "I" or "My".
- While it is important that you take credit for what you have done, be careful not to use words that inflate or exaggerate your responsibilities.
- Check and re-check spelling, grammar, and formatting consistency very carefully. **Even one mistake is too many.**
- Quantify whenever possible. Numbers can speak louder than action statements.

CAREER OBJECTIVE

If you are uncertain about what your career objective

is, you are not alone! Do not assume that you can put together one resume that will work for all the different career areas in which you are interested. If you have three major areas of interest, you may need three different resumes.

A good career objective defines for the employer what your career interests are and the setting(s) in which you would like to use your background. Your purpose is to clearly state the type of work you hope to pursue. There are times when your resume may be used or passed on without benefit of a cover letter. In this case, having an objective on your resume can be crucial.

CAREER OBJECTIVE HINTS

1. With your objective you should be able to answer one of three questions: What type of position am I seeking? What type of organization do I want to work for or where (geographically) would I like to work?
2. When constructing your objective, it is wise to describe skills or skill families rather than use job titles, unless you are using the resume to apply for a specific job opening. Job titles vary among organizations and you risk slating yourself for a lower-level position if you use a title that a particular company associates with a certain level.
3. Avoid using trite terms such as “...with a progressive company”, “...utilizing my strongest skill” or “...with opportunity for advancement.” These terms are considered “canned” and do not indicate the type of work you are seeking or what you have to offer an employer.
4. You may find that starting with a general career field and adding specific areas of interest or special skills will serve you well.
5. Some employers have reported a preference to see very specific objectives targeted toward their company and the particular job opening. Consider this when creating an objective, but be sure to edit it for each job you apply for.

SAMPLE PROFESSIONAL OBJECTIVES

- A position in the field of public accounting with the objective of becoming a CPA
- A position in the marketing field focusing on the planning, promotion and development of new products
- To teach science in a public school setting
- To obtain an occupational therapist position at St. Joseph's Hospital

SKILLS EVALUATION

Skills and knowledge are acquired in the classroom, jobs (part-time, summer, or full-time), internships and volunteer experiences, clubs, athletics, even hobbies.

Assess your skills realistically and honestly. Your goal is to show employers what skills you have to offer and how you might apply these skills to positions in their organizations. Help them understand your abilities by identifying those which are especially relevant to the job or internship you are applying for. Consider the examples in the categories listed:

Work Content Skills include those skills which relate specifically to being able to do a particular job.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> graphic arts | <input type="checkbox"/> computer programming |
| <input type="checkbox"/> research | <input type="checkbox"/> sales/persuasion |
| <input type="checkbox"/> desktop publishing | <input type="checkbox"/> word processing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> interior design | <input type="checkbox"/> news/magazine writing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> human service | <input type="checkbox"/> statistical analysis |
| <input type="checkbox"/> marketing | <input type="checkbox"/> recreation |

Self Management Skills include personal strengths that are related to your personality and temperament.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> make decisions | <input type="checkbox"/> patience |
| <input type="checkbox"/> maintain confidentiality | <input type="checkbox"/> enthusiasm |
| <input type="checkbox"/> cooperativeness | <input type="checkbox"/> attention to detail |
| <input type="checkbox"/> work under pressure | <input type="checkbox"/> flexibility |
| <input type="checkbox"/> take initiative | <input type="checkbox"/> sense of humor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> dependability | <input type="checkbox"/> orderliness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> persistence | <input type="checkbox"/> high energy level |
| <input type="checkbox"/> self-confidence | <input type="checkbox"/> honesty |
| <input type="checkbox"/> optimism | <input type="checkbox"/> loyalty |
| <input type="checkbox"/> assertiveness | <input type="checkbox"/> risk taking |

Transferable Skills are general skills which can be applied in a wide variety of work settings and are likely to be especially interesting to prospective employers.

Communication

- writing
- group presentation
- persuasion
- selling

Work with others

- supervise
- instruct/train
- coach
- advise

Managerial

- organization
- attention to detail
- planning
- decision-making
- time management

Investigative

- research
- scientific curiosity
- define problems
- solve problems

Manual/Physical

- mechanical reasoning
- construction
- manual dexterity
- solve problems

Social/Interpersonal

- at ease socially
- work well with group
- deal effectively with public
- take criticism

Creative

- artistic
- imaginative with things
- imaginative with ideas

Numerical

- budgeting ability
- manipulating data
- problem solving



TOP 10 SKILLS EMPLOYERS SEEK

1. Communication skills
2. Strong work ethic
3. Teamwork skills
4. Initiative
5. Analytic skills
6. Computer skills
7. Flexibility/adaptability
8. Interpersonal skills
9. Problem solving skills
10. Technical skills

(From NACE 2011 Job Outlook Survey)

ACTION VERBS

Use this sample verb list when writing the bulleted job descriptors on your resume.

accelerated	compared	estimated	innovated	pioneered	served
accomplished	completed	evaluated	inspected	planned	serviced
accounted for	composed	examined	instructed	played	set
achieved	computed	excelled	insured	policed	shaped
acquired	conceived	executed	interpreted	prepared	shipped
adapted	conceptualized	exercised	interviewed	presented	shored up
added	concluded	expanded	introduced	prevailed	showed
addressed	conditioned	expedited	invented	processed	sifted
adjusted	conducted	experimented	investigated	produced	simplified
administered	consolidated	explained	joined	profited	smoothed
advised	constructed	explored	judged	programmed	sold
aided	consulted	expressed	kept	projected	solved
allocated	continued	extracted	labored	promoted	sought
alphabetized	contracted	facilitated	launched	proofed	specified
analyzed	controlled	familiarized	learned	proved	spoke
anticipated	convinced	fashioned	lectured	provided	started
applied	coordinated	figured	led	publicized	stopped
appointed	copied	filed	licensed	purchased	straightened
appraised	corrected	financed	lifted	qualified	streamlined
approved	counseled	fixed	located	quickenened	studied
arbitrated	counted	followed	logged	raised	submitted
arranged	crafted	forecast	looked	ran	suggested
assembled	created	foresaw	made	rated	summarized
assessed	critiqued	formulated	maintained	read	supervised
assisted	dealt	forwarded	managed	realized	supplied
assumed	debated	fostered	manipulated	reasoned	supported
assured	decided	found	mapped out	received	surveyed
attained	defined	founded	marketed	recognized	targeted
attended	delegated	gained	maximized	recommended	taught
audited	delivered	gathered	mediated	reconciled	tested
authored	demonstrated	gave	mentored	recorded	tightened
authorized	designed	generated	met	recruited	took
awarded	determined	governed	modeled	redesigned	took over
balanced	developed	graded	modified	reduced	totaled
began	devised	greeted	monitored	referred	toured
boosted	diagnosed	grossed	motivated	related	tracked
bought	digested	guided	moved	renovated	trained
briefed	diminished	handled	negotiated	repaired	transferred
brought	directed	hastened	netted	reported	transformed
budgeted	discovered	headed	observed	represented	translated
built	documented	heightened	obtained	rescued	traveled
calculated	drafted	helped	offered	researched	treated
cataloged	dramatized	hiked	opened	resolved	troubleshoot
caught	drew	housed	operated	resulted in	tutored
caused	drew up	hunted	ordered	restored	typed
chaired	dropped	identified	organized	returned	uncovered
changed	drove	illustrated	originated	revealed	unearthed
checked	earned	implemented	overcame	reviewed	unfurled
chopped	edited	improved	oversaw	revised	unified
chose	elected	improvised	paid	saved	updated
clarified	eliminated	included	painted	saw	upgraded
classified	employed	incorporated	participated	scheduled	used
cleared up	encouraged	increased	perceived	screened	utilized
closed	enforced	indexed	performed	scrutinized	weighed
coached	enlisted	indicated	persevered	secured	welcomed
collected	ensured	influenced	persuaded	selected	won
combined	entered	informed	photographed	sent	worked
communicated	established	initiated	piloted	separated	wrote

Source: Adapted from Career Services and leadership Education, St. Lawrence University, 2002

WHAT NOT TO INCLUDE

Personal information such as marital status, age, birth date, health, children, religion, sexual orientation, and country of national origin are not necessary to reveal during the selection process and therefore not necessary to include on your resume. Emphasize what you do have to offer the employer – your skills, abilities, and talents – that can enhance their organization.

NEVER use a template. While a template can be convenient and efficient, it is often a poor way to market yourself to prospective employers. Templates provide little flexibility in presenting your information and often result in documents that are more than one page long. Additionally, they are uniform in appearance and easily identified as a pre-set form and not as the unique marketing statement that it should be.

RESUME CHECKLIST

- The grammar, punctuation, and spelling are correct. This document is **LETTER PERFECT**.
- Formatting is consistent regarding font, spacing, layout, bullets, etc.
- The resume is an **original** document and **NOT a template**.
- This resume was **critiqued by several people** including someone from Career Services.
- Someone can scan this resume in **30 seconds** and obtain the essential information. The formatting should make it easy to read.
- My **contact information**: name, address, city, state, zip code, e-mail address, and telephone number (local and permanent) are at the top of the page.
- Optional: A **career objective** appears directly under my name and address so the reader's eye is led to it immediately. The statement is as specific as possible.
- All **meaningful activities** related to my career/ internship goal that assisted in developing my skills, whether or not they were paid experiences, are listed.
- For **practical experiences** (paid or unpaid), each includes: position title, employing organization, location and date range worked. These are presented with a consistent format.
- For extracurricular activities such as clubs, organizations, athletics, honors and awards, each includes: organization with which it is affiliated, location and date range of involvement.
- My resume is **one page**. A two page resume is acceptable for certain majors if you have extensive related experience. Margins may be as small as 1/2 inch. Traditional font is 12, but can be 11 or 10 as long as it is legible.
- The final resume is an **accurate** representation of my abilities.
- My resume **does not** include **personal data** such as height, weight, date of birth, social security number, marital and health status, information about one's partner.
- My resume **does not** include any **high school information** unless it will help in obtaining an interview or I am still a first or second year college student.
- Abbreviations are used sparingly**, spelling out my degree, the name of the college, and organizations to which I belong.
- Ample **white space** for readability is included.
- If seriously considering several career areas, a **different resume is developed for each career area**. Not only are objectives different, but the way work and academic experiences are described and arranged are also changed to reflect the qualifications for the different positions.
- The resume is printed on **quality resume paper**, using white, cream, ivory, or very light grey. (Avoid pastels or very bright colors.)
- Use paper that matches your resume for cover letters and envelopes.
- Electronic versions of your resume are in PDF format.

REFERENCES

There are several options to providing information about those who have agreed to serve as your references.

- A **list of references** (with the same heading as your resume) should go on a separate sheet of paper, which can be enclosed with the resume or carried to an interview. In creating a list, include names, titles, full mailing addresses, e-mail addresses, and telephone numbers.
- Consider listing a brief explanation at the end of each reference to identify the relationship you had with that person. (ex. Current Supervisor or Undergraduate Advisor). This is not always evident to the prospective employer.
- If you have established a **credential file** with Career Services, state on your resume that letters are available by request from that office and list the office address and telephone number. (Career Services, Ithaca College, 101 Muller Faculty Center, Ithaca, NY 14850, 607-274-3365)
- Update your credential file with current letters of recommendation periodically.
- Another option is to simply state “**References available upon request**” on the bottom of your resume.

Some suggestions related to selecting and working with your references:

- ✓ **Give the person a copy of your current resume.** In many cases, a person may know you in only one context (the classroom, a member of a professional organization or on the job). The reference may be stronger if the person has fuller knowledge of your other accomplishments.
- ✓ **Discuss the type of position that you will be seeking** and your career goals. If there are skills or information that you hope he or she would include in the reference, you might mention these.
- ✓ **Share with your references the descriptions of specific positions for which you are being considered** just in case they are contacted by telephone.
- ✓ **Don’t wait until the last minute.** Give each reference at least a couple of weeks to write a letter or to prepare for a reference check via phone.
- ✓ **Give faculty ample time to write letters.** Remember that they are asked by many students to write letters of recommendation. Follow up with Career Services to make sure your letter has been received if you have set up a credential file.
- ✓ **Ask for permission** to use the individual as a reference. Do not assume that the person will be willing to recommend you. This courtesy is appreciated and may avoid later embarrassment or a negative letter of reference. “Would you be comfortable giving me a strong recommendation?” opens the subject. Be prepared to hear a “no” or deal with some reservations.

SAMPLE RESUME #2

Sara Smith

(607) 555-1234
ssmith.l@ithaca.edu

321 Hanover Rd.
Horseheads, NY 12345

Objective

To obtain an instrumental or general music teaching position in a public or private school where I can encourage students to appreciate music and perform to the best of their abilities

Education

Bachelor of Music in Music Education, Ithaca College, Ithaca, NY May 2009
▪ Emphasis: Trumpet
▪ GPA: 3.55
▪ Horseheads Music & Arts Community Scholarship

Certifications

NY State Provisional Teaching Certification in Music Education, K-12 June 2009

Related Experience

Private Trumpet Instructor, Horseheads, NY & Ithaca, NY June 2005 – Present
▪ Provide individualized instruction to children and adults in trumpet and piano
▪ Help prepare individuals for solo recitals and other performances

Senior Student Teacher, Greece Athena High School, Rochester, NY October – December 2008
▪ Developed and taught music theory and instrumental lessons for grades 9-12
▪ Conducted daily rehearsals for the Jazz Ensemble
▪ Provided small-group and individual private lessons on all instruments
▪ Completed student evaluations, attended faculty meetings, and helped raise money for the department through a community fundraiser

Junior Student Teacher, Dryden Elementary School, Dryden, NY September 2007 – May 2008
▪ Created and implemented general music weekly lesson plans for 3rd and 6th grade
▪ Provided individualized instruction when necessary
▪ Taught private lessons to students in 4th-6th grade
▪ Emphasized listening skills, performance skills, and good practice habits

Private Instruction

Trumpet: Professor Frank Gabriel Campos, Ithaca College, Ithaca, NY Fall 2005 – Spring 2009
Trumpet: Professor Kim Dunning, Ithaca College, Ithaca, NY Summer 2006
Tuba: Dr. Susan Guiles, Chemung County Chamber Orchestra, Elmira, NY Summer 2005

Performance Experience

Ithaca College Brass Choir 2007-2009
Ithaca College Trumpet Ensemble 2007-2009
Ithaca College Brass Chamber Ensemble 2006-2007
Master Class with Joyce Davis at Ithaca College 2006

Affiliations

Music Educators National Conference, NY Student Music Educators Association 2009
International Trumpet Guild, Collegiate Member 2007-2009

Additional Experience

Office Assistant, Ithaca College Music Education Office, Ithaca, NY Fall 2007 – Spring 2008
Camp Counselor, Camp Irondequoit, Irondequoit, NY Summers 2005 & 2006

SAMPLE RESUME #1

Scott J. Smith

111 Elm Street ♦ Penn Yan, NY 14527

(315) 555-0555 ♦ ssmith@yahoo.com

Objective To obtain a position in the field of business where I can utilize my leadership skills

Education Ithaca College, Ithaca, NY May 2010
Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, Concentration in Management

GPA 3.7

Honors: Dean's List

Fall 2008-Spring 2010

Related Experience Penske Auto Center, Ithaca, NY June 2008-August 2010
Assistant Manager

- ♦ Managed all aspects of high traffic auto parts store
- ♦ Hired and supervised a staff of seven customer service representatives
- ♦ Marketed and sold products and services to customers
- ♦ Handled customer complaints

Public Relations Intern Rochester American Hockey, Rochester, NY June-August 2009

- ♦ Produced press releases, media notes and team statistics
- ♦ Participated in the implementation of the 2000 AHL All-Star Classic
- ♦ Provided game day assistance to media relations coordinator
- ♦ Updated and improved navigability of Amerks website

Managerial Intern Williams & Hoffman, Inc., Geneva, NY June-August 2008

- ♦ Provided managerial assistance at medium-sized engine production company
- ♦ Participated in staff meetings and individual sessions with employees
- ♦ Developed software program for tracking sales and customer contacts

Athletic Director's Assistant Marcus Whitman, Jr./Sr. High School, Rushville, NY January 2008

- ♦ Conducted statistical analysis on the grades of student athletes
- ♦ Helped teach four sections of high school physical education class
- ♦ Performed administrative duties and maintained schedules

Additional Experience Sears, Ithaca, NY January 2010-Present
Sales Associate

- ♦ Provide excellent customer service and process transactions

Technician Trombley Tire, Penn Yan, NY May 2008-August 2009

- ♦ Performed general automotive maintenance

Activities Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE), Ithaca College, Ithaca, NY Fall 2008-Present
Men's Soccer Team, Ithaca College, Ithaca, NY Fall Semesters 2006-2010

Computer Skills Proficient in PageMaker, Adobe Photoshop and Microsoft Office

Anna P. Holmes

Current Address: 1234 Wire Rd., Apt. 11 • Ithaca, NY 14850 • (555) 555-5555 • aholmes@ithaca.edu
Permanent Address: 123 Chester Chase • Fayetteville, GA 30215 • (555) 555-5555

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

- Highly organized and quick-learning achiever who is responsible and learns quickly
- Extremely personable worker with strong social skills who works well in team environments
- Talented, creative worker with strengths in writing, editing, style, and design angles of communications

EDUCATION

Ithaca College, Ithaca, NY • Bachelor of Arts in Journalism; Anticipated May 2010

- Minors: Writing and Spanish
- GPA: 3.67

JOURNALISM EXPERIENCE

The Ithacan (College Paper), Ithaca, NY • Assistant Campus Editor; January 2007 – Present

- Lead 35-50 student staff members to create a weekly paper distributed to 6000+
- Create story ideas, report-on, design and paginate paper

The Fayette Daily News, Fayetteville, GA • Reporter/Intern; May 2009 - August 2009

- Wrote several articles per day
- Experienced in researching, interviewing and on-the-spot reporting for a daily newspaper
- Submitted articles on time, recognizing the importance of deadlines
- Attended bi-weekly City Council Meetings

The Auburn Loafer, Auburn, AL • Contributing Writer/Fashion Editor; October 2007 - March 2008

- Promoted to Fashion Editor in January 2008
- Wrote a weekly column and feature articles for the Auburn-area entertainment magazine

OTHER EXPERIENCE

Gold-n-Gemstones Jewelers, Fayetteville, GA • Sales Person; June 2002 - January 2007

- Sold merchandise, monitored inventories, and ordered supplies
- Provided excellent customer service
- Assumed managerial duties in the absence of the store owner

Outback Steakhouse, Peachtree City, GA • Server; May 2005 - August 2005

- Took orders and served meals seven days a week in a fast-paced environment
- Provided excellent customer service

COMPUTER SKILLS

Quark XPress, Dreamweaver MX and Adobe Photoshop

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Ithaca College Student Activities Board, Ithaca, NY; January 2007 - Present

Ithaca College Writing for Production Association, Ithaca, NY; January 2007 - Present

Annual Memory Walk for Alzheimer's Research, Ithaca, NY; 2007-2009

Volunteering at the Lee County Humane Society, Ithaca, NY; September – December 2008

Amber Leigh

Local Address: 1101 Gannet Center, Ithaca, NY 14850 (607)274-3365
Permanent Address: 70 Kings Gate South, Rochester, NY 14617 (585)365-2734
 aleigh@ithaca.edu

References

Mr. Bruce McClaren
 Sales Team Supervisor

Dine-A-Mate

11 Goodwood Lane

Ithaca, NY 10165

(607) 844-1754

bmc@yahoo.com

* supervisor at current job

Mr. David Coulthard, Owner

Chalfonte Hotel

27 County Line Road

Cape May, NJ 13398

(707) 555-8542

dcoul@yahoo.com

* supervisor at summer job

Mr. Colin Chapman, Director

Student Activities Office

1101 Gannett Center

Ithaca College

Ithaca, NY 14850

(607) 123-4567

cchap@ithaca.edu

* advisor to Student Government

Ms. Lynn St. Onge

Associate Professor

Ithaca College Writing Department

Ithaca College

Ithaca, NY 14850

(607) 555-7954

lstonge@ithaca.edu

* supervisor to campus tutoring job

IMPORTANT TIPS: Can be Flush Left or Center on the page ♦ Include full contact information ♦ Include a statement which explains your relationship to this person

Writing Your Curriculum Vitae

In certain instances, you will need a curriculum vitae instead of a resume. A curriculum vitae (CV) is a summary of your educational and academic background. Its purpose is to outline your credentials for academic, education, scientific, or research positions, as well as fellowships or grants. Other countries around the world also use CVs instead of resumes. Its length can range from 2-4 pages. Please keep in mind each field has a different standard. Ask the faculty in your department for feedback on your CV.

A main difference between a resume and CV is length, as the recommended resume length is one page. Also, job descriptions typically are not bulleted in a CV like they are in resumes. A more subtle but equally important distinction is that whereas the goal of a resume is to construct a professional identity, the goal of a CV is quite specifically to construct a scholarly identity. Thus, your CV will need to reflect very specifically your abilities as a teacher, researcher, and publishing scholar within your discipline.

What to include on your CV:

- Applicant Information
- Education
- Dissertation Title and Advisor
- Awards/Honors/Patents
- Grants/Fellowships
- Research Experience
- Teaching Experience
- Publications and Presentations
- Related Professional Experience
- Languages
- Other- Memberships, Associations, Conferences References

APPLICANT INFORMATION

Your name should appear on the top of each page. On the first page include your name, address, phone number, fax number, and email address. Page numbers

should appear on all pages except for the first. When including your email address consider this communication with an employer to be professional. It is advised to avoid "nick names" or "cute" automatic responses. This also applies for phone messages.

EDUCATION

In reverse chronological order list all of your degrees from college on, with the name of the institution and date they were awarded. List the date you expect to receive the degree for the program you are currently in. It is standard to list the name of your advisor and your thesis title.

From this point on you have more latitude in shaping the organization of your CV. You should be guided by your strengths, requirements for the job, and conventions of your discipline.

HONORS AND AWARDS (GRANTS, FELLOWSHIPS AND PATENTS, ETC.)

Place Honors/Awards near the top of the CV (unless you have few, then put later or omit). This is a good place to list research-related and dissertation-supported grants, fellowships, awards and patents. Scientists may create a separate section for "Research Grants", which would probably come later in the CV.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Scientists will briefly describe their postdoctoral, doctoral, and possibly undergraduate research. You should include both substance and techniques employed if relevant. List names of the institution, professor, project, and dates. Along with descriptions note any contribution you made (Some scientists append a "Statement of Research Interests")

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Where you place this section depends on the target institution (i.e. small teaching college) as well as your strengths as a candidate. The basic information should include: Where, What, When you have taught and your titles i.e. teaching fellow or lecturer.

PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

Where you place this section depends on the strength of your publication record. If substantial, it may come first. If too lengthy or short it can come at the end of the CV or have an additional page. Some candidates will subdivide this category into:

- Publications (if have you enough, you can separate this into Books, Abstracts, Reviews, Other Publications, etc...). Use standard bibliographic form for publications.
- Papers and Presentations. Include dates/locations with titles of your presentations.

Avoid listing published abstracts in with papers. List abstracts as a separate section. Otherwise, it gives the impression of "padding."

RELATED PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Use this category for any experience that is related to teaching, research, and administration, i.e. conference organizing, tutoring, and committee work.

LANGUAGES

Accurately assess your knowledge level of a language: native, fluent, proficient or working knowledge.

OPTIONAL SECTIONS

- Memberships or Professional Organizations
- Scholarly Associations
- Travel or Study Abroad

REFERENCES

Most academics tend to operate within small informal networks, the names of references will convey significant information to most readers. Most applicants will list their references at the end of their CV. Include:

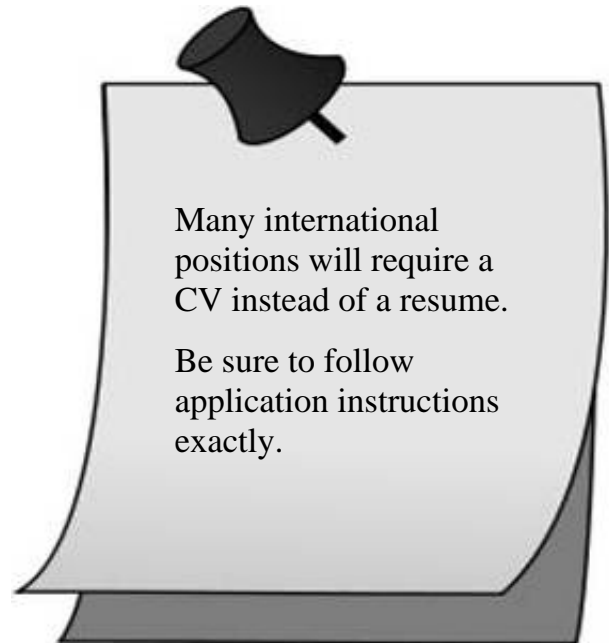
- Full name
- Title
- Institutional address
- Telephone address/email/fax

Three references are expected, but you may add more if their evaluations would add significant information.

*** Make sure your references know they are listed and have a copy of your CV**.*

One of the most important things to remember when working on your curriculum vitae is that there is not one standard format. There are different emphases in each discipline, and a good CV is one that emphasizes the points that are considered to be most important in your discipline and conforms to standard conventions within your discipline.

Source: <http://graduate.dartmouth.edu/careers/services/vita.html> and <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/641/01/>



Writing a Cover Letter

The resume never travels alone. Each time you submit your resume to an employer you should enclose a cover letter which explains why you are submitting the resume. Keep in mind that cover letters are not generic and should be written specifically for each job you apply for. It is the key to creating interest in your candidacy.

The cover letter is your opportunity to summarize your qualifications and highlight your most appropriate skills or background in relation to a particular position without simply reiterating the information on your resume. There are two types of cover letters:

1. **Application Letter** - This letter is written when you know of a specific opening and want to apply for the position. Its purpose is to get your enclosed resume read and generate an interview. ***Your strategy is to demonstrate that your qualifications fit the requirements of the position.*** Study the position description carefully and link each of the described job dimensions with your skills and experience. Structure your application letter with three sections:

The opening (1 paragraph): Tell why you are writing, the name of the position or field, how you heard about the opening (company website, newspaper ad, referral, etc.), and why you are interested in this particular company, location, or type of work. This paragraph should also include a statement emphasizing your enthusiasm and fit for the position.

The body (usually 1-2 paragraphs): Sell yourself. Outline your strongest qualifications that match the position requirements. Provide evidence of your related experience and accomplishments by providing specific examples. Make referrals to your enclosed resume. Convince the employer that you have the personal qualities and motivation to perform well. Indicate any knowledge you may have of the organization that demonstrates you have done research and are familiar with their operation.

The closing (1 paragraph): Close by showing interest in further discussing your qualifications (an interview), providing your phone number and email address, and showing appreciation for being considered.

2. **Inquiry Letter** - This letter is written when you are asking an employer for information about possible job or internship openings. Its purpose is also to get your resume read and generate interviews. Structure this letter similarly to the application letter, but instead of using position information, focus on broader occupational and/or organizational dimensions to show how your qualifications match the work environment.

COVER LETTER RULES

- ✓ **Print on good quality resume paper.** Use the same type of paper that your resume is printed on.
- ✓ **Address to a specific name and title.** If you are uncertain whom to address, try finding it online, look at reference materials in the Career Services Resource Center or check a company database such as CareerSearch or eRecruiting. You can also call the organization's human resource department to ask for information.
- ✓ **Writing style should be direct, powerful and error free.** Edit to eliminate extraneous words and to check grammar, spelling and punctuation. In addition to stating your purpose, the letter tells the reader how well you communicate.
- ✓ **The cover letter should be no more than one page.** Keep the letter concise and no longer than one page.
- ✓ **Use appropriate language.** Repeat terms that the employer uses. Avoid jargon and the passive voice. Use action verbs and the active voice. Do not try to be cute or too aggressive. Be employer focused - tell the employer what you have to offer, not what you hope to gain from them or the position.
- ✓ **Always be positive** by stressing your base accomplishments and skills as well as your future value.
- ✓ **Be sure to keep copies of all correspondence.** It is possible that you will need to refer to it in the future.

SAMPLE COVER LETTER

1234 West 45 St.
Rochester, NY 32165
April 1, 2010

Dr. John Robertson
Principal
Horseheads High School
987 South St.
Horseheads, NY 12345

Dear Dr. Robertson,

I am writing to express my interest in the recently posted position of High School Band Teacher that I found on the Horseheads Central School District website. I will graduate in May of this year from Ithaca College with a Bachelor of Music in Music Education and be certified to teach kindergarten through twelfth grade in all music areas. My education, experience, and passion for teaching would make me an excellent team member in the Horseheads Central School District.

As you can see in the enclosed resume, my classroom experiences included working with students of various grades and abilities in different academic settings. I utilize a holistic student-centered approach while teaching, and pride myself on adapting to students' individual needs. My internships, summer camp work, and student teaching helped me develop effective teaching, behavior modification, and learning assessment strategies. In my most recent experience as a music camp instructor, I utilized fun and engaging teaching methods to educate campers about classical music instruments. These experiences have prepared me to create an enjoyable learning environment, suitable for all types of learners.

I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss how my education and experience will be helpful to you. I will be contacting you within two weeks to talk about the possibility of arranging an interview. In the meantime, I can be reached at (555) 555-5555 or randerson@ithaca.edu. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Richard Anderson
Enclosures

SAMPLE LETTER OF INQUIRY

123 Main St.
Ithaca, NY 14850
August 14, 2010

Ms. Suzie Smith
Director of Recruiting
The Sherwin-Williams Company
456 North St.
Boston, MA 12345

Dear Ms. Smith,

I read about Sherwin-Williams' retail management training program in *College Graduate Magazine* and I would like to inquire about the possibility of openings.

I have a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration with a Management concentration, as well as retail experience as a Sales Associate and Key Holder. In addition, I completed an internship at Target focusing on retail management where I learned the operations side of the business. I spent two weeks with each department and completed a product assessment in the children's clothing department, which resulted in adding a new product line. In addition to my experience in retail, I have exceptional interpersonal and organization skills and highly enjoy working with the public.

I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss the training program with you and to provide further information on my candidacy. I can be reached anytime via my cell phone at 555-555-5555. Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to speaking with you about this exciting opportunity.

Sincerely,

John Walter

Job and Internship Search Strategies

PREPARATION

SELF-ASSESSMENT

One of the most important aspects of preparing for a job or internship search is first knowing yourself. Not only do you need to know what skills and characteristics you have to offer an employer, you should know what type of job or internship will suit your interests and values. **Use the checklists below to select your career-related interests, skills, and values.**

Interests:

- Arts & entertainment
- Athletics
- Cinema & photography
- Computers/technology
- Designing
- Editing
- Environment
- Healthcare
- Helping others
- Law/politics
- Managing others
- Organizing
- Public speaking
- Researching
- Sciences
- Selling products or services
- Teaching/training others
- TV & Radio
- Working with numbers
- Working with people
- Writing
- Others: _____

Skills:

- Active listening
- Adaptability/flexibility
- Communication
- Creativity
- Critical thinking
- Decision making
- Detail-oriented
- Information gathering
- Initiative
- Instructing
- Interpersonal

Skills continued:

- Management
- Math
- Organizing
- Persuasion
- Planning
- Problem solving
- Public speaking
- Teamwork
- Technology
- Time management
- Work ethic
- Writing
- Others: _____

Values and Preferences:

- Challenge
- High salary
- Independence
- Job security
- Leadership
- Make a difference
- Opportunity to advance
- Prestige
- Physical work
- Room for creativity
- Routine
- Rural work setting
- Supportive boss
- Traditional work hours
- Urban work setting
- Variety
- Work alone
- Work/life balance
- Work with others
- Others: _____

ONLINE PROFILES

Make sure your social networking sites (facebook, MySpace, Twitter, etc.) have appropriate content as some employers pre-screen candidates via online searches. You should ask your friends to delete any questionable photos or comments about you. You can also set your profile to private or temporarily delete your profiles all together. Creating a LinkedIn.com profile is a great way to create a professional online presence.

RESUMES AND COVER LETTERS

Before you begin applying for jobs and networking, make sure your resume is ready to be sent to employers. You can bring your resume and cover letter, written for a specific opportunity, into Career Services to be reviewed.

ELEVATOR SPEECH

The opportunity to network can happen anywhere from a job fair to the grocery store so be prepared with a 30 to 60 second pitch that may include your educational background, experience or skill highlights, career goals, and interest in your field. For example, “Hi, my name is Dana Young and I will be graduating this May with a dual degree in Accounting and Math. I’ve really enjoyed my internships at KPMG and a small local accounting firm, Thomas and Jones, LLP, where I had a proven knack for tax auditing. I’m very interested in your organization and would love the chance to talk with you more about it.” To avoid sounding canned or phony, you might introduce the different aspects of your elevator speech throughout a conversation as appropriate.

RESEARCH

Researching specific companies and positions is vital to your search for the most appropriate job and workplace. Here are resources for finding information about occupations, organizations, etc.:

CareerSearch (<http://v2.careersearch.net/client>)

Exclusively for Ithaca College students and alumni, Career Search is an extensive database of organizations which allows you to search for companies based on industry and location. Search results include company descriptions and contact information. Contact Career Services for the client referral code.

Occupational Outlook Handbook

(<http://www.bls.gov/oco>)

Provides career information on most job titles, including required training and education, earnings, job outlook, job description, and working conditions.

ONET (<http://online.onetcenter.org/find>)

Review occupational information, jobs related to your skills, work requirements, and occupations related to those in which you have an interest.

Other Resources

Also be sure to review specific company’s websites, trade journal articles, press releases, and other publicly available materials.

What to research: (from www.distinctiveweb.com/research.htm)

- What is the age of the company/ organization?
- What is their location? How long have they been established there?
- How many locations are there?
- What are the services and/or products they sell?
- What is the size of the company/ organization?
- How many employees do they have?
- What are their sales? Assets? Earnings?
- What has their growth pattern been like?
- What are the various divisions and subsidiaries?
- Who are their competitors?
- What are the names of key executives?
- What is the general reputation of the company/organization?
- Is the company publicly or privately owned?
- Is the company foreign owned?
- How successful is the company? What have been their major achievements?
- Have there been any major issues or events in the recent history of the company?
- What are the objectives and philosophy of the company/organization?
- What is their forecast of anticipated growth?

FINDING JOBS & INTERNSHIPS

Now that you have completed all of the preparation work, it is time to find the positions you would like

to apply for. Keep in mind that the search process requires a considerable amount of work and can take months. By using a multifaceted approach, your chances of securing a position considerably increase, so take a look at techniques for finding opportunities in the open and hidden markets:

Open Job Market

The open job market refers to advertised positions. Here are ways to search for jobs in the open market:

- Search online job and internship databases; see general and industry-specific websites here: www.ithaca.edu/sacl/careers/resources/
- Attend recruiting events (ex. Job & Internship Fairs at IC). Check upcoming events at: www.ithaca.edu/sacl/careers/events1/
- Check for on-campus recruiter visits at: www.ithaca.edu/sacl/careers/events1/Visits/
- Look through classified ads in newspapers
- Go to a temp agency

Hidden Job Market

While the most popular method is to search the open market, many positions are NOT advertised; they are in the hidden job market. Finding these jobs involves networking. Simply stated, *networking is using your current contacts and generating new ones in order to locate opportunities*. You network all the time and probably don't even know it. You are networking when you:

- Attend professional or trade association meetings
- Talk with your professors and alumni
- Volunteer for a local church function
- Visit with other members of your social clubs or religious groups
- Talk with your friends and classmates
- Talk to your neighbors
- Strike up a conversation with someone else waiting at the doctor's office
- Post messages on mailing lists or in chat rooms

Keep in mind that you never know the connections someone might have, so networking is extremely important to discover opportunities.

For more ideas on networking, including setting up information interviews, see "Networking and Professional Etiquette" on **page 24**.

International Job Searching

Finding work outside the United States can be a long and complicated process. Make sure you do plenty of research before applying for jobs abroad so you know each country's requirements. Paperwork, documentation, and citizenship requirements vary depending on individual country politics and labor laws. In most cases, you will need a special type of visa known as a work permit. Be aware there are fees associated with acquiring work permits, passports, and visas. Specific country information can be found at www.workpermit.com.

While you can use the same job search techniques as you would in the U.S., many people use placement programs to find work abroad. In addition to helping you find opportunities, placement programs and international organizations will often assist you with the application process for visas and work permits. Some resources to begin with include:

- Search Associates (www.searchassociates.com),
- the International Research and Exchanges Board (www.irex.org),
- Interexchange (www.interexchange.org), and
- BUNAC (www.bunac.org).

Also, pay close attention to the job qualifications and application requirements. Resumes are not always used abroad, so make sure you also have a curriculum vitae (CV) prepared in case the employer asks for one. See **page 16** for information on creating a CV.

For more information and resources on working and living abroad, visit our website: www.ithaca.edu/sacl/careers/resources/.

APPLYING FOR POSITIONS

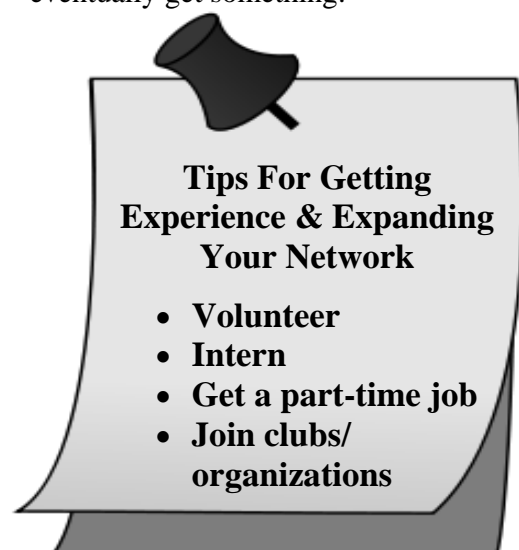
Before applying for a job or internship, be sure you know and can communicate your knowledge, skills, and experience that are relevant to the position you are applying for. Here are some other helpful hints when applying for jobs:

- **Proofread!** Be sure that there are absolutely no spelling, punctuation, or grammatical errors on any application documents. It is a good idea to have at least two other people look over your materials. We have seen instances where employers have not interviewed an otherwise qualified candidate because of proofing errors in their resume and/or cover letter!
- **Follow directions.** Send all documents mentioned in the application instructions. Leaving anything out reflects lack of attention to detail.

- **Cover letters are not optional.** A cover letter should always accompany your resume, even if the application instructions do not request a cover letter. It demonstrates business etiquette while portraying to the employer the purpose of your resume.
- **Use PDF, not DOCX.** When sending documents to an employer or recruiter, save them in PDF form so that no formatting issues (i.e., different default margins, unaccepted fonts, etc.) occur.
- **Use professional etiquette.** Correspondence with employers should always be professional. Address them as Mr. or Ms., do not use internet slang or smiley faces, and use proper spelling and grammar.
- **E-mail signature.** At the end of each e-mail, include a professional signature that includes your first and last name and contact information. You can also include positions held (ex. Ithaca College Class of 2011 President) and your LinkedIn.com URL.
- **Use a professional subject line.** Be sure to include the job title or job code if you are applying for a specific job via e-mail. If you are inquiring about the possibility of openings, state this in the subject line. You must have relevant information in the subject line to avoid it getting thrown out as junk mail.
- **Appropriate voicemail and e-mail.** Once you begin networking and/or applying for positions, make sure your voicemail message is professional and avoid ringback tones. Also make sure your e-mail address is appropriate, such as your college e-mail address or ["your_name"@yahoo.com](mailto:your_name@yahoo.com).
- **Keep records.** As with networking, keep track of all correspondences, applications, dates applied, etc. involved in your job or internship search.
- **Follow up!** Following up with contacts, recruiters, employers, etc. is vital. It demonstrates a sense of professionalism, courtesy, and perseverance. You should follow up with hiring personnel within two weeks of sending in application materials and within 24 hours of an interview. Thank you

letters can be typed, handwritten, or e-mailed. Hard copy letters are the most formal and are always appropriate after an interview. Handwritten letters are more personal, and can be appropriate for brief notes to people you met during an interview or who may have helped you in other ways. E-mail is appropriate when that has been your method of contact with the person you want to thank, if your contact has expressed a preference for e-mail, or if you want to send a quick thank you to be followed up by hard copy. Thank you letters, phone calls, or some type of correspondence should take place after:

1. A job interview
 2. An informational interview
 3. A contact has helped you/provided you with information
 4. Someone was extremely helpful to you at a career fair
 5. You visit a contact at their work site
 6. Anyone you wish to express thanks to and/or develop a relationship with
- **Interview preparation.** Practice responding to typical interview questions, do a mock interview at Career Services, and get interview attire appropriate for the field to which you are applying.
 - **Be persistent.** The process of finding and securing jobs and internships can be frustrating and you may have to deal with rejections. Know that this is typical, and that with hard work and persistence you will eventually get something.



Professional Dress

There are different levels of professional dress that you should consider when attending events such as: job fairs, networking events, your job or internship, and job interviews. Remember that your appearance creates a first and lasting impression, so you want your image to convey credibility, integrity, and professionalism.

LEVELS OF DRESS

PROFESSIONAL		
	Women	Men
Business casual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Khaki pants, dress pants, or knee-length (or longer) skirt • Collared shirt or twin set shirts • Closed-toe shoes (open-toed shoes may be acceptable-check with company first) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Khaki pants or slacks • Collared shirt (button or polo) tucked in • Dress shoes
General professional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dress pants or knee-length (or longer) skirt • Collared, button up shirt or jacket/blazer • Closed-toe shoes • Pantyhose/stockings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dress slacks • Long sleeved, collared, button up shirt with tie • Dress shoes with dark socks • Belt
Business professional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pant or skirt suit (skirts must be knee-length or longer) • Closed-toe heels less than 2-3" or flats (professional looking flats, not ballet flats) • Pantyhose/stockings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pant suit • Long sleeved, collared, button up shirt with tie • Dress shoes with dark socks • Belt
NOT PROFESSIONAL		
Casual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jeans or shorts • T-shirts or sleeveless tops • Tight or revealing tops or bottoms • Open-toed shoes, flip flops, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jeans or shorts • T-shirts or sleeveless tops • Open-toed shoes, flip flops, etc.

CHOOSING THE APPROPRIATE LEVEL OF DRESS

Now that you know the different levels of dress, here's the breakdown of what to wear in various professional settings.

Job/Internship Fairs: Business professional! This is your chance to make a good first impression with employers. Showing up in khakis or jeans shows that you may not know how to be professional or take your work seriously.

Internship: The level of dress you wear to your internship will depend on the organization; check with your supervisor to determine whether you should wear business casual, general professional, or business professional. You will also get an idea of what current employees wear during your interview for the internship; try to dress as professional as, or more so than them. It's very important, especially as an intern, to prove your credibility and that can partially be through your attire.

Job: Similar to internship attire, the level of dress you wear to work will depend on your employer. You can check with your supervisor about the dress code, or wear clothes similar or more professional than your co-workers.

Interviews: Business professional is highly recommended for job interviews, even with employers for which you would not have to wear suits for everyday work. See pages 32-33 for more information on interview attire.

Networking Events: These types of events typically call for general professional or business professional attire. You can check with the organization coordinating the event for appropriate dress guidelines, but you're probably safe with general professional. For Ithaca College's Network Nights, general professional is recommended.

Professional Development Conferences: The attire worn at conferences varies depending on the organization. Conference announcements often reveal the dress code, or you can contact the organization coordinating the conference. If you are slated to present you should wear general professional to business professional attire. Otherwise, you would probably be safe bringing several levels of dress for the different parts of a conference.

PROFESSIONAL DRESS TIPS

- **Invest in at least one high quality, well-fitted suit.** Between job interviews, job fairs, networking events, etc., you are going to need it. If buying multiple suits isn't an option, consider wearing different colored shirts (and ties for men) with the suit to change its appearance.
- **Good grooming is essential.** Your personal hygiene and appearance contribute highly to first impressions. Things like bad breath, body odor, wrinkled clothing, dirty nails, unruly hair, etc., may translate to others that you are sloppy in general, and maybe in work and attitude as well.
- **Better safe than sorry.** It's better to dress more professionally than required, than to under-dress.
- **Get a professional bag or briefcase.** This isn't required for all professions of course, but it will affect your appearance if you carry a formal-looking black bag or briefcase as opposed to a floral patterned tote.
- **If you think your clothes might be too tight, they probably are.** Tight clothing is not professional and should always be avoided.
- **Wear comfortable shoes.** If you have to stand for two hours at a networking event or walk around a job fair for an hour, you'll want to make sure your feet aren't aching after 10 minutes.
- **Use perfume/cologne sparingly in a work setting.**
- **Loud colors and styles of clothing can be distracting.**
- **Women: avoid too much makeup, jewelry, and accessories.**
- **Women: for most industries, avoid really high heels (more than 2-3").**
- **Women: beware of gaping button-up shirts (wear camisoles underneath them).**
- **Men: facial hair should be neat and trimmed.**
- **Men: don't wear ties or pants that are too short.**
- **Men: wear dark colored socks that reach mid-calf with dress shoes.**

Networking and Professional Etiquette

NETWORKING

WHAT IS NETWORKING?

Networking is the process of developing professional relationships. These relationships allow you to get to know people who can help you with your career needs while also getting yourself known. This is a strategy that takes time and effort, but the results are worth the investment.

Why should I do it?

Because it is the most effective job search method! Studies show that as much as 85% of jobs are found through some form of networking.

- Networking gets you outside of your present circle and in touch with people who may be able to help you tap into new opportunities.
- People who make contacts through networking have a better success rate because employers are more likely to hire them through personal referral rather than a blind contact.
- Note: Even though someone may not be employed in the field that you are specifically interested in, they may know someone who is. Or they may have some valuable life experience to share with you as well.

Why would anyone want to network with me?

People like to help people, especially by talking about themselves, their jobs and contacts. And you may be able to help them in some way – if not now, perhaps in the future. Just remember, **you are asking for information when you network, not a job.** Keep in mind that networking often eventually leads to job opportunities.

REASONS TO NETWORK

- To explore career options
- To get information about a career field, industry, or organization

- To discover job opportunities
- To get to know people in your chosen field or industry
- To let people know who you are and what you want to do

HOW DO I GET STARTED?

Before you contact anyone, think about why you are contacting them and what you want to say. Are you looking for information about different careers so you can choose your career path? Or, are you looking for people working in a specific company or career field to find job opportunities?

When you have a clear idea of your purpose, you will be able to develop an effective message about who you are and what you want to accomplish. Make sure you clearly tell everyone you speak with what information you are looking for and how they can help you. You may want to begin by sending an email to introduce yourself, then follow up with a phone call.

WHO CAN I CONTACT?

Anyone you know or can get to know! Potential networking contacts include:

- Family
- Faculty and staff at Ithaca College
- Classmates
- Friends and neighbors
- Current and past employers
- Internship supervisors
- Alumni in the Online Community
- Members of professional associations

Keep in mind that some of these contacts may be able to help you directly, while others may be able to refer you to someone else who can help. As you talk to more people, you will discover more opportunities.

WHAT DO I SAY?

When sending your first introductory email, introduce yourself in a clear and concise way and then quickly let the person know why you are contacting him or her. If someone referred you, use that individual's name in your introduction. In an introductory email **DO NOT** ask if they have jobs/internships, and **DO NOT** attach your resume. If you want maximum impact, you must first establish a relationship with this person.

Ideally, you want to arrange a time to meet with the person directly (or by phone or email, depending on the circumstances) so you can ask them detailed questions and gain useful information.

Example Introduction:

"Mr. Kiselow, my name is Patricia Flood and I am a classmate of your son Lou. He suggested that I contact you. I am considering public relations as a career and I'm trying to learn more about the field and the type of opportunities that are available. Lou told me that you work for the public relations firm of Zambelli and Woodhead and have a great deal of experience in PR. I'd like to sit down with you and talk at your convenience to get your advice. Thank you for your time and I look forward to hearing from you."

Caution: Be prepared to ask your questions when you call; they may want to talk right away.

INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWING

A specific networking technique called informational interviewing gives you the chance to find out about career paths and job opportunities while developing contacts with key people and learning to sell your skills in a non-threatening environment.

Steps to a successful informational interview:

- Prepare your questions and a brief introduction of yourself in advance
- Dress professionally and take copies of your resume, your list of questions, and any other materials you may want to present
- Turn off your cell phone before the interview
- Maintain good posture and eye contact
- Take notes during the meeting
- Be attentive and enthusiastic
- End on time
- Ask for other contacts they can recommend
- Thank the contact for his/her time and information
- Follow up with a thank you note within 24 hours

WHAT DO I ASK?

We have included the following list of sample questions, to get you started.

Personal Background:

- Before graduation, what did you think your career was going to be?
- How did you get into this type of work?
- Could you describe the progression of your career?

Preparation:

- What credentials, education degrees, licenses, etc. are required for entry into this kind of work?
- What kind of prior experiences are absolutely essential?
- How did you prepare yourself for this work?

Present Job:

- What is a typical day/week like for you?
- What skills or talents are essential for effectiveness in this job?
- What are the toughest problems/decisions you must deal with?
- What do you find most rewarding about the work itself?
- What do you like least about it?

Hiring Decisions:

- If you were to hire someone to work with you today, what factors would be most important in your hiring decisions and why?
- If I became an applicant for this type of work, who should I contact in your organization or in another firm?

Supply and Demand:

- How do people find out about jobs in your agency (company, division, etc.)?
- What types of employers hire people in your line of work? Where are they located?
- Is turnover high? Do people normally move to other companies, or do they move up within the company?

Life-Style:

- What type of life-style do people in your position lead?
- What obligation does your work place upon you, outside of the ordinary work week?
- How many hours do you work in the average week?
- How much flexibility do you have in terms of dress, hours of work, vacation, schedule, etc.?

Career Future:

- Where do you see yourself in five years?
- What other kinds of work do you feel that you could do?
- What sorts of changes are occurring in your field?

Professional Development:

- Where are the best programs of advanced study? Formal degree programs, corporate training programs, continued education?
- What are the professional journals in your field? Which ones do you recommend?
- What forms of professional development are offered through your company?

Advice to Job Seekers:

- What kinds of experience, paid employment and otherwise would you most strongly recommend?
- If you had to do it all over again, what would you do differently?
- Where would you recommend I look for work in this field?
- What would be your advice to individuals preparing for this type of work?
- Can you suggest anyone else whom I could contact for additional information? May I have permission to use your name when I call or contact them?

INTENTIONAL NETWORKING

Here are some other ways to start building your network:

- **Attend career events.** What better place to make connections with employers than a job fair? Check with Career Services to find

upcoming events like the Job & Internship Fair, Network Nights, Communications Consortium, alumni panels, and many more.

- **Get involved.** The more clubs and organizations you belong to, the more contacts you have.
- **Contact IC alumni.** Use the Alumni Online Community (<http://www.icalumni.net>) to locate alumni who work in your field. You can search by industry, location, major, job title, and much more. See **page 4** for more information.
- **Join professional organizations.** These groups often provide networking opportunities, ideas for best practices, relevant resources, and job postings.

Helpful Hints:

- Begin networking early. Don't wait until spring of your senior year to begin networking.
- Remember, you will be meeting primarily to gather up-to-date information about an area of interest. You are **not** asking the person for a job.
- Always make an appointment. This puts your conversation on a business-like basis and helps to eliminate interruptions.
- Be prepared to take the lead in the conversation. Remember you are the interviewer. Prepare in advance by learning everything you can about the person, the organization and the field. Have questions in mind that show you have done your homework.
- Respect the person's time. Plan a manageable agenda. A half hour is reasonable.
- Make it a point to remember the names of your new contacts.
- Always reciprocate. When you ask others for help, be prepared to return the favor. Keep supporters informed about your progress and successes.
- Be sure to send a thank you letter following an informational interview.

Helpful Hints continued:

- Make sure you follow through with any commitments you made during the meeting (or after).
- Use caution when name dropping. Don't name drop with employers unless you really know the person and have permission to use their name as a referral source.
- Keep in touch with your contacts. Inform them of job interviews and offers.

PROFESSIONAL ETIQUETTE

Communicating with others - peers, faculty and staff at college, supervisors and colleagues at internships or jobs, or the general public - is something you do every day. Understanding communication etiquette can help you become a more professional member of Ithaca College and society. We have put together some tips on proper communication through email, cell phones, internet and other online resources.

First Impressions

- Good grooming is essential since a person's first impression of you is your appearance.
- Appropriate attire is also essential and can leave a lasting impression. See pages 24-25 on professional attire.
- Some people may be offended by piercings and tattoos.

Handshakes

- Always have a firm handshake; a floppy handshake portrays lack of confidence and too firm a grip can be perceived as aggressive.
- Maintain eye contact and smile while shaking hands; it reinforces your confidence and friendliness.
- Introduce yourself and say, "it's nice to meet you."

Mind Your Manners

- Remember the basics: say please and thank you, use Mr. and Ms. when addressing people, open doors for others, etc.

Social Etiquette

- Be sociable but avoid gossip and controversial issues such as religion, politics, etc.

- Be prepared to talk about current events or issues, especially if you are at a networking event.
- Do not show up late to appointments or be a no show.
- Ask questions and show sincere interest
- Excuse yourself if you must leave a conversation.

Email Etiquette

- Use an appropriate email address such as your college email.
- Use proper spelling, grammar, and punctuation.
- Use professional tone and language in the body of the email AND the subject line.
- Address superiors and those you might not know as Mr., Ms., Dr., or Professor unless they have made it obvious that it is acceptable to address them.
- Do not use emoticons, slang, or abbreviated words.
- Proofread all emails before sending them out.

Social Networking

- You can create a professional online presence using LinkedIn.com.
- Keep in mind that some employers screen candidates using sites like facebook and MySpace, so make sure your online profiles are appropriate.
- If you have the option, you may want to set your social networking profiles to private.



Shadow a Professional

Take advantage of your break by shadowing a professional in a field of interest. Career Services can help you find IC alumni in your area to connect with.

Phone Etiquette

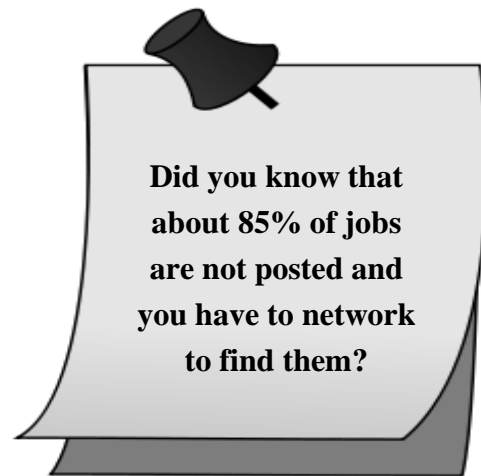
- Know who you want to talk to and what you want to say before placing a call.
- Identify yourself and why you are calling when you place a call.
- Use a welcoming tone; it also sometimes helps to smile while you are talking.
- Be polite; how you treat the caller will determine their impression of you.
- If you receive a phone message, return the call within 24 hours.
- Do not chew gum while talking on the phone.
- Excuse yourself for a minute if you have to sneeze, cough, or blow your nose.

Cell Phone Etiquette

- Do NOT text or talk on your cell while in the middle of a meeting or appointment (this is rude and sends the message that whoever is on your phone is more important than who is in the meeting with you).
- Turn your ringer off when in class, at a job interview, in a meeting, etc.
- Make sure your voicemail message is professional and avoid ring back tones.

Dining Etiquette

- Wait until your host begins eating to start eating.
- When passing a dish or condiment, always offer it to everyone else first, and pass to the right.
- Chew with your mouth closed and do not talk with food in your mouth.
- If you must leave the table, politely excuse yourself and place your napkin on your chair.
- For more dining etiquette tips, visit: www.diningetiquette.org.



Successful Interviewing

The interview is your opportunity to match your individual talents and interests to the needs of the employer. Your goal in the interview is not merely to convince the employer you are the person for the job. You should also use the interview to acquire insights and information which will assist you in evaluating whether this is the position for you. Throughout the exchange of information that takes place, the interviewer is looking for an answer to the question, "Why should I hire you?" It is important that your responses to his or her questions focus on answering that question.

Preparing for the interview is almost as important as the interview itself. The key to successful interviewing is **knowing who you are** and **knowing the organization** with which you are interviewing. To prepare for any interview, you should:

1. Do a self-evaluation
2. Research the organization
3. Prepare response to questions you might be asked and review questions you can ask the interviewer.

SELF EVALUATION

In order to articulate your qualifications for the job, you must have a clear understanding of what you have to offer an employer and what you are seeking in a position.

To begin your self-evaluation, assess your **skills, interests, and values**. Define these in relation to your career interests by prioritizing them according to their importance to you. Your list should include, but not be limited to: what you like to do in your spare time, work experiences you have enjoyed, successes you have had in school or in jobs you have held, the types of people with whom you enjoy working, the work environment you prefer, and how much value you place on monetary rewards.

Once you have gathered this information, apply it to what you know about the career field you plan to enter. Are there any obvious discrepancies between what you do well, what you like to do, and what is important to you and the expectations for the positions you are seeking? If so, **before** the interview is the time to deal with these differences.

If you have not already done so, carefully prepare a statement of your short-range career objective. Be prepared to discuss this objective as it relates to what you know about yourself, to the job for which you are interviewing, and to your future career goals.

As you proceed through your interviews, you will find many of the questions you are asked relate to how well you can assess yourself - skills, interests, strengths, weaknesses, and experiences you have had. Spending a little time at the beginning of your job search to evaluate these factors will pay off later.

RESEARCH

It is important to research the company, industry, organization, or school prior to the interview. You should acquire as much information as possible about the prospective employer. Such research should be aimed at understanding the organization and position for which you are applying. This will enable you to ask intelligent questions and to emphasize your assets during the actual interview. The Career Resource Center maintains descriptive materials about career fields and employers. The following resources will also help you in your search:

- The company's/organization's website
- Company brochures (annual reports and recruiting brochures)
- Standard and Poor's Register - (www.standardandpoors.com)
- Hoover's Handbook of American Companies
- Business magazines that profile small and large companies *e.g.* Forbes, Fast Company, Business Week
- CareerSearch-online database of over 4 million companies nationwide (www.ithaca.edu/sacl/careers/resources)
- Company profile websites such as www.manta.com

In addition to the Career Resource Center and online resources, you may write to the organization itself for information and/or talk with current or former employees. If news about the organization has appeared in recent business publications, it will be helpful for you to be informed of this prior to the interview.

JOB INTERVIEWING TIPS

- Visit the location of the interview ahead of time if possible so you can plan your travel needs accordingly.
- Arrive at an interview **10 minutes early**.
- If for some reason you are running late for an interview, call the organization.
- Do not smoke before an interview.
- Don't chew gum.** (Mints are ok!)
- Turn off your cell phone** or do not bring it into the interview at all.
- Be friendly** with everyone you meet at the organization.
- Greet your interviewers formally (ex. Mr. Jones).
- Ask someone ahead of time if you are unsure how to pronounce an interviewer's name.
- Offer a **firm handshake**.
- Maintain **good posture** and **eye contact**.
- Be sure to **smile**.
- Demonstrate **self-confidence and positive energy**, but do not be overly confident.
- Speak loud enough for everyone to hear you and enunciate your words.
- Avoid slang and pause words** such as "um" and "like".
- Do not bring up controversial issues or personal/family problems, or tell jokes.
- Do not give simple yes or no answers; elaborate and **give examples** whenever possible.
- Do not lie or exaggerate your abilities or experiences.
- Do not speak negatively about past employers or colleagues.
- Show appropriate interest- do not appear desperate for the job.
- Feel free to **take notes** during and after the interview so you remember details.
- At the end, show your appreciation for being interviewed and **ask what the next steps are**.
- Get business cards from each interviewer.
- Write **thank you letters** or emails to each interviewer within 24 hours.

THINGS TO TAKE TO THE INTERVIEW

Many students spend time preparing for their interview, think about what they are going to wear and practice interview questions. But have you thought about what you should take with you to an interview? Here is a short checklist:

- Directions to the interview, parking instructions and the phone number
- Portfolio/padfolio, paper and pen
- Extra resumes
- Sample work or professional portfolio
- List of questions for the interviewer
- List of references
- Mints
- Bottled water
- Professional bag, tote or briefcase
- Positive attitude and a smile!

INTERVIEW ATTIRE

Your first impression during a job interview is based on your overall appearance. Choose clothes that project an image appropriate to the position you want. Do some research to learn the company's standards; then dress as though you were representing them. Neatness counts. Make sure you check for missing buttons, tiny rips in your clothing, or run down heels. People equate how neatly you dress with how neatly you work.

In the traditional business world, conservative suits in neutral colors (black, gray, navy, etc) are the unofficial uniform. In a creative field, more casual and colorful clothing may be acceptable. Be aware of how people in your chosen field typically dress and choose accordingly. When in doubt, dress on the conservative side.

MEN'S ATTIRE

- Solid-colored suits are best: medium to dark blue, black and gray; and subtle pinstripes work well.
- Wear a good quality necktie with a conservative pattern.
- Clean, polished dark dress shoes (brown or black) and dark socks are a must; no boots.

MEN - continued

- Hair should be clean, neat and relatively short. Be prepared to get your hair cut at least a week in advance so you and your hair can get used to the cut.
- Beards and mustaches are acceptable only if they are fully grown-in and neatly groomed.
- Make sure your hands and nails are clean.
- Men should not wear earrings to an interview. Limit jewelry to a watch and/or wedding band.
- Your clothes should fit well and be pressed.
- Do not wear a strong-scented cologne or aftershave.

WOMENS ATTIRE

- Neutral colors are best; black, blues, grays and beiges. Pastels do not look professional.
- Skirts should be knee length or below. If you are going to wear a skirt that is shorter, be sure to sit down while trying it on. Most skirts will “ride” up, so you want to make sure that a skirt that looks presentable while you are standing, doesn't suddenly shrink when you are asked to have a seat.
- Avoid clothes that are too tight or revealing. Make sure your button-down shirt doesn't gap between buttons when you sit down.
- Avoid blouses, shirts, etc. that have excessive ruffles and bows.
- Always wear stockings, even on a scorching summer day. Bare legs are not acceptable. It's a good idea to bring a spare pair in case you get a run.
- Stockings should be opaque in flesh tone or neutral colors. Brightly colored or textured hose detract from a professional appearance.
- Hairstyles should be clean and neat. There is no one appropriate length, however, if your hair is long make sure to wear it in such a way that you do not have to constantly pull it away from your face.
- Professional shoes are a must. Closed toe and low heels are suggested; boots should be avoided altogether.

- Nails should be clean and neat. Light-colored polish may be acceptable, but clear polish is preferred.
- Do not wear excessive jewelry or anything that dangles or clinks. Only wear two earrings to the interview, and stick with the classics - gold, silver or pearl.
- Use make-up that enhances your features but does not overpower them. Avoid very dark or very bright colors.
- Do not use strong perfumes that will overpower your interviewer; stick to a light scent or none at all.



COMMONLY ASKED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

There are a number of questions commonly asked by interviewers during an initial employment interview. By being aware of some of these questions and by considering your responses, you will be better prepared to offer well thought-out and concise replies. This will also help you and the interviewer feel more at ease and will facilitate the interviewing process.

To assist you in preparing for your interview, we have listed some common interview questions. It is best to think in terms of why the recruiter is asking the following questions:

- **What are your career plans?** The interviewer really wants to know how your future plans relate to those of the organization. This question also allows the interviewer to assess

whether this job fits your short range goals and your future career goal. Try to emphasize how you will contribute to the company as part of your plan.

- **Why are you interested in our organization?** In asking this question, the employer is hoping to determine how much research you have done about the organization. You must be able to articulate career plans which are compatible with the organization with which you are interviewing. Discuss what you have learned in researching the organization. Prove your interest.
- **How did you choose your major and/or your college?** This question gives the employer a chance to assess your decision making process. You should stress the thought and research that went into making your decision. The employer is interested in how you conducted this research as well as the end result.
- **Tell me about yourself.** The employer will want enough information about you as a person to enable him/her to make a comparison of profiles of successful company employees. She/he also wants to know what motivates you, how you will work with others, your enthusiasm, drive, and other JOB-RELATED traits. Be sure to stress the positive attributes, and confine your answer to career-related information.
- **What are your greatest strengths?** This question enables the employer to determine what your self image is. Concentrate on strengths related to the work environment. Here is your opportunity to prove that you have the most important strength required for the position. Point out all the strengths you have acquired through your past jobs and campus/community activities. You need to be able to relate these strengths to the employer's needs, so give this careful consideration.
- **What are your main weaknesses?** Briefly mention a weakness which you have overcome or are in the process of overcoming. Do not dwell on negatives and avoid mention of a weakness which might be debilitating in the position for which you are being considered. An example of an appropriate response would be "being organized hasn't always been my strongest trait, but I have implemented a calendar and folder system that really helps."

- **Behavior-based questions.** The employer is looking for you to tell a story and provide examples when a behavior-based question is asked. This type of question typically begins with "Tell me about a time when..." An easy way to craft your answer is to use the STAR Method: describe the **S**ituation, the **T**ask or goal, what **A**ction you took, and the **R**esult. Be careful your answers aren't too long; keep them to about 1 or 2 minutes.

QUESTIONS FOR INTERVIEW PREPARATION

1. What are your long range career goals, when and why did you establish these goals, and how are you preparing yourself to achieve them?
2. What specific goals, other than those related to your occupation, have you established for your-self for the next ten years?
3. Why are you interested in working for our organization?
4. What are the most important rewards you expect in your career?
5. What are your greatest strengths?
6. How would you describe yourself?
7. How do you like to spend your free time?
8. How did your college experience prepare you for a career?
9. What books, magazines, newspapers, or journals do you read?
10. Why should I hire you?
11. What qualifications do you have that make you think you will be successful?
12. Why do you think you would like this particular job?
13. In what ways do you think that you can make a contribution to our company?
14. What do you think determines a person's progress in an organization?
15. Describe the relationship that should exist between a supervisor and subordinates?
16. What two or three accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction and why?
17. Do you feel that you have the best scholastic record of which you are capable?
18. Why did you choose your field of study?
19. If you could do so, how would you plan your academic study differently? Why?

-
20. Describe your most rewarding (college) experience?
 21. Do you have plans for continued study? An advanced degree?
 22. What have you learned from participation in extracurricular activities?
 23. In what kind of work environment are you most comfortable?
 24. May we contact your previous employers for reference information?
 25. What characteristics do you think are necessary for success in this field?
 26. What two or three things are most important to you in your job?
 27. Describe what you consider to be the ideal job.
 28. Do you prefer working by yourself or with others?
 29. What have you done that shows initiative or willingness to work?
 30. What criteria are you using to evaluate the company for which you hope to work?
 31. What kind of supervisor do you prefer? What kind of colleagues do you prefer to work with?
 32. Do you have a geographic preference? What is it? Why?
 33. What salary expectations do you have for this position?
 34. Tell me about a time when you worked successfully in a team.
 35. What do you know about our company?
 36. How do you feel about travel?
 37. What major problem have you encountered and how did you deal with it?
 38. What type of person do you find most difficult to deal with?
 39. What have you learned from your mistakes?
 40. What have you learned from other jobs that you have held?
 41. Tell me about yourself.
 42. What motivates you on the job?
 43. What has been your most creative project?
 44. What was the most embarrassing thing that has ever happened to you?
 45. What is your greatest weakness?

Please Note: It is not always easy to accentuate the positive without appearing boastful. By focusing on factual answers in a sincere manner, you can avoid the appearance of conceit.

This list is not comprehensive. Many other types of questions can and will be asked. Your knowledge of yourself, the company, your preparation and your verbal abilities will help you to respond more effectively.

HANDLING INAPPROPRIATE QUESTIONS

It is not appropriate for the interviewer to ask personal questions unrelated to the qualifications of the job for which you are interviewing. Such inappropriate (illegal) questions could include: "What does your spouse do?", "Will being married or having children interfere with your ability to travel and relocate?", "Are you planning on getting married (having children) soon?". There are many more examples of discriminatory questions. Every candidate needs to make a personal decision on how to respond to these inquiries. There are three ways to answer an illegal question:

1. Alert the interviewer to an illegal question.
2. Simply answer the illegal question.
3. Determine the underlying concern and address it in your answer. For example: Are you planning on having (or do you already have) children? The underlying concern could be your ability to perform certain aspects of the position, such as traveling. Your response should address this concern. "I understand there is a significant amount of travel required for this position and my personal life shall not interfere with my ability to perform all aspects of this position effectively."

Regardless of the method you choose, this situation should be handled tactfully and politely. However, if you feel that there was discrimination and you were turned down for a job based upon your response to an illegal question, the necessary legal steps can be taken after the interview. It will then be up to the interviewer to prove that discrimination did not take place.

QUESTIONS TO ASK AT AN INTERVIEW

At some point in the interview, the interviewer will ask if you have any questions. You should have some prepared in advance so that you will not be taken by surprise. Avoid asking questions to which you would know the answer if you had read the company's materials or questions that are very technical in nature.

The interview is a two-way exchange of information. Questions that you might ask the interviewer are as equally important in this encounter as those you answer. You need to learn as much as you can about the position and the organization for which you might work.

It is best to avoid asking about salary or benefits during the first interview. If you absolutely must know the salary, ask in terms of a range you might expect. Most employers view excessive interest in financial matters to be inappropriate in the first contact.

Here are some sample questions you may want to ask in addition to any specific questions you have about the job description:

1. How would you describe the work environment?
2. What are the characteristics of a successful person in your organization?
3. How would you describe the organization's personality and management style?
4. What are your expectations for new hires?
5. What are the typical first year assignments.
6. What is the overall structure of the department where the position is located.?
7. What are the company's strengths and weaknesses?
8. What do you like most about the organization for which you work? What do you like least?
9. Would you describe your training program for me? ...OR... What type of training will I receive? (If you are applying for a management trainee position, you should have covered this in your research and need not ask unless you want more detailed information.)
10. How would you describe the differences between your organization and others similar to it?

11. What are your organization's promotion policies?
12. How is an employee evaluated and promoted?
13. If I were to accept this position, what would be my opportunity for advancement or personal growth?
14. What is the retention rate of people in the position for which I am interviewing?
15. What are your policies or expectations regarding continuing education for your employees?
16. What are the challenging facets of the job?
17. What are the toughest problems/decisions that the person in this position will have to deal with?
18. What are the organization's plans for future growth?
19. What industry trends will affect this company?
20. How is this firm stronger than the competition?

FOLLOW UP

Immediately following an interview you should send a thank you letter or e-mail to each person who interviewed you (within 24 hours is best). Thank you letters are considered a professional courtesy; use them to show your appreciation as well as make additional positive impressions on the interviewers. Letters may be sent via email or by U.S. mail. With this mind, be aware the employers can receive dozens of emails a day. A neatly handwritten note can demonstrate extra effort and help you to stand out.

WHAT TO INCLUDE

- The opening remark should show your appreciation for being interviewed. Include the position for which you interviewed and the date of the interview.
- Mention something specific that person brought up in the interview; making individualized connections shows that you were paying attention and are interested in what that person says.
- Restate your interest in the position and confidence in your ability to do the job. Mention specific skills or experiences that are a good fit.
- Include any information that was requested at the interview and offer to provide additional information if needed.

SAMPLE FOLLOW UP LETTER

45 Franklin St.
Watkins Glen, NY 14891

May 26, 2010

Ms. Jane Doe
Director of Personnel
XYZ Company
123 Seneca St.
Ithaca, NY 14850

Dear Ms. Doe:

Thank you for taking the time to interview me yesterday for the Project Coordinator position. Our conversations confirmed to me that this job is exactly the type of quality experience in which I am interested.

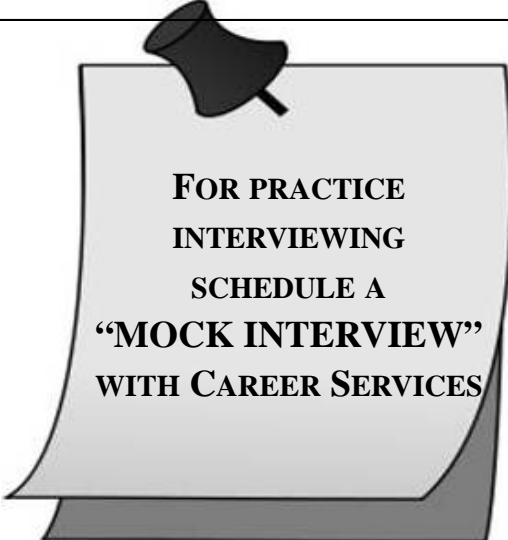
I was especially impressed to learn that the Project Coordinator plays a significant role in working with outside constituents. As I mentioned in our interview, I have extensive experience in communicating with various departments and community members. My interpersonal skills would be of benefit to you in creating and developing relationships with clients outside of the organization.

I would like to express my sincere interest in working for XYZ Company. If there is any further information you would find helpful in making a decision regarding my employment, please feel free to contact me at (607) 123-4567. I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Sincerely,

Your Signature Here

Suzie Sample



**FOR PRACTICE
INTERVIEWING
SCHEDULE A
“MOCK INTERVIEW”
WITH CAREER SERVICES**

Salary Negotiation

Salary negotiation is the process in which you tactfully and professionally discuss your pay during the final stages of the application/hiring process. It can be a tricky process to navigate, so read these tips before approaching an employer with particular salary or benefit requests:

Avoid Salary Talk Until You've Been Offered the Position.

You have more bargaining power if you are the final candidate. If salary comes up earlier in the interviewing process, try to avoid giving specific numbers. For example, you could say something like, "I would hope for a competitive salary for this area and job title that also matches my experience, ability, and passion for helping people."

Research!

Before you do anything else, research average salaries for particular job titles and geographic locations. A couple salary research sites include www.salary.com and www.payscale.com.

Use Your Experience.

The more experience you have, the more bargaining power you have. During salary negotiations, be ready to emphasize your related employment, internship, volunteer, and extracurricular experiences. Also consider transferable skills that you've gained in unrelated experience (ex. leadership, interpersonal, budgeting, or technology skills).

Be Realistic.

Approach negotiations with a realistic salary expectation, not your ultimate salary goal. Also, if you are an entry level candidate, you cannot expect to start out with the same salary as someone who has been in the field for 10+ years.

Leave Personal Reasons Out.

When determining suitable salaries, employers do not take into consideration that you have student loans to pay off, a car payment, five kids to feed, a mortgage... you get the picture. Stick to professional, positive reasons why you are worth the negotiated salary.

Prepare Your Pitch.

It is vital to be prepared for a salary negotiation conversation. You've got to sell yourself, be realistic, and show that you've done your research. For example, you might be prepared with something like, "I've researched average salaries for entry level marketing assistants in this region and discovered that they fall between \$36,000 and \$39,000. Based on my employment and internship experiences that we've discussed, in addition to my motivation and creativity, I was hoping for a salary in that range."

Be Prepared with a Minimum Expected Salary.

Go into salary negotiations with a minimum acceptable salary. And while this is a wise strategy to begin with, consider being flexible with the offered salary if additional benefits make the overall package worth it (see next bullet). The alternative is being prepared to walk away from a job offer.

Consider ALL Benefits.

A benefits package not only includes your salary, but your time off, medical insurance, retirement options, and work/life balance (employer flexibility). Salary negotiation can involve some of these other kinds of benefits such as relocation assistance, vacation days, bonuses, and performance raises. Also consider potential professional development opportunities, trainings, education assistance, etc.

Be Prepared to Hear "No."

It's possible that your request for increased salary or other benefits gets rejected. Many companies have strict salary policies or salary caps, so there truly might not be any flexibility with your salary.

Get it in Writing.

After you've been offered a position, especially if you were able to negotiate a higher salary, ask the employer for an acceptance letter.

Take the Chance! You'll never know if you don't ask! Many people are excited to have a job offer and eager to accept, but you should take the time to ask if there is any room for negotiation regarding the salary.

Graduate School Decisions

SHOULD I GO TO GRADUATE SCHOOL?

Should I go to graduate school right away or wait awhile and then apply? How do I decide which school is best for me?

These are probably two of the most frequently asked questions people present to us. The answer is a personal one for each of you. Graduate education can increase earning potential as well as provide the specialized training required to enter numerous professional areas, but it is not for everyone. Before deciding on a graduate program, self-assessment is essential. Clear goals and objectives are imperative. Consider these factors when deciding whether or when to attend graduate school:

GOALS: How defined are your goals? Have you talked with people in your field to explore what you might be doing after graduate school?

EXPERIENCE: Do you have any "hands-on" experience? Have you completed an internship or worked in your chosen field? Related work is recommended prior to graduate school to enable you to gain experience and understanding of your field.

EMPLOYABILITY: What is the probability of finding employment in the field with and without an advanced degree? Is the additional schooling essential to your entry into the field?

OPPORTUNITY: Do you truly understand what you will gain by pursuing an advanced degree? Have you compared your expectations of what graduate school will do for you with what it has done for alumni of the graduate program?

HOMEWORK: Are you excited by the idea of studying the particular field you have in mind? Do you like intensive study?

MOTIVATION: Are you simply looking for a way to put off career decisions, the job search and adult responsibilities?



PREPARATION: You generally need a solid grade point average (B or 3.00) or a series of prerequisite classes before entering graduate school. Are you prepared? What graduate entrance exams are needed? Are your scores competitive?

COST: Calculate the academic and personal expenses of another degree. Can you afford this? Have you identified ways to finance such a decision? Also, consider the cost of deferred income for this period. How much potential income will you lose now and in the future by delaying your entry to the workforce?

Adapted from The Bagley Center, Plymouth State College <http://www.plymouth.edu/career/gradindex.html>

CHOOSING A SPECIALIZATION AND RESEARCHING PROGRAMS

Will the graduate program have what you are looking for? Does a particular program provide you the professional development opportunities you want? How will a specific program enhance your future career possibilities? Use this list of questions to assist you in that evaluation process.

PROGRAM FEATURES

- How flexible is the program? Are there opportunities to take elective courses?
- Can you minor in an area of key importance to you?
- Does the program offer opportunities for practical experience?
- What is the emphasis of the program? Is it on practice or research?

PROGRAM FEATURES - CONTINUED

- Is the program in a geographic area you like (urban/ rural/ size/ etc.)?
- What is the average time to complete the (1) class work, (2) research, and (3) dissertation?

FACULTY

- What is the student-faculty ratio?
- What is the background/reputation of the faculty who teach in the program?
- Are there faculty members with research areas similar to your interests?
- How accessible and available are the faculty to students?
- How are advisors assigned?
- What is the faculty turnover rate?

FINANCIAL AID

- What are the criteria and process for selecting Teaching Assistants (TAs), Graduate Assistants (GAs), Resident Assistants (RAs), Research Assistants (REs), and Fellows?
- How reliable is your financial support from year to year?
- Is this process coordinated by the program or the graduate admissions office?

STUDENTS

- Will you have a good sized cohort?
- Is the student body diverse geographically, socially, economically?
- What is the ratio of full-time and part-time students in the program?
- Is the retention rate good? Do most students who begin the program finish completely?
- Are there organizations for students and opportunities to socialize outside of class?
- May I meet some currently enrolled students (either in person or via e-mail)?

FACILITIES

- How comprehensive are the labs and other learning facilities?
- How current, diverse, and expansive are library holdings in your program and research area?
- Are there specialized research facilities available for graduate student use?

PLACEMENT

- What types of positions do graduates of the program secure after graduation?
- Where are these positions typically geographically?
- What is the placement rate for new graduates within the first year after graduation?
- How helpful is the program in helping you to secure employment? What services are available?

Adapted from Career Services and Leadership Education Office, St. Lawrence University, 2003.

ADDITIONAL APPLICATION CONSIDERATIONS

APPLICATION FORMS AND INFORMATION

- Many applications are now available on-line or through a simple email request.
- Confirm application deadlines; pay particular attention to rolling or modified-rolling admissions.
- Follow instructions carefully and accurately while completing all requested information.
- Tailor your communications to the specific aspects of the graduate program.
- Complete forms online, or if it must be handwritten, use a pen, keeping in mind that a neat and attractive appearance is important.
- Include **all** requested documents and materials: resume, fees, personal statement, writing sample, etc.
- Always make copies for your records before sending.
- Contact the graduate admissions office to confirm that all of your application materials have been received.

MEETING APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Requirements vary from one field to another and from one institution to another. Read each program's requirements carefully; the importance of this cannot be overemphasized!

TRANSCRIPTS

In regard to academics, grade point averages are important but are not examined in isolation; the rigor of the courses you have taken, your course load, and the reputation of the undergraduate institution you have attended are also considered.

To obtain an official copy of your transcript, contact the Registrar's Office at (607) 274-3127 or at <http://www.ithaca.edu/registrar>. Allow the Registrar's Office several working days to process your transcripts for graduate school referral. If you are a transfer student, be sure to check with each graduate program to determine if you must also obtain transcripts directly from your previous institution(s) of study.

RESUMES

A resume is an important summary of the experiences and education that have prepared you for graduate school. It is also a statement of your professional interests and commitments to date. Be sure to include this with your application materials. If you need assistance developing your resume, be sure to visit the Career Services Office.

GRADUATE ENTRANCE EXAMS

GRADUATE RECORD EXAM (GRE) is the most common entrance exam and provides admissions committees with a common evaluation criteria for all applicants. As a computer-adaptive test, the GRE is offered at designated test centers across the country, including here in Ithaca. **The GRE test length, question content, and scoring scale is changing as of August 1, 2011. For detailed information on these changes visit http://www.ets.org/gre/revised_general/know.**

Each test includes the following: (1) Verbal Reasoning sections – two 30 minute sections; includes text completion, sentence equivalence, and reading comprehension; (2) Quantitative sections – two 35 minute sections; includes basic math skills and concepts such as algebra and geometry, word problems, and numeric entry questions; (3) Analytical Writing section – one 45 minute “present your perspective” essay and one 30 minute “analyze and argument” essay.

Some graduate programs may also request that you complete a Subject Test of the GRE. Topics may include: Biochemistry, Cell Biology, Molecular Biology and Genetics, Biology, Chemistry, Computer Science, Literature in English, Mathematics, Physics, Psychology. Subject tests are given on designated test Saturdays at colleges across the country.

If you are hoping to enroll in graduate school the fall after you graduate, you should take the GRE before the end of November of your senior year. Information booklets for the GRE General and Subject Tests are available at Career Services.

To register: Students should visit www.ets.org/gre/ or call 1-800-GRE-CALL to schedule a test date; be sure to take the test well in advance of any application deadlines. August is not too early to schedule a November test!

GRADUATE MANAGEMENT ADMISSIONS TEST (GMAT) is the entrance exam required by most business schools across the country. Also a computer adaptive test, the GMAT is offered at test centers across the country.

To register: Students should visit www.mba.com/mba/thegmat or call 1-800-GMAT-NOW to schedule a test date; be sure to take the test well in advance of any application deadlines.

The three sections of the GMAT include:

- (1) Verbal – 75 minutes; includes reading comprehension, sentence correction and critical reasoning;
- (2) Quantitative – 75 minutes; includes data sufficiency and problem solving;
- (3) Analytical Writing – 60 minutes; “Analysis of an Argument” essay – 30 minutes and “Analysis of an Issue” essay – 30 minutes.

LAW SCHOOL ADMISSIONS TEST (LSAT) is the entrance exam required by every law school across the country. Candidates are evaluated in four areas: Logic Games, Logical Reasoning, Reading Comprehension, and an Analytical Writing Sample. The exam is scored on a scale of 120 – 180. The multiple-choice sections may be given in any order, but the writing sample is always administered last. While applicants may take the exam in June, October, December or February of each year, it is recommended that you take the LSAT by December of your senior year.

To register: Registration for this exam is available online at www.lsac.org.

MEDICAL COLLEGE ADMISSIONS TEST (MCAT) is required by nearly all US medical schools. This full-day paper and pencil exam is offered each April and August and it is recommended that you take the exam in April of your junior year if you plan to attend medical school immediately following your Ithaca graduation. Applicants will be tested in four areas: (1) Physical Sciences – 100 minutes; (2) Verbal Reasoning – 85 minutes; (3) Writing Sample – 30 minutes; (4) Biological Sciences – 100 minutes. Scores for each section range from 1 – 15 with the exception of the Writing Sample which is given a letter score.

To register: Registration is available online at www.aamc.org.

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

Choosing people to write recommendations can be difficult, and most graduate schools require two or three letters. To begin the process of choosing references, identify likely candidates from among those you know through your classes, extracurricular activities, jobs, internships and research experiences. Once identified, ask them if they can serve as a positive reference.

A good reference will meet several of the following criteria: he/she has a high opinion of you, knows institutions to which you are applying as well as the kind of study you are pursuing, has taught or worked with a large number of students and can make a favorable comparison of you with peers, is known by the admissions committee and is regarded as someone whose judgment should be given weight, and has strong written communication skills.

A note about confidential vs. non-confidential letters: Whether a letter is confidential or not is a decision made by **you**, the student. Confidential means you have waived your right to review what is written in that letter. Even after 10 years, if you ask to see this confidential letter, that request will be denied. Even if a prospective reference has a preference for the kind of letter s/he will write, this is ultimately your decision. Note: many schools require the confidential format and these letters tend to carry more “weight.”

GIVE THE WRITER:

- ✓ A statement of your career goals, why you are interested in them, and how this graduate program will help you attain these goals.

- ✓ A list of activities that have supported this career/program choice (e.g. summer experience, research experience).
- ✓ Academic credentials-approximate grade point average, GRE scores, relevant course work and grades.
- ✓ Refresh the writer's memory about your experience with him/her (courses, etc.).
- ✓ Mention any facts that may support your case (you had mono when you got a "D" in Organic).
- ✓ A copy of your personal statement for graduate study.
- ✓ Extracurricular activities not directly relevant to your application.
- ✓ An envelope stamped and addressed for each program. If a recommendation form is provided, enclose it in the envelope.
- ✓ A list of all programs to which she/he is to write, **AND THE DEADLINES FOR EACH**. Plan ahead and ask for your recommendations well before the deadlines. In addition, you may need to follow up to insure that your recommendation letters have been sent.
- ✓ A copy of your transcript.

APPLICATION ESSAYS

An essay for an application, often referred to as a personal statement or statement of purpose, should essentially contain your interests and goals in relation to that particular program. Some institutions will pose specific questions, while others may instruct you to simply submit a personal statement. Usually it includes a certain amount of personal history, but, unless an institution specifically requests autobiographical information, you do not have to supply any. Your aim should be a clear, succinct statement showing that you have a definite sense of what you want to do and enthusiasm for the field of study you have chosen. The Career Services staff can assist you by critiquing your essay. Additionally, you should consider having your essays critiqued at the Ithaca College Writing Center (Smiddy 107).

Don't underestimate the time needed to prepare an effective statement! Before writing anything, stop and consider what your reader might be looking for; the general directions or other parts of the application may give you an indication of this. Admissions committees may be trying to evaluate a number of things from your statement, including the following:



- Motivation and commitment to a field of study
- Expectations with regard to the program and career opportunities
- Writing ability
- Major areas of interest
- Research and/or work experience
- Educational background
- Immediate and long term goals
- Reasons for deciding to pursue graduate education in a particular field and at a particular institution
- Maturity
- Personal uniqueness-what you would add to the diversity of the entering class

If you are not given specific questions to answer, there are two main approaches to organizing an essay. You can outline the points you want to cover and then expand on them, or you can put your ideas down on paper as they come to you, going over them, eliminating certain sentences, and moving others around until you achieve a logical sequence. Use the approach you feel most comfortable with. Either way, you want your essay to be clear, specific, and detailed, yet concise.

Think of your responses in terms of how your background, skills, abilities, goals, etc. match the characteristics and opportunities of the graduate program. Additionally, recognize that this statement is an opportunity to demonstrate your written communication skills, motivation, energy level, creativity, commitment, and depth of response to the application questions. Most important, take the time to have others review your statement. The Career Services staff and Ithaca College faculty are more than willing to assist in this critical review process.

ESSAY RESOURCES ON THE INTERNET

About Grad Schools [<http://gradschool.about.com/msubessay.htm>]: An excellent and comprehensive list of web sites related to developing an effective essay for graduate admissions in a variety of fields.

Admissions Essays [<http://www.admissionsessays.com/>]: The premier personal statement development service on the Web. It provides all the necessary guidance to help clients produce memorable, striking,

and effective personal statements and admissions essays to help them get into the schools of their choice. View sample essays from various academic disciplines.

University of Wisconsin – Madison: Tips on Writing Application Essays [<http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/apessay.html>]: Let these tips help you get started writing this all important aspect of your graduate school application.

FINANCING YOUR GRADUATE EDUCATION

Most graduate students find it is necessary to draw upon several sources of financial assistance during their studies. There are three basic types: grants and fellowships, work programs, and loans. Funding sources to explore are: the federal government, state governments, educational institutions, foundations, corporations, etc. Unlike financial assistance awarded to undergraduate students, graduate students face a more selective and competitive scholarship process. The more common awards include the following:

1. **Fellowships, Grants and Scholarships:** This is the most desirable type of financial assistance and therefore, the most competitive. Fellowships may be supported by the federal government, special interest groups, or within a given school. Check the graduate catalog for a complete listing of these programs. There are also a number of directories that can assist you with this search process, such as www.finaid.org/otheraid/grad.phtml.
2. **Research Assistantship:** Typically these are coordinated directly by the graduate program and are extremely competitive; there is often a separate application process. In exchange for your work on someone's research project, you may be awarded tuition assistance or a living stipend. There is also potential that this work may count toward or help complete your thesis.
3. **Teaching Assistantship:** Also coordinated by the graduate program, this assistantship requires that you must teach something, usually a laboratory or first-year level course, in exchange for tuition assistance, living stipend or other award. Work expectations vary among departments, but 15 hours per week is usually required.

4. **Administrative/Professional Assistantships:** Similar to research and teaching assistantships, you work for the college in exchange for room, board, tuition assistance, and/or a stipend. There is typically a separate application process for these types of assistantships.
5. **Resident Assistantship:** If you have experience as a Resident Assistant, then this may be a viable strategy for you. Institutions may hire you as a resident assistant or residence director and in exchange for your service to the department, you are typically compensated with room, board, a stipend, and/or tuition assistance.
6. **Odd jobs around the department:** Sometimes you can get hourly work, but this, of course, does not include tuition assistance as do more traditional assistantships.
7. **College Work Study:** Just as undergraduate students can be awarded funding for an on-campus job, this program is also available to graduate students. The Financial Aid Office will ultimately make this decision for you.
8. **Loans:** Borrowing money for further study is always an important decision. Make sure you have checked with your undergraduate financial aid office to determine what your borrowing eligibility may be.

If money is not available when you first enroll, it may be available later. Also, don't enroll in a program that you are not interested in simply because it gives you more money than a program that will more closely align with your personal and professional goals.

Peterson's Guide to Graduate and Professional Programs

WEBSITES FOR THE GRADUATE ADMISSIONS PROCESS

GENERAL RESEARCH

All About Grad School

[www.allaboutgradschool.com] - Provides a comprehensive geographic directory of graduate schools in the United States along with test preparation information & recommended books.

College Source Online [www.collegesource.org] - This website will give you access to complete graduate catalogs for institutions across the country. Very useful to search for programs by topic.

Eurograduate [www.eurograduate.com] - This is a site for identifying graduate program opportunities across Europe.

GradSchools [www.gradschools.com] - The most comprehensive online source of graduate school information.

Grad Profiles [www.gradprofiles.com] - Features in-depth graduate and professional school profiles with information about programs of study, degree requirements, facilities, expenses, financial aid, faculty research and much more.

Petersons Guide [www.petersons.com] - Just like their *Guide to Four Year Colleges*, this site will let you search for graduate programs in nearly every discipline imaginable. Hard copy companions can be found in the Career Resource Center.

US News & World Reports [www.usnews.com/edu/grad/rankings/rankindex_brief.php] - Provides career outlook information, admission tips, and graduate test information; also provides information on graduate programs in business, law, medicine, engineering, education, health, library science, Ph.D.'s, the arts, and public affairs.

LAW SCHOOL

Law School Admissions Council [www.lsac.org] - The site to visit if you are considering law school; valuable information about the LSAT, selecting a school, law school admissions process, and much more.

LawSchool [www.lawschool.com] - A site jam packed with news and events in law school today. Definitely check this site out to see what's happening at the schools to which you are thinking about applying. You will also find law school rankings on this site.

Boston College Online Law School Locator

[www.bc.edu/offices/careers/gradschool/law/lawlocator.html] - The Locator can help you identify schools where your scores and grades are most competitive for admission and help you gauge your chances of admission at a particular school.

Princeton Review Law School Information

[www.princetonreview.com/law] - Get the latest information on selecting and applying to law school, the LSATs, financial aid, making a successful transition to law school and other related resources.

BUSINESS PROGRAMS

MBA.com [WWW.MBA.COM] - **The site** to visit if you are considering business school; valuable information on the GMAT exam, selecting MBA programs, and financing your graduate studies. From the Graduate Management Admissions Council.

Princeton Review Business School Information [www.princetonreview.com/business] - Get the latest information on selecting and applying to business school, the GMATs, financial aid, making a successful transition to law school and other related resources.

MEDICAL PROGRAMS

Association of American Medical Colleges [www.aamc.org] - **The site** to visit if you are considering medical school; valuable information on the MCAT, applying to and financing med school, application timelines, and more.

Princeton Review Medical School Information [www.princetonreview.com/medical] - Get the latest information on selecting and applying to medical school, the MCATs, financial aid, making a successful transition to medical school and other related resources.

FINANCIAL AID

FastWeb [www.fastweb.com] - FastWeb lets students create a personalized profile that can be matched against expansive databases of colleges and scholarships. As the oldest and most popular free online scholarship matching service, this database has over 600,000 scholarships totaling more than \$1 billion. FastWeb also notifies students when new scholarships are added and application deadlines are approaching.

FinAid: The Smart Guide to Financial Aid [www.finaid.org] - This award-winning site has grown into the most comprehensive annotated collection of information about student financial aid on the web.

Student Loan [www.estudentloan.com] - eStudentLoan provides a comparison marketplace where students can match their specific needs with lender programs.

GRADUATE SCHOOL APPLICATION RECORD

See sample application record below.

	PROGRAM 1	PROGRAM 2	PROGRAM 3
SCHOOL			
APPLICATION			
Deadline / Fee			
School Visit/Interview Date			
Application Sent Date			
TRANSCRIPTS			
Date Requested			
Date School Received			
TEST SCORES			
Date Exam is Scheduled			
Date Requested			
Date Received by School			
RECOMMENDATION 1			
Name			
Date Requested			
Date Completed and Sent to School or Credential File			
Date Received by School			
RECOMMENDATION 2			
Name			
Date Requested			
Date Completed and Sent to School or Credential File			
Date Received by School			
RECOMMENDATION 3			
Name			
Date Requested			
Date Completed and Sent to School or Credential File			
Date Received by School			

APPYING FOR GRADUATE SCHOOL TIMELINE

Junior Year, Fall and Spring:

- Try to define your career goals and determine if grad school is required or beneficial in helping to meet those goals.
- Research interest areas, institutions, and degree programs.
- Get to know your professors and advisor. They are a great source of career-related information. You may need to ask them for a letter of recommendation later.
- Register and prepare for appropriate graduate admission test. You may choose to take your exam during the spring of your junior year through the fall of your senior year. Note that some exams are only offered certain times each year.
- Investigate scholarships, assistantships, fellowships, and grants.
- Speak with alumni, faculty, parents, and friends about their graduate experiences.

Summer before Senior Year:

- Request applications and financial aid materials.
- Visit institutions of interest if possible.
- Narrow your list of schools.
- Check application deadlines and rolling admission policies.
- Study sample test questions for the appropriate entrance exam, enroll in a test prep course if needed.
- Register for a summer or fall graduate admission test.
- Begin writing your application essay (personal statement).
- For medical, dental, osteopathy, podiatry, or law school, you may need to register for the national application, or data assembly service most programs use.

Senior Year, Fall:

- Obtain letters of recommendation.
- Take graduate admission test (*if you have not already done so*).
- Send in completed application(s).
- Have transcripts and letters of recommendation mailed.
- Confirm that graduate programs have received all application materials.
- Apply for assistantships, fellowships, grants, etc.
- Register for Graduate and Professional School Financial Aid Service (GPSFAS) if required.
- Consider visiting select institutions during winter break.

Senior Year, Spring:

- Check with all institutions before the deadline to make sure your file is complete.
- Keep track of acceptances, waiting list placements, and rejections.
- Visit institutions that accept you (if you haven't already).
- Evaluate all offers of admission and financial aid before making final decision.
- Send deposit to institution of your choice.
- Notify other institutions that accepted you of your decision so that they may admit students on their waiting list.
- Send thank-you notes to people who wrote your recommendation letters, informing them of your success.
- Upon graduation, forward an updated transcript to the institution you will attend in the fall.

Credential File Service

WHAT IS A CREDENTIAL FILE?

Career Services offers a recommendation file service so that you may provide graduate schools and/or employers information about your background and qualifications. Most credential files contain written letters of recommendations from professors, former employers, or supervisors who have been able to observe you closely in an educational or work setting. Your file may include other materials which support your candidacy, but the following are **NOT accepted for your file**: transcripts (contact the Registrar's Office at 274-3127), NTE scores or graduate school examination scores and resumes.

Between three and five letters of recommendation are appropriate for most credential files. Graduate schools and employers are generally satisfied with three well written letters.

HOW TO ESTABLISH YOUR CREDENTIAL FILE

To open your file, you will need to complete a Credential File **Registration Form**. The form is available on our website (www.ithaca.edu/sacl/careers/docs/credentials/Registration_Form) and in our office. **Submit this completed form, along with payment of \$30. Checks should be made payable to Ithaca College.**

Recommendation Forms are available in Career Services and at www.ithaca.edu/sacl/careers/docs/credentials/Recommendation_Form. Be sure to complete the top boxed-in area on each form before providing your reference writers with the forms. If a writer chooses to use their own letterhead, these forms will be considered **non-confidential** unless a signed Recommendation Form is attached indicating your decision of confidentiality. You may wish to provide the reference writer with a stamped, addressed envelope to ensure delivery to Career Services.

HOW TO USE YOUR CREDENTIAL FILE

You must submit a **written and signed request** to have a credential file packet sent out to prospective employers or graduate schools. You may request to send any or all of the documents in your file. **Request Forms** are available at www.ithaca.edu/sacl/careers/docs/credentials/Request_Form or in our office.

Credentials should be sent when an employer or school expresses an interest in receiving recommendations other than your initial resume. Credentials should not automatically be sent when you are making an initial inquiry.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Careful consideration must be given to your decision to waive your right to view a recommendation. If a letter is designated confidential, you will never be able to view its contents. You may, however, find out if the letter has been placed in your file and whether or not it is directed toward graduate school or employment.

All non-confidential letters may be viewed in our office during regular hours. **NO** recommendations will be read over the phone, either to you or to a prospective employer or graduate school.

Although most employers will accept both confidential and non-confidential recommendations, some place a higher value on confidential recommendations. Graduate schools often prefer a confidential format, and some letter writers feel more comfortable with the confidential format.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Obtaining Copies of Non-Confidential Material

Upon your written request, a copy of non-confidential material contained in your file can be forwarded to you.

Updating and Deleting Information

If you no longer wish to use a specific letter, you may inform us in writing to make it **inactive** in your file. As you grow professionally, you should update your file to reflect your professional development. Letters from four or five years ago will probably not represent current levels of responsibility and achievement. You may want to add new letters of recommendation to replace old ones.

Active Status

Each credential file will be maintained for **ten years**. At the end of this ten year period, all files will be destroyed unless you notify this office, in writing, that you wish to keep your file active.

NOTES

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