



CAREER PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT  
University of NORTH ALABAMA

CAREERS IN THE MAKING

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Welcome & Mission .....	2
A Note About Professionalism .....	3
Career Action Plan .....	4
Professionalism & Technology .....	6
LionJobs Student Registration & Job Search Instructions .....	7
Career Exploration .....	8
Information Interviewing .....	10
Get Experience .....	12
Graduate School .....	13
Job Search Techniques .....	14
Writing a Cover Letter .....	15
Writing a Résumé .....	17
Action Verbs .....	24
Professional References .....	25
Interviewing Basics .....	26
Preparing for an Interview .....	27
Answering Interview Questions .....	28
Interviewing Attire .....	30
Dining Etiquette .....	31
Thank You Notes .....	32
Life After College .....	33
Negotiating Salaries .....	34
Monthly Budget Worksheet .....	35

# CAREER PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

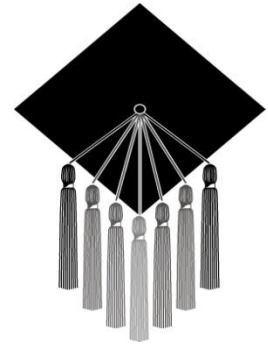
A DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

Location: Guillot University Center, Room 202

Phone: 256-765-4276 Fax: 256-765-4169

E-mail: [careerservices@una.edu](mailto:careerservices@una.edu)

Web: [career.una.edu](http://career.una.edu)



Career Planning and Development (CPD) is committed to empowering students and alumni in all phases of their career development. In support of this mission, CPD serves as the primary resource on campus for career related information, providing necessary resources, services, and programs to facilitate successful career development as it relates to students, alumni, faculty, and employers.

Career Planning and Development services include:

- Assisting with major and career choices
- Providing information about different occupations
- Providing information about the job search process
- Maintaining LionJobs database of employment opportunities (on- and off-campus, part-time and full-time, internships and co-ops, paid and unpaid)
- Assisting with résumé and cover letter writing
- Preparing students for interviews, conducting mock-interviews, hosting etiquette dinners
- Hosting career and graduate school fairs
- Connecting students and alumni for career mentoring

Events to Remember:

(please visit [career.una.edu](http://career.una.edu) for exact dates and locations)

- NACPED Career Fair – Spring, Von Braun Center, Huntsville, AL
- Spring Career Carnival
- Fall Career Fair
- Graduation Expo – Each Semester
- Etiquette Dinner/Lunch – Each Semester

## HOW TO USE THIS CAREER GUIDE

This Career Guide is meant to serve as a tool to assist you in your personal career planning and development efforts. The job search process requires much individual thought, preparation and decision-making. It is our hope that this guide will provide a starting point for you towards that end.

We in Career Planning and Development look forward to working with you as you develop your own personal career plan. We encourage you to stop by our office, 202 GUC, to utilize the resources and expertise we have to offer.

## A NOTE ABOUT PROFESSIONALISM

As you begin to explore the world of work, realize that the expectations are much different than those you've likely encountered as a college student. The workforce world has different rules, procedures, and behaviors than are common in the school environment. It is important to be aware of these differences in all phases of career exploration and development and especially during the job search phase. You must always strive to make a good impression by representing yourself as a mature, respectful adult who deserves to be taken seriously. Employers are evaluating your character as well as your abilities, and it's important to make a good impression.

You will find information on professionalism throughout this Career Guide. However, keep the following ideas in mind:

- Always be polite. Address people formally (Mr./Ms./Dr.), shake hands, maintain eye-contact and good posture.
- Be respectful of time. Arrive to appointments early. Be concise with phone and email. Respond promptly to messages and follow directions. Wait patiently for a response.
- Be upbeat. Have a positive attitude, show enthusiasm, and smile.
- Avoid interruptions and distractions. Listen carefully.
- Be prepared. Do your research in advance. Convey interest and knowledge.
- Communicate effectively. Speak and write formally. Talk clearly, slowly, avoid “ums” and “ahs” and slang. Proofread written communication carefully.
- Take pride in your image. Dress professionally. Have an appropriate email address and voice mail message.
- Show appreciation. Be gracious, say thank you, and send thank you notes or emails.



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CAREERS IN THE MAKING

# CAREER ACTION PLAN

## FRESHMEN AND PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS - Inquiry and Awareness

- **Establish your LionJobs account at [career.una.edu/LionJobs](http://career.una.edu/LionJobs)**
- Read your catalog (online at [una.edu/catalog](http://una.edu/catalog))
- Consult with an academic advisor in your division to schedule classes and plan a course of study
- Visit Career Planning and Development and meet with a Career Counselor to identify skills, abilities, interests and values as they relate to possible career choices
- Establish relationships with upper classmen, faculty members and administrators
- Visit the Center for Academic Advising and Retention in 127 Keller for help with study habits, test-taking skills, or test anxiety
- Register for IDS 200, Career Exploration and Planning, if you are undecided about your major
- Get involved with campus activities
- **Attend career development classes, workshops, seminars, presentations, and career fairs**

## SOPHOMORES - Assessment and Exploration

- **Establish your LionJobs Account at [career.una.edu/LionJobs](http://career.una.edu/LionJobs)**
- Read your catalog (online at [una.edu/catalog](http://una.edu/catalog))
- Consult with an academic advisor early in the semester to select courses for the next semester
- Undecided about a major? See an advisor in your division or a counselor in Career Planning and Development, 202 GUC
- Visit the Center for Academic Advising and Retention in 127 Keller for help with study habits, test-taking skills, or test anxiety
- Clarify skills, abilities, interests and values to help identify potential careers
- Begin to develop a résumé; schedule a mock interview
- Explore job shadowing and internship opportunities
- Register for IDS 200, Career Exploration and Planning, if you are undecided about your major
- Get involved with campus activities
- **Attend career development classes, workshops, seminars, presentations, and career fairs**

## JUNIORS - Gaining Career Experiences

- **Establish your LionJobs account at [career.una.edu/LionJobs](http://career.una.edu/LionJobs)**
- Read your catalog (online at [una.edu/catalog](http://una.edu/catalog))
- Consult with an advisor in your major to confirm degree requirements
- Continue developing skills and abilities through student organizations, internships, part-time employment and community service
- Assume leadership roles in student organizations as appropriate
- Relate values, interests, skills and abilities to possible career choices
- Meet with a Career Counselor to discuss career choices
- Research thoroughly career choices and conduct information interviews in your areas of interest
- Explore programs and entrance requirements to graduate school
- Make plans to take entrance tests appropriate to your program
- Update your résumé and have it critiqued by the Career Planning and Development staff
- **Attend career development classes, workshops, seminars, presentations, and career fairs**

# CAREER ACTION PLAN

## SENIORS - Job Search

- **Establish your LionJobs account at [career.una.edu/LionJobs](https://career.una.edu/LionJobs)**
  - Consult with an advisor/registrar to confirm degree requirements
  - Apply for graduation
  - Have résumé critiqued by the Career Planning and Development staff
  - Take advantage of on-campus and off-campus recruiting events
  - Network with professionals and alumni in fields of interest
  - Apply to graduate and professional schools
  - Sharpen job search skills; use the internet in job search activities
  - Meet regularly with a Career Counselor
  - **Attend workshops, seminars, presentations, and career fairs**
  - **Report employment status to Career Planning and Development via the Graduation Survey**
- 

## GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL STUDENTS

- **Make sure your LionJobs Account is updated at [career.una.edu/LionJobs](https://career.una.edu/LionJobs)**
  - Meet with a Career Counselor to discuss career interests and ways to market your experiences
  - Clarify work interests and associate them with educational and career opportunities by utilizing self-assessments and other information resources
  - Investigate the world of work
  - Continue to update and revise your résumé
  - Network with employers through LionJobs and On-Campus Recruiting and by attending Career Fairs
  - **Report employment status to Career Planning and Development via the Graduation Survey**
- 

## ALUMNI

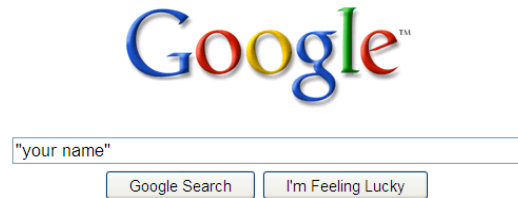
- **Make sure your LionJobs Account is updated at [career.una.edu/LionJobs](https://career.una.edu/LionJobs)**
- Meet with a Career Counselor to discuss career interests
- Clarify work interests and associate them with educational and career opportunities by utilizing self-assessments and other information resources
- Investigate the world of work
- Continue to update and revise your résumé
- Network with employers through LionJobs and On-Campus Recruiting and by attending Career Fairs
- Offer your support to underclassmen by mentoring and providing job shadowing experiences
- **Report employment status to Career Planning and Development via the Graduation Survey**

## PROFESSIONALISM AND TECHNOLOGY

Employers are evaluating your character as well as your abilities, and it's important to make a good impression. Keep the following in mind:

### Evaluate Your Web Presence

Before beginning your job search, take a minute and consider what kinds of information an employer might be able to discover about you from the Internet. Type your name, in quotation marks, into any search engine, and see what links result. Consider whether this is information you want made available to a prospective employer.



We also recommend that you evaluate your profile on social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter. Photos and certain types of information or messages may work against you as you seek to make a good impression. While you probably think the messages and pictures are funny and innocent, employers might think they are immature, unprofessional, or even arrogant. Most networking sites have detailed privacy options; make sure you understand how these work and restrict access to your friends only. Even if you take this precaution, realize that others may gain access to your profile in any number of ways. Especially in a small town, many people know each other and news could travel fast that you are applying for a certain position. Consider de-tagging yourself from questionable photos and deleting any questionable messages. Be mindful that employers want to hire mature, respectful people. They may go beyond simply checking the references you provided in order to get a sense of your true character.

### Using Email

Even though email is quick and easy to send, remember that you must always be professional when communicating with prospective employers. Put just as much time and effort into composing an email as you would writing your résumé or cover letter, and follow these guidelines:

- Proofread carefully for incomplete sentences, punctuation, spelling, and grammatical errors
- In the "Subject" line, write something concise and descriptive
- Consider creating a signature block, complete with your contact information as listed on your résumé
- Be sure your email address is professional (not [partygirl@xyz.com](mailto:partygirl@xyz.com))
- Be careful about including flowery quotations or extraneous statements in your signature block
- Internet slang including LOL, Thx, and :) are not acceptable in professional email communication
- Check your email regularly and respond promptly to any employment-related messages
- Read emails thoroughly before responding, and follow all directions
- Don't write in all UPPERCASE or **bold**; this is considered SHOUTING at the recipient

### Posting your Résumé Online

Many career websites (monster.com, careerbuilder.com, etc.) provide job seekers with the option to upload a résumé that will be available to hiring employers. Employers are able to read through all posted résumés and contact the most qualified candidates. In practice, very few people get hired using this approach. If you decide to post your résumé online, remember that these types of résumé banks are essentially open to the public. Consider whether or not you want to list your address or your phone number on your résumé when posting to generic job boards. Also, be respectful of the individuals you've listed as references and do not post their information online. If you are contacted by an employer about a position, you can send references separately at that time.

# LionJobs: STUDENT REGISTRATION & JOB SEARCH INSTRUCTIONS

Register with LionJobs to view and apply for jobs. LionJobs lists local part-time positions both on- and off-campus, as well as local and national full-time positions, internships, and co-ops. All students are encouraged to register.

## First Time Registration:

1. Go to [career.una.edu/LionJobs](http://career.una.edu/LionJobs). Click **FOR STUDENTS**.
2. Click **REGISTER**. Enter the information requested and click **SUBMIT**.
3. Next you will receive two emails at the address you entered. One has a confirmation link that you must click to complete the registration process. The other email contains your **username and password**.
4. Log in and complete the remaining sections of the **PROFILE** tab. (You must do this to access the other tabs. You can change your password on the **PASSWORD/PREFERENCES** tab if you wish.)

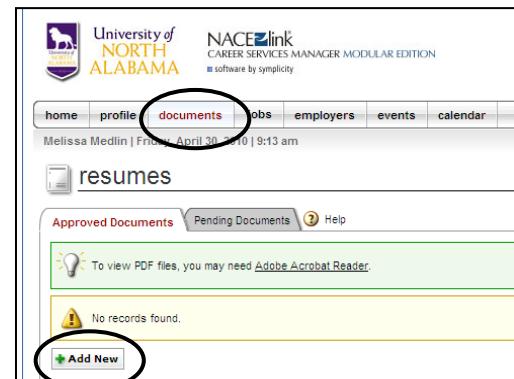


To apply for most jobs, you must have an “approved” résumé in the LionJobs system. We recommend you submit a résumé shortly after registering. Career Planning and Development will offer you constructive feedback on how to improve your resume. **\*Don’t forget to update and re-submit your résumé each semester!\***

## To Upload a Résumé:

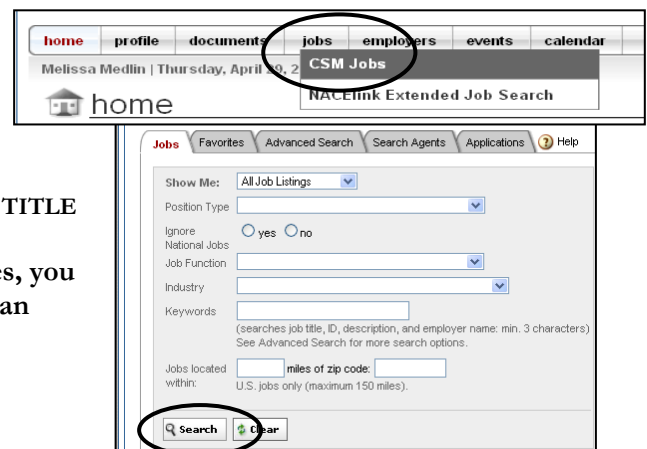
First, view sample résumés at [career.una.edu](http://career.una.edu)! When your résumé is finished and you’re ready to submit:

1. Click the **DOCUMENTS** tab.
2. Click **ADD NEW**.
3. **BROWSE** to the location where your résumé is saved. Click **SUBMIT**.
  - Your résumé will be reviewed by the CPD staff
  - If it needs to be corrected or changed, you will receive an email with comments and instructions
  - Make the suggested changes and re-submit
4. **WHEN YOUR RÉSUMÉ IS APPROVED, YOU WILL BE ABLE TO APPLY FOR JOBS.**



## To Search for Jobs:

1. Click the **JOBS** tab. Next click **CSM JOBS**.
2. Indicate the **POSITION TYPE** you are seeking (part-time or full-time, on- or off-campus, internship or co-op).
3. Click **SEARCH**, or further restrict the search as you wish.
4. Scroll down to view the list of positions. Click on the **JOB TITLE** of the position that you wish to review.
5. Follow the instructions to apply for the job. **In most cases, you will not be able to apply for the job if you do not have an approved résumé on file.**



Please email [careerservices@una.edu](mailto:careerservices@una.edu) or call (256)765-4276 if you have any questions.

# CAREER EXPLORATION

## *Discover your Options*

Doing some research is an essential first step on the path to a successful and rewarding career. You cannot choose a career path until you know about the different types of careers available. The perfect job is probably out there waiting for you, but you might not even know that it exists! Even if you think you know exactly what you want to do, spend some time learning about related careers and keep your options open. Find information from the following sources:

### Online Resources

There are countless websites devoted to career exploration. Begin by visiting the following sites:

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



– The Occupational Outlook Handbook is a nationally recognized source of career information, designed to provide valuable assistance to individuals making decisions about their future work lives. The Handbook describes hundreds of jobs in terms of the training and education needed, earnings, expected job prospects, what workers do on the job, working conditions, and related occupations.

<http://online.onetcenter.org/>



– The O\*NET program is the nation's primary source of occupational information. It is an interactive database which contains details on hundreds of standardized and occupation-specific descriptors. It also offers a set of valuable assessment instruments for workers and students looking to find or change careers.

<http://www.act.org/wwm/index.html>



– The World-of-Work Map organizes occupations into six clusters, 12 regions, and 26 career areas. It graphically shows how occupations relate to each other according to primary work tasks including data, ideas, people, and things.

<http://career.una.edu/MAJORS/>



– The chart helps students draw connections between academic majors and careers. Click on MAJORS of interest to see outlines of common career areas, employers, and strategies designed to maximize career opportunities. Choose LINKS to find a list of websites that provide additional insight. This valuable information is available right from the UNA Career Planning and Development website!

<http://www.careeronestop.org/>



– This site is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor and offers career resources and workforce information to foster talent development in a global economy. It includes (1) **America's Career InfoNet**, which helps individuals explore career opportunities to make informed employment and education choices, and (2) **America's Service Locator**, which connects individuals to employment and training opportunities available at local One-Stop Career Centers.

<http://www2.dir.state.al.us/OES/CAREER/DEFAULT.aspx>



– Produced by the Alabama Department of Industrial Relations, Labor Market Division, Alabama's Career Exploration Guide is designed for anyone seeking a job or considering a career direction. The information provides employment projections and salary information, specific to the state of Alabama, for hundreds of jobs.



# INFORMATION INTERVIEWING

## *A strategy to explore and research careers and employers*

Information interviewing is a technique used to explore and research occupations and organizations. It has several benefits, including:

- Discovering first-hand knowledge about an occupation. Reference books can provide facts about an occupation, such as salary and demand, but information interviews provide a personalized perspective of an occupation or job.
- Providing access to the “hidden” job market. Only 20% of all job openings are advertised! Direct contact and networking are essential to finding out about unadvertised job openings. Information interviewing is not a job interview, but it will establish your interest and can be a helpful first step in eliciting information about a prospective employer.
- Improving your self-confidence and interviewing skills.

The steps below explain how to set-up and conduct an information interview. The more prepared you are for an information interview, the more you will get out of it!

### **STEP 1: Identify Occupations, Job Titles, or Potential Employers of Interest**

Begin by identifying occupations, job titles, or potential employers that you want to explore. Research these areas as thoroughly as you can. Look to the following resources: Career Planning and Development (202 GUC), local public libraries, professional associations related to a particular industry or occupation, specific organizations’ websites, employees of the targeted organizations, a local phone book, the local Chamber of Commerce.

### **STEP 2: Identify Potential Contacts**

Begin to identify contacts through family, friends, instructors, employer directories, Career Planning and Development employer listings, telephone directories, and other networking contacts within the community. You may have to contact the organization directly to identify someone you can interview. Familiarize yourself with professional titles for the types of people you’re trying to contact. As an example, if you are interested in a marketing position, you might contact a particular organization and ask them for the name of the Director of the Marketing Department. Once you’ve developed a list of contacts, it is time to set up the interviews.

### **STEP 3: Schedule the Interview**

You can write a letter, send an email, or call to arrange an appointment with the target individual. If you send a letter or email, it is important to follow up a few days later with a phone call. **Be sure to make it clear that you’re not looking for a job at this time, but that you are just trying to obtain information.** You might begin your conversation like this:

**Student:** “Hello, Ms. Smith, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am a University of North Alabama student. I am very interested in marketing and I am trying to learn as much as I can about careers in marketing. I have read a lot about the subject, but I really feel it might help to talk to someone who works in the field. If you have the time, I would appreciate meeting with you to discuss this occupation. The interview would only take approximately 20-30 minutes to complete. My schedule is flexible and I can meet with you at your convenience.”

**STEP 4: Prepare Your Questions**

Based upon your goals and the results of your research of the area, prepare your questions for the interview. Try to make them open-ended questions, not questions with simple “yes” or “no” answers. The suggestions below may give you some ideas:

- What is a typical day in the life of a \_\_\_\_\_?
- How did you get interested in this occupation?
- What do you like and dislike about your occupation?
- What is a typical career path in this occupation?
- What kind of academic/training preparation do you recommend for this occupation?
- What is the projected growth for this occupation?
- What skills should I be developing?
- Would you recommend participating in any particular clubs or organizations?
- What is the organizational structure and where does your position fit in the organization?
- Is there someone else you can suggest for me to contact?
- If you were going to hire a new entry level person, what would a highly qualified candidate be like?
- What are the major challenges/problems that your organization is facing in the upcoming year?



**STEP 5: Conducting the Interview**

You should dress in business attire. Arrive early for the interview. When you meet your interview contact, you should shake hands and exchange greetings. Take notes during the interview. At the end of the interview, shake hands again, and express your appreciation for the interview. You should send a thank you note to the contact following the interview. (See section on “Interviewing Basics” for more details.)

**STEP 6: Evaluate**

Based upon the information gained during the interview, ask yourself the following questions:

- What did I learn about this occupation?
- What did I learn from the experience in general?
- What did I like about the job? What didn’t I like about the job?
- Am I still interested in this career?
- Am I willing to do what is necessary to be successful in this career?
- Did I learn of any related careers that I should explore?
- How can I make the next information interview more successful?

***NOTES:***

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## GET EXPERIENCE

After you've identified careers of interest, obtain relevant experience.

### **Experiential Education/Learning**

Experiential learning is a process through which students develop knowledge, skills, and values from direct experiences outside a traditional academic setting. It is gained through work-related activities that help explore and clarify career interests and foster personal and professional growth while developing professional contacts. Here are some options for gaining experience:

**Service Learning** – Service-learning gives students the opportunity to integrate academic experiences with intentional and thoughtfully organized service experiences, in order for students to gain greater context with what they are learning in the classroom. Students who participate in service-learning are able to connect classroom learning to real world problems and issues, as well as network with community leaders, giving them greater experience for when they try to get internships, co-ops and full-time employment.

**Internships** – Internships offer a hands-on opportunity to learn practical skills in the work environment rather than in a classroom. They give students the chance to put theory into practice and to see how the two work together. An internship should be a carefully monitored and structured experience that has intentional learning goals. Students who participate in internships:

- Become self-managed learners
- Learn problem solving skills and improve communication skills
- Are better prepared and viewed as better candidates for employment
- Receive more job offers and are able to be selective
- Earn higher salaries

CPD posts all known internship opportunities on LionJobs. Students are responsible for securing their own internships as CPD does not place interns. Once hired, students work with their college and then CPD to determine if academic credit will be approved and to complete all paperwork.

**Co-Ops** – A co-op is even more structured than an internship. It usually requires students to work full-time for a semester and then attend classes for a semester. Students retain full-time student status while participating in the co-op, even during the semesters they are not enrolled in classes. Students acquire increasing levels of responsibility and use their job knowledge and classroom learning to make meaningful contributions to the employer.

**Part-time and Summer Employment** – Take advantage of your summers and free time in college to explore the world of work. It's tempting to babysit or mow lawns to make some extra money, but challenge yourself by seeking employment that is more in line with your career interests. Be sure that you're registered in LionJobs and that you check the site regularly so you can be kept informed of all opportunities.

**Volunteer** – You do not have to be paid in order to get experience! Volunteering in the community can be an excellent learning experience. It also establishes genuine interest, as others recognize that you aren't likely to do something for free unless you are truly committed.

**Extra-Curricular Activities** – Participating in social or philanthropic student organizations on campus is an excellent way to get real world experience while in college. Join a student group related to your major or interest area and take an active role. Attend meetings and events regularly, and work toward assuming a position of leadership.

## GRADUATE SCHOOL

If you're considering continuing on to graduate school, first and foremost, you must determine WHY!! Why are you pursuing a graduate degree? Choosing to attend graduate school as a means of delaying the job search is not a wise move, even in poor economic times. Ask yourself:

- Is a professional graduate degree needed for my professional career (medical/law/dental school, etc.)?
- Will graduate education assist me in pursuing my personal career goals? (i.e. MBA)

### Applying to Graduate Schools

Decide where you would like to attend graduate school based upon the type of program offered, geographic location, admissions requirements, etc. Begin reviewing application criteria in the summer before your senior year of college or at least a year before you plan to start graduate school. Deadlines will vary significantly depending on the institution to which you apply. Contact programs about visiting, and make trips if possible. (Be sure to brush up on your Interviewing Skills.)

Admissions criteria are one of the main factors you must take into consideration when applying to graduate and professional schools. Entrance criteria and standards vary from institution to institution. Criteria for admission are dependent upon the academic discipline, selectivity of the institution, and number of seats available in the program.

#### Criteria for admission will typically include the following:

- Grade Point Average (GPA)
- Standardized test scores ( GRE, MAT, LSAT, MCAT, or GMAT score)
- Personal Statement/Statement of Purpose  
*Meet with current faculty members to discuss your statement and possible programs. Ask for letters of recommendation.*
- Experience or Undergraduate Research
- Completion of Course Prerequisites
- Letters of Recommendation
- Admission Essays
- Résumé or CV

### To How Many Schools Should You Apply?

A common recommendation is to apply to five or six schools, reflecting the following categories:

- One program that is extremely desirable with very competitive admissions standards
- Three programs that are realistic for you in terms of admission standards and that also meet your criteria
- Two programs you are confident in being admitted to that meet your criteria

Some students choose to apply to 10 or more graduate and professional schools; however, keep in mind that this can become costly in terms of time and money.

### When Should You Start Submitting Applications?

- Be sure to contact each school well in advance to determine graduate application deadline dates. Most deadlines fall between December and March but each program will have a specific deadline.
- For some universities it is best to apply in November or December of your senior year, due to the popularity and reputation of an institution's program, in order to be admitted for the next academic year.
- Generally, the more competitive the program, the earlier you need to submit all pertinent application materials.

### What Financial Aid and Assistance Are Available To Graduate Students?

Contact institutions directly to learn about financial assistance. The aid package will incorporate a combination of:

- Work programs (assistantships, institutional funding, and other part-time jobs on campus)
- Monetary awards (grants, fellowships, and scholarships)
- Loans (subsidized and unsubsidized). \*\*Make sure you understand the differences in loans and your responsibility to repay them. \*\*

## JOB SEARCH TECHNIQUES

### *Know Where to Look for Opportunities*

There is no quick, easy way to find a job. You should expect to put a considerable amount of time into identifying opportunities. It may be helpful to treat your job search like a three hour class, and to devote that much time at scheduled intervals. Research the field thoroughly and develop a list of all potential employers. Consider all employment sectors including businesses, government, and nonprofit organizations. Once you've compiled that list, individually research each employer and familiarize yourself with the procedures for applying for positions.

**LionJobs** – LionJobs is an online database that lists full- and part-time jobs, internships, and unpaid opportunities available to UNA students and graduates. New positions are added daily, so be sure you're registered and check the site frequently. Register at [career.una.edu/LionJobs](http://career.una.edu/LionJobs).

**Other Online Sources** – Don't overlook the following types of websites:

- Online newspaper classified ads
- Chamber of Commerce websites
- Professional association websites
- Websites of individual companies
- Local, state, and federal agency websites  
(e.g., <http://www.florenceal.org>, <http://www.personnel.state.al.us>, <http://www.usajobs.gov>)
- Employment websites like monster.com and careerbuilder.com

**Career Fairs** – Employers who attend recruiting events are hiring! Take advantage of the fact that these employers are all under one roof. Dress professionally and bring copies of your résumé. Try to find out in advance what companies will be represented and research those that are of interest. Also know that some larger companies (e.g. Marriott) host their own job fairs. While you are job searching, it can be helpful to subscribe to the local newspaper to learn of these kinds of events.

**Network** – Make sure that the people in your network are aware that you are looking for a job. They can't assist in your job search if they don't know you are searching! In addition to any professional contacts you've made, remember to talk with your family, friends, friends' families, neighbors, professors, and advisors.



## JOB SEARCH ETIQUETTE

Etiquette becomes especially important when you are looking for a job. You need to convince potential employers that you are able to conduct yourself in a professional manner on the telephone, in written communication, and in person. Put effort into your application materials. Once submitted, be patient waiting for a response. If you decide to phone the organization, be polite, not pushy. If you are offered an interview, prepare thoroughly and convey to the interviewer that you are a serious candidate and can meet and exceed expectations. Remember, not to let your excitement come across as arrogance. Strive to appear confident without being obnoxious.

# WRITING A COVER LETTER

Once you've identified positions to apply for, it's time to prepare your application materials. You should include a cover letter each time you submit your résumé for a position. The cover letter is your opportunity to present yourself as you wish to be seen. Use it to highlight your skills and qualifications and to explain why those experiences make you a good candidate for the job. Do not just reiterate your résumé. Instead, focus on several key areas and go into detail including what you did and what you learned.

Rather than submit a standard letter, be sure to tailor your cover letter to the specific organization and job for which you are applying. Research the organization and include sentences that correspond to the job duties or qualifications from the job description.

When submitting a résumé by email, consider the body of your email as the cover letter. Be sure to include proper contact information in your email signature.

When submitting your application by postal mail, the cover letter should be typed and laser-printed on the same type and color paper as your résumé, in business letter format. The heading of your cover letter should match the heading of your résumé. The letter should be 3 or 4 paragraphs and should not exceed one page in length.

Remember, the cover letter is a sample of your writing ability. Employers will assume that the quality of your letter is indicative of the quality of your work. Proofread and spell check carefully!

**Salutation** – Never address your letter "To Whom it May Concern" unless you don't care if you get the job. If you don't know whom to send the letter to, call and request the name of the person who is responsible for hiring entry-level professionals in your area. You can also check the Internet or book directories to find names of people to contact. Be certain to get the name and title (and correct spelling). Whenever possible, avoid sending your letter to the personnel department as it generally does not have the power to hire - only the power to screen you out.

**Paragraph I** – Your opening sentence should state the purpose of your letter (your objective). Mention a name if you have permission (e.g., John Smith recommended I contact you.). You should also mention how you heard about the job and why it interests you. Try to make the first paragraph interesting to get the reader's attention.

**Paragraph II** – Stress the particular strengths you have which qualify you for the job, but do not repeat information word-for-word from your résumé. Highlight coursework, skills, or experiences that will be of greatest interest to the organization. Reference actual job duties from the job description. This section can be more than one paragraph.

**Paragraph III** – Thank the reader for their consideration. Indicate your desire for a personal interview and state how the employer should contact you (phone, email). Offer any assistance to help in a speedy response. It is also a good idea to follow up each résumé and cover letter you send with a telephone call.

**NOTES:**

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## COVER LETTER SAMPLE

**JIM SMITH**

1234 Some Street, Muscle Shoals, AL 35661  
(256) 456-7890      [jsmith@gmail.com](mailto:jsmith@gmail.com)

January 7, 20XX

Mr. James Field  
Putnam, Hayes, & Bartlett, Inc.  
10940 Boulevard Road, Suite 1500  
Huntsville, AL 35802

Dear Mr. Field:

I am writing regarding the Research Assistant Position. I am interested and excited about the position at Putnam, Hayes, & Bartlett, Inc. because it offers an ideal opportunity to expand my knowledge of the consulting profession.

As an Economics major at the University of North Alabama, I have taken a variety of courses preparing me for a career in economics and management consulting. In Public Finance and Labor Economics, I studied cost-benefit analysis and labor structures. Currently, in Industrial Organization, I am learning the intricacies of corporate institutions. I have also taken several communications and persuasion courses which will help me to work effectively on project teams and with clients. I enjoy using computers and have extensive experience with application software. As can be seen through my academic record, I love to be challenged, to work hard, and to excel. I have supplemented my education with an assortment of internships and summer employment. Through these experiences I have been able to express my creativity and enhance my analytical abilities. In both academics and employment, I am self-motivated and dedicated. I work not only until the job is done, but until it is done well.

I am very interested in working as a Research Assistant. I feel that my abilities and interests will help me to succeed at Putnam, Hayes, & Bartlett, Inc. I would like to meet with you to attain more information about your organization and to further discuss my qualifications for the position. If you need any more information from me, or if you have any questions, please feel free to call me at (213) 345-3456.

Sincerely,

Jim Smith

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# WRITING A RÉSUMÉ

Your résumé is your personal work, so create a document that represents you well and that you like. While there is no perfect format, a well-organized résumé with a professional appearance will attract more attention from potential employers. Avoid using a template! Résumé templates are difficult to manipulate and demonstrate laziness and a lack of creativity. Also remember, it is YOUR RÉSUMÉ; it shouldn't look exactly like your friend's résumé!

## Basic Résumé Guidelines

- Make sure your résumé says the most about you in the fewest number of words. One page is recommended for Bachelor's level students (unless you had a previous career). If your résumé is two pages long, add "name" and "page 2" at the top of the second page.
- Make your résumé look professional. When submitting/presenting a hard copy, use good quality paper and a laser printer. Use white or off-white, 8 1/2" x 11" bond paper. (Be sure the color is light enough to photocopy well.)
- Choose a conservative font such as Helvetica, Times, Courier, Geneva, New York, Palatino, or a sans serif font no smaller than 10 and no larger than 12.
- Be consistent with your format. Margins, bolding, capitalization, and style must be consistent.
- Both the résumé and cover letter should be examples of your best work. Maintain a positive tone by excluding negative aspects of your experience.
- Use what is called telegraphic style. Omit all personal pronouns (I, we, they, you, etc.). Use incomplete sentences in list form (no paragraphs) without punctuation.
- Only items leading directly to setting up an interview should be included. Salary requirements, supervisor's names, abbreviations, clichés, reasons for leaving jobs, personal opinions and personal information such as height, weight, age, marital status, etc. should be excluded.
- In general, don't list any high school information. (Exceptions: freshmen and sophomores applying for part-time jobs, Education majors applying to a hometown school district)
- Proofread for typing and spelling and grammar accuracy.

## Résumé Categories

**ALWAYS** – This information should always appear on your résumé!

### Header –

Name

Address - permanent and current if they are different

Phone number

Email address - be sure your email address is professional (not [partygirl@xyz.com](mailto:partygirl@xyz.com))

**JOHN B. GOOD**

[jbg@aol.com](mailto:jbg@aol.com)

**Current Address**

400 Spruce Street  
Florence, AL 35630  
(256) 555-1234

**Permanent Address**

10 Beach Drive  
Port St. Joe, FL 55555  
(551) 444-3322

**Education –**

In addition to the name of your school, list your degree and graduation date. Include your GPA only if it is 3.0 or higher, and use a scale.

<b>EDUCATION</b>	<b>Bachelor of Science in Education</b> , May 20xx University of North Alabama, Florence, AL Major: Secondary Education, Language Arts GPA: 3.7/4.0
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**Experience (Work and/or Activities) –**

Positions should be listed in reverse chronological order. Be specific with dates, job titles, employers, and accomplishments. Be complete and descriptive without being too long. Always be completely accurate and truthful. Be consistent in your format.

<b>RELEVANT EXPERIENCE</b>	<b>Intern, Feature Columnist</b> , Summer 20xx <i>The Franklin County Times</i> , Russellville, AL <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shadowed each department to gain insight and knowledge of operational procedures</li> <li>Wrote feature articles on local events including elections, entertainment and community issues</li> </ul> <b>Contributing Journalist</b> , August 20xx – May 20xx <i>The Birmingham News</i> , Birmingham, AL <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wrote feature articles on campus, community, activities and events</li> <li>Photographed interviews and sporting events and included captions for publications</li> </ul>
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**SOMETIMES – Include some of these headings if they apply:**

- Honors, Awards, or Honor Societies
- Leadership Experience
- Computer Skills or Relevant Skills
- Technical Expertise
- Language Skills (Foreign or Computer)
- Publications or Presentations
- Professional Affiliations
- Military Experience
- Relevant Coursework (use to fill space when necessary)
- Objective (use to fill space when necessary – your cover letter should explain your objective!)

Use results oriented "**action verbs**" to describe your experiences. (see list on page 24)  
 Use past tense action verbs for previous jobs and present tense action verbs for current positions.

**NEVER – Do not include this information!**

- Personal statistics (height, weight, marital status, health information, social security number, etc.)
- Photos of any type
- References (or “References Available Upon Request”)
- Political or religious information (unless it is relevant to the job)
- Anything related to high school (exceptions: freshmen, sophomores and Education majors)
- GPA, if below a 3.0 (unless specifically requested by an employer)

## College of Arts & Sciences: Social Work

### JANE R. COUNSELOR

[jrc@una.edu](mailto:jrc@una.edu)

**School Address**  
200 Main Street  
Florence, AL 35630  
(256) 555-1234

**Permanent Address**  
123 Anywhere Avenue  
Rivertown, GA 55555  
(555) 777-4455

#### EDUCATION

**Bachelor of Social Work**, May 20xx  
University of North Alabama, Florence, AL

GPA: 3.9/4.0

#### INTERNSHIP

**Student Intern**, January 20xx– Present  
**Make Believe Hospital**, Florence, AL

**Associate in Applied Science**, May 20xx  
Northwest Shoals Community College, Muscle Shoals, AL

#### RELATED EXPERIENCE

- Serve as family service assistant, conducting assessments and making referrals
- Co-facilitate development of parent/teen support groups
- Refer patients to community resources during prenatal and postpartum stages

#### RELATED EXPERIENCE

- Discharge Planning Assistant**, May 20xx – August 20xx  
**Pretend Medical Center**, Rivertown, GA
- Organized resource packets for hospital pregnancy clinic
- Updated/ maintained filing system to improve follow-up rate
- Provided office support for eight full-time employees

#### PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

- Volunteer, Peer Contacts Program**, January 20xx – August 20xx  
**Not Real Clinic**, Birmingham, AL
- Compiled and organized resource information for young mothers
- Coordinated monthly educational programs
- Served as mentor to parents, providing support and information

#### HONORS/ ACTIVITIES

- National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Student Chapter  
ABC Human Services Council
- Gamma Beta Phi Honor Society  
Alpha Delta Pi, Standards Committee, 20xx – Present  
Meals on Wheels, Volunteer, 20xx – 20xx

## College of Arts & Sciences: Geography

### Heather Mapps

707 Geography Way, Muscle Shoals, AL 35661  
(555)258-8569

[Heather.mapps@gmail.com](mailto:Heather.mapps@gmail.com)

#### EDUCATION

**Bachelor of Science**, May 20xx  
University of North Alabama, Florence, AL  
Major: Geographic Information Systems  
GPA: 3.3/4.0

#### COMPUTER SKILLS

Proficient with MS Office Suite, Windows XP and Vista  
Experienced user within ERDAS Imagine and ArcGIS 9.3

#### RELATED EXPERIENCE

- Geographical Information Systems Intern**, December 2008 - Present  
*Limestone County Information Services*, Limestone, AL
- Create maps and update spatial data within the Spatial Database Environment
- Utilize GIS technology and techniques to analyze multiple resources for a variety of projects
- Gained knowledge of land use planning and classification
- Evaluate source material for map production for a variety of projects
- Assist co-workers with advice in the development and construction of maps
- Use a variety of techniques to evaluate and update existing feature classes

#### OTHER EXPERIENCE

- Assistant to Curator of Natural History Museum**, Summers 2005-2008  
*Middle Tennessee State University*, Murfreesboro, TN
- Created innovative curriculum activities and coordinated field trips for school aged children
- Identified, labeled, and cataloged rock and mineral specimens
- Set up and arranged displays
- Administrative support duties including typing and proofreading grants and research proposals
- Geology Department Lab Assistant**, August 2005-May 2006  
*University of North Alabama*, Florence, AL
- Assisted in experiments and grading for introductory geology lab
- Prepared and cleaned lab
- Server/Trainer**, August 2005-Present  
*Outback Steakhouse*, Sheffield, AL
- Promoted to trainer after 6 months
- Train new servers on protocol and procedures
- Serve as Hostess and develop seating charts when needed
- Perform customer service

## College of Nursing

### Gail N. Knight

(Name as it appears on Nursing License)

[gnk@hotmail.com](mailto:gnk@hotmail.com)

123 Old Navy Highway

Florence, AL 35555

(256) 777-7777

#### OBJECTIVE

To practice nursing in the surgical department of St. Mark's Hospital working with adult patients

#### EDUCATION

**Bachelor of Science in Nursing**, May 20xx  
University of North Alabama, Florence, AL  
GPA: 3.5/4.0

#### CERTIFICATION LICENSURE

Alabama Board of Nursing  
Basic Life Support  
Cardiac Life Support  
Eligible to take National Council of Licensure Exam (NCLEX) for Registered Nurse

#### EXPERIENCE

**Preceptorship**, January 20xx-Present  
XYZ Hospital, Anywhere, FL (225 hours)

- Monitor patients' progress following surgical procedures
- Coordinate discharge procedures with patients

**Nursing Student**, January 20xx-December 20xx

Alabama Health Department, Decatur, AL  
SBS Home Health, Madison, AL  
PQR Regional Center, Decatur, AL  
Highside Middle School, Plant City, TN

- Performed nursing assessments
- Planned patient care through detailed nursing care plans
- Taught health promotion to elementary students

#### COMPUTER SKILLS

Meditech, Electronic Medication Administration Record,  
Microsoft Office

#### HONORS & ACTIVITIES

Dean's List (4 semesters), Student Nursing Association, Alabama Association of Nursing Students, National Student Nurses Association

## College of Arts & Sciences: Communications

### GABBY C. WORD

[gword@aol.com](mailto:gword@aol.com)

(205) 335-2300

#### Current Address

1500 Old Hickory Lane  
Florence, AL 35630

#### Permanent Address

622 East Ford Street  
Birmingham, AL 35020

#### EDUCATION

**Bachelor of Arts**, May 20xx  
University of North Alabama, Florence, AL  
Major: Communication Arts-Public Communications  
Minor: Journalism  
GPA: 3.4/4.0

#### INTERNSHIPS

**Intern**, January 20xx–May 20xx  
Randall Publishing Company, Huntsville, AL

- Assisted in special re-organization projects
- Aided in the merger of company

**Purchasing Intern**, June 20xx–December 20xx  
Books to Read Unlimited, Huntsville, AL

- Coordinated client and customer special orders
- Streamlined ordering process for new book releases

#### EXPERIENCE

**Human Resource Generalist**, September 20xx–December 20xx  
Sears, Roebuck and Company, Birmingham, AL

- Participated in all human resource activities
- Administered recruitment, selection and placement programs
- Supervised all in-store training
- Acted as Payroll Supervisor and Benefits Manager

#### COMPUTER SKILLS

Excel, Lotus 1-2-3, Corel Draw, Photoshop, Autocad R. 14,  
Microsoft Word

#### HONORS/ ACTIVITIES

Lambda Pi Eta Honor Society, April 20xx  
Kappa Tau Alpha Communications Honorary, August 20xx  
Golden Key Honor Society, May 20xx  
Circle K Service Organization, January 20xx–August 20xx

## College of Business: Business Administration

### JOHN B. GOOD

[ibg@aol.com](mailto:ibg@aol.com)  
(551) 444-3322

**Current Address**  
400 Spruce Street  
Florence, AL 35630

**Permanent Address**  
10 Beach Drive  
St. Andrews, LA 55555

#### EDUCATION

**Bachelor of Business Administration**, May 20xx  
University of North Alabama, Florence, AL  
Major: Management  
GPA: 3.7/4.0

#### COMPUTER SKILLS

Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Publisher, QuickBooks

#### RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

- Assistant Manager Intern**, Summer 20xx  
Roberts Restaurant, Tallahassee, FL
- Prepared work schedules for six waiters and six bus boys
  - Presented training sessions to improve customer service
  - Entered payroll information for all employees into QuickBooks

**Sales and Marketing Intern**, Summer 20xx  
Aetna Life & Casualty, St. Andrews, LA

- Created marketing brochures for a new insurance product
- Developed presentation materials for a pre-staff of 46 members
- Submitted marketing analysis reports for actuarial associates to develop future projection reports

#### OTHER EXPERIENCE

- Sales Representative**, Summer 20xx  
Cutie Pie's Children's Shop, Tusculmbia, AL
- Fitted toddlers in shoes designed for their age group
  - Completed a daily sales report
  - Suggested latest baby and toddler fashions to customers

#### HONORS/ ACTIVITIES

Gamma Beta Phi Honor Society, Who's Who of American Business Students, American Management Association Student Chapter, Delta Mu Delta Business Honor Society

#### LANGUAGES

Able to read and write fluently in Spanish

## College of Business: Computer Information Systems

### CANDY BARR

[barr@xvz.com](mailto:barr@xvz.com)

**Current Address**  
222 Smith Street # 4  
Florence, AL 35630  
(256) 555-1111

**Permanent Address**  
400 Bluebird Lane  
Frederick, MS 11111  
(111) 222-3333

#### EDUCATION

**Bachelor of Science**, May 20xx  
University of North Alabama, Florence, AL  
Major: Computer Information Systems  
Major GPA: 3.3/4.0  
Cumulative GPA: 3.0/4.0

#### PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE

- Computer Lab Assistant**, June 2006 – Present  
University of North Alabama, Florence, AL
- Provided hardware/software support for 125 computer workstations
  - Installed and networked computers in classrooms (30+ computers)
  - Provided technical support for students using Access, Excel, Word, and Visual Basic
  - Tested software

**Student Worker**, June 20xx – Present

- CIS Department, University of North Alabama, Florence, AL
- Assisted faculty and staff with projects
  - Performed general clerical duties as assigned

#### COMPUTER SKILLS

**Software Development:** Visual Basic, Net, Java, C++  
**Web Development:** HTML, XHTML, FrontPage, Dreamweaver  
**Database Management:** SQL, MySQL, Oracle, Microsoft Access  
**Microsoft Office:** Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Visio, Projects  
**Hardware:** Dell, Compaq, IBM, Gateway, Macintosh, Hewlett-Packard

#### HONORS AND ACTIVITIES

Dean's List, all semesters  
Delta Epsilon Iota  
University CIS Club  
Student Government Association

## College of Education: Human Environmental Science

### Michael Lee Webber

[Michael.L.webber@unauniv.edu](mailto:Michael.L.webber@unauniv.edu)

(555)265-1894

707 White Cedar Lane

Killen, AL 15151

#### EDUCATION

Bachelor of Science May 20xx  
**University of North Alabama** Florence, AL  
Human Environmental Sciences: Interior Design  
GPA: 3.65/4.00

#### EXPERIENCE

**David Dodge Interior Design Intern** Muscle Shoals, AL  
January 20xx – May 20xx

- Participated in meetings with clients to determine space needs of renovation projects
- Completed inventories of spaces, focusing on potential environmental problems
- Assisted in creating renovation time-lines and coordinating with contractors

#### **Bath and Body Works Sales Associate**

Florence, AL  
May 20xx – March 20xx

- Researched and promoted new products and their effectiveness
- Helped organize stock room to ensure speediness of product replenishment
- Designed and set-up effective window displays
- Motivated fellow associates to help reach daily and weekly sales goals

#### ACTIVITIES

UNA Chapter, National Kitchen and Bath Association  
Society of Interior Designers (ASID) Student Chapter  
UNA Fashion Forum, Vice-President, September 20xx – May 20xx

#### DESIGN SKILLS

AutoCAD 2008, Google Sketch-Up, Technical Hand Drafting, Hand Rendering, Microsoft: Visio, OneNote, Access, and Publisher

#### RELEVANT COURSEWORK

Business Codes and Practices - Drawing I - History of Interiors - Interior Design I, II & III - Introduction to Interior Design - Lighting and Mechanical Systems - Space Planning for Interior Design - Technical Drawing for Interior Documentation - Textiles and Materials – Visual Presentation I & II

## College of Education: Teaching

### Susie Q. Public

[Susie@unauniv.edu](mailto:Susie@unauniv.edu)

567 12<sup>th</sup> Street

Florence, AL 35630

256-111-1122

#### EDUCATION

**Bachelor of Science in Education**, May 20xx  
University of North Alabama, Florence, AL  
Major: Secondary Education, Language Arts GPA: 3.7/4.0

#### CERTIFICATION

Class B, Language Arts Education (6-12)  
HIGHLY QUALIFIED

#### RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

**Intern**, Peabrain Middle School, Fall 20xx  
8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Grade English

- Prepared daily classroom lessons
- Instructed approximately 110 students
- Computed student grades and averages
- Maintained creative and informative bulletin boards
- Developed activities incorporating multiple learning styles

**Practicum Student**, Alabama High School, Spring 20xx  
11<sup>th</sup> Grade English

- Observed teacher's performance in daily classroom activities
- Participated in meetings with teachers and principal
- Gained insight about personal teaching style and preferences

#### HONORS

Dean's List (2 semesters), Kappa Delta Epsilon

#### VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES

**Baptist Student Union**, September 20xx -May 20xx

- Served as a mentor to underprivileged pre-teens
- Promoted activities that encouraged creative learning skills

**Adopt-A-Highway**, April 20xx-April 20xx

- Rehabilitated roadside through trash pick-up twice monthly
- Recycled to improve roadway and environment

**Florence-Lauderdale Public Library**, June 20xx-May 20xx

- Taught small groups of children about library services
- Read interactive stories to young children

## Utilizing Summary of Qualifications and MBA sample resume

### Monica Wyatt

1009 Gap Avenue, Florence, Alabama 35633  
Phone: 256-588-8888  
E-mail: [monicawyatt@gmail.com](mailto:monicawyatt@gmail.com)

#### SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

- Over 9 years accounting and finance experience
- Extensive experience in Payroll, & Cost Budgeting
- Current CPA license
- Experience in small business and the corporate sector
- Proficient use of Excel, Word, PowerPoint, QuickBooks, Peachtree and JD Edwards
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills

#### EXPERIENCE HISTORY

##### **Staff Accountant, Hicks Accounting Firm, Tupelo, MS, May 2002-Present**

- Maintained general ledger for 2 distribution centers with a combined sales volume of \$200 million annually
  - Collaborated with internal and external auditors to provide variance analysis, budget support, and support schedules
  - Supported internal sales and distribution center management teams with ad hoc projects as required
  - Reconciled all balance sheet accounts and bank statements monthly
- ##### **Accountant, Mitchell and Associates, Florence, AL, June 1994-May 2002**
- Prepared budgets and budget to actual reports
  - Reconciled job costs and cash documentation for tax purposes
  - Supervised 2 office staff

##### **Controller, Dibby College, Mountain Brook, AL, June 1989-January 1994**

- Prepared monthly financial statements
- Performed cost accounting for all university entities
- Assisted in preparation of budgets and feasibility studies
- Prepared monthly operating statements

#### EDUCATION

**Master of Business Administration**, December 2011  
University of North Alabama, Florence, Alabama  
Concentration: Accounting GPA: 3.9/4.0

**Bachelor of Business Administration**, May 2006  
University of North Alabama, Florence, Alabama  
Major: Accounting GPA: 3.5/4.0

## Functional Skills Resume Sample: Multiple Years in Work Force

### Jessie Lane

555 Montgomery Street  
Sheffield, Alabama 35660  
c: 256-888-9999  
e: [lanejessiew@communication.com](mailto:lanejessiew@communication.com)

#### Functional Experience

##### Management

- Successfully led refurbishment campaign on all three extruder gearboxes.
- Reallocated resources during two-week annual shutdown so that no down time was encountered and all projects finished on time
- Supervised a team of 15 crew members to ensure jobs were completed in a timely and accurate manner
- Organized production work daily

##### Quality Assurance

- Insure that production is being met on a daily/weekly basis to meet demand for product
- Inspect product before it leaves the department to insure that it meets state codes and quality expectations
- Repair product if needed

##### Communication

- Implemented safety related information to senior staff, peers and subordinates
- Frequently requested to explain processing issues involving batching processes
- Provided operational information to senior management as well as to the process operators and managers on the floor

#### Employment History

**Senior Process Engineer**, Mobley Corporation, Hollywood, CA, 2005-Present  
**Process Engineer**, Times Inc., Phoenix, AZ, 2002-2005  
**Technical Support**, Morgan Computers, Florence, AL, 1998-2001

#### Education

**Bachelor of Science, Computer Science, May 2001**  
*University of North Alabama, Florence, AL*  
GPA: 3.5/4.0

## ACTION VERBS

Each job duty on a résumé needs to begin with an action verb. Use past tense action verbs for previous jobs and present tense action verbs for current positions. Below is a list of action verbs to help you get started:

Achieved	Directed	Improved	Perceived
Acquired	Discovered	Improvised	Performed
Adapted	Displayed	Increased	Planned
Addressed	Dissected	Indexed	Practiced
Administered	Distributed	Indicated	Prepared
Advertised	Documented	Influenced	Presented
Advocated	Drafted	Initiated	Produced
Aided	Earned	Innovated	Projected
Analyzed	Edited	Inspected	Provided
Applied	Eliminated	Inspired	Questioned
Approved	Enabled	Installed	Raised
Arranged	Enforced	Integrated	Ran
Assembled	Engineered	Interpreted	Read
Assessed	Enlisted	Interviewed	Reasoned
Assisted	Ensured	Introduced	Received
Attended	Established	Inventoried	Reconciled
Brought	Estimated	Judged	Reduced
Built	Evaluated	Justified	Referred
Calculated	Examined	Kept	Related
Charged	Exceeded	Launched	Reported
Checked	Executed	Learned	Researched
Clarified	Expanded	Lectured	Responded
Classified	Experienced	Led	Scanned
Coached	Experimented	Lifted	Scheduled
Collected	Explained	Located	Served
Communicated	Explored	Made	Set goals
Compared	Expressed	Maintained	Sold
Composed	Extracted	Managed	Solved
Computed	Facilitated	Manipulated	Specialized
Conducted	Financed	Mastered	Simulated
Constructed	Fixed	Maximized	Strengthened
Contributed	Followed	Met	Succeeded
Controlled	Formed	Modeled	Summarized
Cooperated	Formulated	Modified	Supervised
Coordinated	Fostered	Monitored	Supported
Created	Founded	Motivated	Tabulated
Critiqued	Gained	Narrated	Tailored
Debated	Gathered	Negotiated	Taught
Decided	Generated	Observed	Trained
Defined	Grouped	Obtained	Transformed
Delegated	Guided	Offered	Translated
Delivered	Handled	Operated	Unified
Demonstrated	Helped	Ordered	Upgraded
Designed	Hired	Organized	Utilized
Detailed	Identified	Originated	Validated
Determined	Illustrated	Overcame	Verified
Developed	Implemented	Participated	Wrote

## PROFESSIONAL REFERENCES

- Your references should not be included on your résumé. List them on a separate page with the same heading as your résumé.
- Also, don't write "References Available Upon Request" on your résumé. It is assumed that you are able to provide references.
- Contact each person you intend to list as a reference and ask their permission. Ensure they are willing to provide a strong, positive recommendation. It is important that your references know you well and can speak to your character. It is also considerate to provide each reference with a copy of your updated résumé.
- Include the following for each reference: name, title, place of employment, business address (city, state, zip code), business telephone number, and email address.
- List 3-5 references. At least one (though you may use more than one) should be an Academic Reference (professor, advisor, etc.). At least one reference (though you may use more than one) should be a Professional Reference (employer, supervisor, etc.). The remainder of your references can be of your own choosing. Avoid "Personal References" unless they are specifically requested.

### **James Tee**

[James.tee@hotmail.com](mailto:James.tee@hotmail.com)

1495 Lion Street  
Florence, AL 35630  
(256) 555-8234

### **REFERENCES**

Mr. John Doe  
President  
Alpine Camp for Boys  
1234 Maple Street  
Mentone, AL 35555  
(256) 555-5555  
[john.doe@mentonecamp.com](mailto:john.doe@mentonecamp.com)

Dr. Jane Smith  
Professor  
University of North Alabama  
UNA Box 5066  
Florence, AL 35632  
(256) 765-5555  
[janesmith133@una.edu](mailto:janesmith133@una.edu)

Miss Susan Johnson  
Store Manager  
Logan's Roadhouse  
5555 Florence Blvd.  
Florence, AL 35630  
(256) 767-5555  
[susanjohnson@logans.com](mailto:susanjohnson@logans.com)

Ms. Sharon Watson  
Volunteer Coordinator  
Big Brothers/Big Sisters  
100 Mentor Lane  
Athens, AL 12223  
(256)123-1234  
[sharon.watson@mentor.com](mailto:sharon.watson@mentor.com)

Dr. Adam Mooney  
Professor  
University of North Alabama  
UNA Box 5042  
Florence, AL 35632  
(256) 765-4444  
[adammooney789@una.edu](mailto:adammooney789@una.edu)

# INTERVIEWING BASICS

Employers want to hire someone who has experience related to the field, strong leadership skills, good communication skills, and a strong work ethic. The ideal candidate is innovative, motivated, professional, and dependable.

## Job Interview Types

It is helpful to know the format of the interview in advance so that you can prepare accordingly. If the employer is not forthcoming with this information, consider asking about the format/schedule. Knowing what to expect will make you more comfortable and allow you to start the interview strong and more relaxed. Common types of interviews styles are listed below.

**Screening Interviews** are meant to weed out unqualified candidates. Providing facts about your skills is more important than establishing rapport. A common type of screening interview is the telephone interview.

**Telephone Interviews** are screening interviews designed to eliminate less qualified applicants so that only the best are invited for a personal interview. Phone interviews are typically scheduled in advance. Be sure you take the call in a quiet location, free from any distractions. It can also be helpful to dress in professional attire, because your clothes can affect your attitude and conversational style. If an interviewer calls unexpectedly, stay calm and answer their questions to the best of your abilities. Your goal is to provide concise, thoughtful answers and to be invited for a personal, face-to-face interview.

**One-on-One Interviews** are situations where you are face-to-face with just one other person. If invited to an interview, the employer has already established that you have the skills and education necessary for the position. The interviewer wants to see if you will fit in with the organization and how your skills will complement the rest of the department. Your goal in a one-on-one interview is to establish rapport with the interviewer and show him or her that your qualifications will benefit the organization.

**Committee Interviews** require that you face several members of the organization at one time. Each committee member generally has a say in whether you are hired, and they will take turns asking questions. Take your time responding, and try to find a way to connect with each person. Maintain eye contact primarily with the person who asked the question, but also look around the room and connect with the other committee members as you respond.

**Group Interviews** gather the front-runner candidates together in an informal, discussion-type interview. This type of interview is designed to gauge the leadership potential and interpersonal skills of the candidates. The interviewer will notice how you interact with others and how you use your knowledge and reasoning powers to influence others.

**Lunch Interviews** are especially difficult because in addition to worrying about interview questions and your answers, you need to be aware of your table manners too! The setting may be more casual, but remember it is an interview and you are being watched carefully. Use the lunch interview to develop common ground with your interviewer. Follow his or her lead in both food selection and in etiquette. (See section on Dining Etiquette)

**Stress Interviews** are a deliberate attempt to see how you handle yourself in an uncomfortable situation. The interviewer may be sarcastic, argumentative, purposely silent, or may keep you waiting. Remain patient and calmly answer each question as it is asked. Request clarification if you need it and never rush into an answer. If the interviewer lapses into silence, recognize this as an attempt to unnerve you. Sit still and remain silent until the interviewer resumes asking questions.

# PREPARING FOR AN INTERVIEW

Make a good impression at your interview by preparing thoroughly.

## Days Before the Interview

- Research the organization and the position. Find out as much key information as you can about the organization, its products, services, and customers. The more you know about the organization and the job you are applying for, the better impression you will make in the interview. Things to know: mission/vision, annual sales, size/structure of the organization, locations, competitors, history, etc.
- Be prepared to sell yourself. Show enthusiasm, interest, and confidence. Know yourself and what you have to offer to the employer.
- Review lists of common interview questions and practice your answers out loud.
- Identify two or three of your top selling points. Determine how you will convey them during the interview.
- Be prepared to provide examples of when things did not turn out as planned. What did you do?
- Review your résumé. Identify examples of situations where you have demonstrated the behaviors a given organization seeks.
- Rehearse your responses with a friend. You should be able to convey all pertinent details about yourself in 15 minutes. Tape yourself to check your diction, speed, and body language.
- Research current salary ranges for similar positions. If the employer asks, you should have a general idea of how much an entry level employee earns doing similar work. It is safest to give a range (i.e. \$25,000-\$30,000).
- Prepare a list of questions to ask the employer. Asking questions shows you are interested and engaged.
- Prepare your interview materials before you leave. Bring several copies of your résumé, a copy of your references, and, if appropriate, any work samples. Make sure all are updated.
- Know what you want and why. Don't be afraid to let the employer know that you want the job. Ask for it!

## Before the Actual Interview

- Be on time, preferably 10-15 minutes early.
- Dress professionally and conservatively. You will be judged in some respects by what you wear.
- Bring a pen and notepad to jot down anything you may need to remember.
- Be positive and respectful when meeting others. The interview begins when you drive into the parking lot.
- Be confident. Have a firm handshake, make eye contact, and be aware of your posture.

## During the Interview

- Show self-confidence and establish a rapport with the interviewer.
- Make eye contact, maintain proper posture, listen carefully, and respond in a clear voice.
- Be aware of any distracting overdone gestures (e.g., talking with your hands, raising your eyebrows).
- Avoid slang and use correct grammar.
- Relax! Take deep breaths, pause before answering questions, and stay calm.
- Ask the employer 2-3 questions at the end of the interview.

## After the Interview

- End with a handshake and thank the interviewer.
- Ask for the employer's business card if you haven't received it already.
- Send a thank you note within 24 hours of the interview.
- Follow up with a phone call within 7-10 days of the interview.
- Review your performance during the interview. Look for ways to improve next time.

## ANSWERING INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Whatever the type of interview, you can be certain that the employer will be asking questions and that you will be expected to respond! Some questions will be general, with straightforward answers. Other questions are likely to require more reflection on your part. The questions will target past performance and behaviors, and will require you to recall specific situations and your reactions. When answering questions:

- Always make eye contact!
- Listen carefully to the question, ask for clarification if necessary, and make sure you answer completely the question that was asked.
- Use specific and detailed responses, not general responses. Whenever possible, use the STAR method to frame your response. This method provides a logical approach to answering any question:

**S** – Situation or  
**T** – Task

Describe the situation that you were in or the task that you needed to accomplish. Be specific! Provide enough detail for the interviewer to understand. Quantify your results with numbers to illustrate your level of authority and responsibility. (Rather than “I was a shift supervisor” explain that “As a shift supervisor, I trained and evaluated 4 employees.”)

**A** – Action

Describe the action you took and be sure to keep the focus on you. Even if you are discussing a group project or effort, describe what you did - not the efforts of the team. Don't tell what you might do, tell what you did.

**R** – Results

Describe what happened or how the situation ended. Focus on your accomplishments and what you learned.

## COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

By rehearsing interview questions, you will become more familiar with your own qualifications and will be well prepared to demonstrate how you can benefit an employer. Remember to use the STAR method where appropriate; describe the situation or task at hand, explain what actions you took, then discuss the results. The following are common interview questions:

- Tell me about yourself.
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- What makes you stand out among your peers?
- How do you determine or evaluate success?
- What college subjects did you like best? Least? Why?
- What motivates you?
- Where do you see yourself in five years?
- What qualities should a successful manager possess?
- Why did you select your college or university?
- What led you to choose your major or field of study?
- Why did you choose the career for which you are preparing?
- In what kind of work environment are you most comfortable?
- How do you think you can make a contribution to our organization?
- What have you learned from participating in extracurricular activities?
- What are the most important rewards you expect in your career?
- What has been your most rewarding experience in college?

Use the STAR method to practice your answers to these sample questions:

- Tell me about a time when you had to go beyond the call of duty in order to get a job done.
- Describe a situation in which you were able to persuade someone to see things your way.
- Give me a specific example of a time when you used good judgment to solve a problem.
- By providing examples, convince me that you can adapt to a wide variety of people, situations, and environments.
- Tell me about a good decision you made recently.
- Describe a situation in which you worked as part of a team.
- Give an example of a goal you reached and explain how you achieved it.
- Describe a decision you made that was unpopular and how you implemented it.
- What do you do when your schedule is interrupted? Give an example of how you handle it.
- Have you had to convince a team to work on a project they weren't thrilled about? How did you do it?
- Have you handled a difficult situation with a classmate, co-worker, or supervisor? How?
- Tell me about how you worked effectively under pressure.
- Give me an example of a complex process or task you had to explain to another person or group of people.
- Talk about a recent problem you faced at work and how you found the best solution.

## QUESTIONS TO ASK THE INTERVIEWER

Be ready to ask 2-3 thoughtful questions. The questions you ask distinguish you from the other candidates. In some cases, your questions are more likely to be remembered than any answers you provide. Never inquire about salary, benefits, and/or company perks at an interview!

- Can you tell me what a typical day would be like?
- Can you explain the typical career path of someone entering this position?
- Does this firm recommend taking night classes during the first year?
- How often are performance reviews given?
- Does this organization promote from within?
- How much exposure to, and contact with, management is there?
- What are the commonly experienced satisfactions and frustrations of this job?
- What types of training programs do you incorporate?
- Some of my strong characteristics that I believe are applicable to this position are\_\_\_\_\_. What specific characteristics are you looking for?
- Where did the person who previously held this job go?

### **NOTES:**

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# INTERVIEW ATTIRE

## Dress Code for Men

- Wear a dark tailored suit (navy, charcoal, or gray are recommended).
- Wear a starched long-sleeved white shirt to give a more professional appearance.
- Invest in an updated silk tie with a tasteful, conservative pattern. A Windsor Knot is the standard choice.
- Match your belt with the color of your shoes (black or brown).
- Make sure your shoes are polished and your socks coordinate with your suit. Avoid light colored socks with a dark suit.
- Jewelry should be worn in moderation (wedding ring and/or class ring, watch).
- Grooming tips: cleanly shaven or neatly trimmed facial hair; clipped fingernails; hair freshly cut, not below base of neck; no visible body piercings or tattoos; avoid cologne and aftershave, use only deodorant. **DO NOT SMOKE** before your interview.
- Carry a briefcase and/or portfolio to enhance your overall professional appearance; accessories should be quality leather investments, black or tan in color.
- If using breath mints, finish before greeting the recruiter; do not use gum.
- When in doubt about how to dress for an interview, dress conservatively and professionally.



## Dress Code for Women

- Wear a two-piece business suit in a dark or neutral color
- Avoid ill-fitting (short, tight, clingy, or slit) skirts; skirts should be no higher than your knee when you are standing.
- When choosing a shirt, select a classic, tailored blouse in cotton or silk fabric. Conservative necklines are extremely important; low-cut tops and other revealing clothing will ruin your chances to make a professional appearance.
- Wear simple classic heels with a closed heel and toe (black, navy, brown, or taupe).
- Always wear hosiery that matches your skin tone—no bare legs
- Jewelry should be worn in moderation (only 1 ring on each hand, watch, earrings, bracelets, or necklaces in 14 karat gold or sterling silver; no costume jewelry).
- Grooming tips: hair should be natural color, if not, beware of off-colored or contrasting roots; if hair is longer or your style is flowing and wispy, wear it pulled back away from your face; no visible body piercing beyond conservative ear piercings; no visible tattoos; make-up should be natural; avoid perfume, use deodorant only; nails should be well manicured, clear nail polish is best. **DO NOT SMOKE** before your interview.
- Carry a briefcase and/or portfolio to enhance your overall professional appearance; accessories should be quality leather investments, black or tan in color (it is recommended that you do not carry a handbag in addition to the briefcase).
- If using breath mints, finish before greeting the recruiter; do not use gum.
- When in doubt about how to dress for an interview, dress conservatively and professionally.



# DINING ETIQUETTE

Often an employer will take potential candidates to lunch or dinner to continue the interview process. This is an opportunity for the employer to observe candidates in a more conversational setting; however, it is important to be mindful of social etiquette. Remember, this is still a job interview and your communication skills, interpersonal skills, and manners are all being critiqued.

## General Etiquette

- Turn off your cell phone and other electronic devices
- Have proper posture and keep your elbows off the table
- Participate in the conversation
- Follow the lead of the host

## Sitting Down

- Do not place any bags, purses, sunglasses, cell phones, or briefcases on the table
- When all are seated, unfold your napkin and place it on your lap, folded in half with the fold towards your waist
- Wait for all parties to arrive before beginning any part of the meal

## Ordering

- Don't order the most expensive item
- Order simply; don't ask for many substitutions
- Avoid finger foods or foods that are difficult and messy to eat
- In general, don't order alcohol at a business meal, even if others do

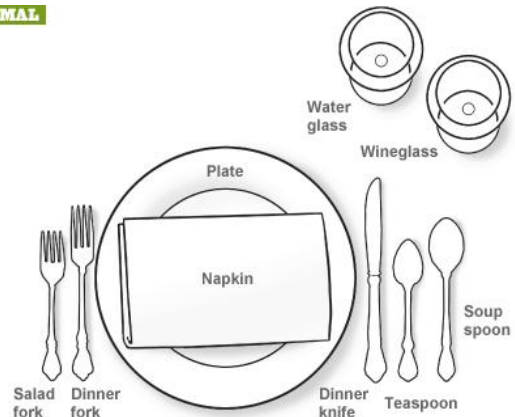
## While Eating

- Wait for everyone to get their meal before starting
- Take small bites and don't talk with your mouth full
- Cut your salad into bite size pieces if necessary
- Break your bread/rolls and butter each piece individually
- Gently stir your soup to cool it instead of blowing on it; spoon your soup away from you
- Try to pace yourself to finish at the same time as everyone else
- If something undesirable is in your mouth, discreetly remove it with your fork
- If you leave the table, excuse yourself and place your napkin on your seat

## After Eating

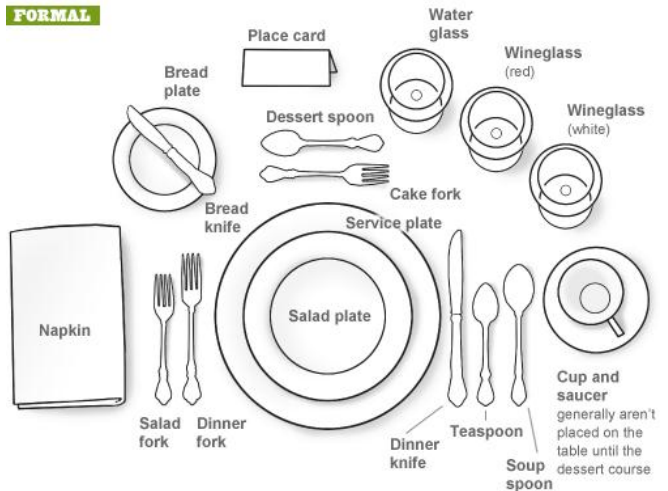
- When finished, place your napkin neatly to the left of your plate; don't push your place setting away from you
- If you don't finish your meal, don't ask for a doggy bag!
- Assume that the employer will pay the bill and tip
- Remember to thank the employer for lunch/dinner

### INFORMAL



Utensils are placed one inch from the edge of the table

### FORMAL



Cup and saucer generally aren't placed on the table until the dessert course

Practice by attending an Etiquette Dinner!  
(offered every semester)

## THANK YOU NOTES

Writing a thank you note after your interview won't necessarily help you secure the job, but not sending one will most certainly hurt your chances. You should write a follow-up letter immediately after each interview, ideally within twenty-four hours. Hand-written notes, hard copy letters, and emails are acceptable formats. Sending emails might be more manageable if you've met with many different recruiters. Emails are certainly received faster and may be the best option if you're uncertain of the hiring timeframe. Each thank you note should be brief and personalized. Try to recall a moment from your interview. Be sure to:

- Express your appreciation for the opportunity to interview with the recruiter
- Express your continued enthusiasm about the position and the organization
- Recap your strengths, being careful to relate them to the requirements of the job and the organization

John Smith  
1234 Pine Street  
Florence, Alabama 35630  
256-555-5555  
[john.smith@gmail.com](mailto:john.smith@gmail.com)

February 9, 20xx

Mr. Andrew Hur  
Putnam, Hayes, & Bartlett, Inc.  
10940 Boulevard Road, Suite 1500  
Huntsville, AL 35802

Dear Mr. Hur:

It was a pleasure meeting with you yesterday regarding the research assistant position. I enjoyed learning more about the opportunity and about Putnam, Hayes, & Bartlett, Inc.

The position is exciting and seems to encompass a diversity of responsibilities. I believe that with my experience and skills, I'm qualified to make a valuable contribution to your organization.

Should you require additional information, please don't hesitate to contact me at the telephone number listed above or at (312) 555-1212. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

John Smith

## **LIFE AFTER COLLEGE**

### *Making the Transition from School to Life*

#### **Organizational Behavior and Office Politics**

- Take time to learn how to work with new managers.
- Learn to listen to others and seek advice; don't try to prove yourself all the time.
- Consider what others on a team have to say, and work together.
- If no mentor is set up for you, find one for yourself.
- Be careful what you say about others; protect your image; know who can be trusted and who cannot.
- Adapt to the organization's style and culture; don't be afraid to ask questions.
- Volunteer for projects and committees, but don't line up more work than you can handle.
- Show enthusiasm and take initiative. Offer to help others with projects as time allows.
- Remember that you are in charge of your own career; don't blame others if it's not going the way you want.
- If you make a mistake, take responsibility and communicate with management.

#### **Effects of Breaking the Law**

- Any criminal record can have a disastrous effect on your career. You won't be eligible for teacher certification; you won't get security clearance for military, state, or federal jobs; you will have trouble getting a job in a medical field where there is access to controlled substances; and you may not be eligible for jobs requiring travel if you have driving offenses.

#### **Moving**

- Know what your needs are in a home or apartment.
- When you look at properties, check to make sure everything works as it should.
- Read leases carefully and discuss any questions or concerns with the landowner.
- Complete a condition report so you have a record of any damages already made to the property. If not, you may lose your security deposit for something you didn't do.
- Consider all costs: moving expenses, deposits, utilities (there is a charge to hook them up when you move in, and you need to have an idea how much they'll run per month), phone, Internet access, water, cable, trash pickup, insurance, etc.

#### **Money Matters/Financial Planning**

- Make a budget (see p. 35) and stick to it. Keep track of your expenses so you can tell where your money is going.
- Keep only one credit card and use it only in real emergencies.
- Paying just the minimum each month keeps you barely ahead of the finance charges.
- It's never too early to start saving. Invest in tax deferred accounts: IRA, 401K, annuities, Keogh plans.
- Use your employer's automatic savings plan. If you never see the money, you won't miss it.

#### **Insurance**

- Health insurance is a must; keep premiums lower by selecting high deductibles and coinsurance.
- If you're renting, it's important to have renter's insurance - the landowner's policy will not cover your belongings.
- Homeowner's or renter's insurance generally covers fire, storms theft, liability, etc., but most does not cover flood. If you are in a flood zone, consider adding flood insurance.
- Get coverage for replacement costs. It's more expensive, but if you don't, you could end up getting \$100 for something that will cost you \$500 to replace.
- Life insurance should cover paying off your debts and your funeral. If you have a family, you'll need more.
- Disability insurance is more common than life insurance among people under 65. Get coverage at 50-60 percent of your income.

## NEGOTIATING SALARY

1. Whenever possible, let the interviewer bring up the topic of salary.
2. Aim for a salary that equals the peak of your qualifications. The higher you state your qualifications, the higher the offer is likely to be. Always state your requirement within a range (e.g., high thirties to mid forties). This is broad enough to negotiate and does not specify a low end, which the employer may likely select if you suggest it.
3. If the interviewer asks what salary you are seeking, you can reply, "What figure or range is the company planning to pay?" This gives you a start point for negotiation. If it is higher than you expected, you help yourself by not starting too low. If it is lower, you now have a place to begin negotiations.
4. Another appropriate response is, "The national average for a person with my experience, education, and training is \$\_\_\_\_\_. Considering the cost of living here, I would expect a salary in the mid \_\_\_\_\_." Optimism and realism make good partners in this case. To do this, you need to research the facts first! Web sites to review include bls.gov and [www.salary.com](http://www.salary.com).
5. If the interviewer brings up the subject of salary too early in the interview (before you have an adequate chance to demonstrate your suitability for the job), delay discussion of the topic, saying something like, "Actually, the position itself is more important to me than the salary. Could we first discuss the position a little more?"
6. While discussing salary, always return to your assets. Review all you have to offer the company.
7. Once you state your salary range, do not back down, particularly if you feel it is equal to your qualifications. The employer will respect confidence about the quality and worth of your work. Base your range on careful research.
8. Do not discuss any other sources of income. Employers want to hire people who need the job. However, they do not want to hear about your personal expenses (e.g., babysitter fees, medical costs, car payments). Keep the interview positive.
9. Along with the topic of salary, you should discuss other fringe benefits of the job (e.g., insurance coverage, pension plans, paid vacations). Also discuss the criteria on which salary increases are based. If benefits and salary increases are good, they can offset a somewhat lower starting salary.
10. If the salary offer is made in a letter and the salary is too low for your needs, arrange an appointment to discuss it immediately. Your bargaining power is far better in person than by letter or telephone.
11. If the salary is not acceptable to you, state the salary you would accept and close the interview by reaffirming your interest in the company and the job. If the interviewer says, "I'll have to think about your requirements," wait one week; then call back. You may receive a higher offer or a compromise offer. If the interviewer gives a flat "no" to your salary requirements, express regret that you were unable to work out a compromise and restate your interest in the position and the organization. Send a thank-you letter within two days of your interview. This act of courtesy could be the deciding factor in your favor, resulting in a job offer you cannot refuse, or you might be remembered and called later. In any case, you will have completed the negotiations professionally, leaving a positive impression.

# MONTHLY BUDGET WORKSHEET

Congratulations, you have been offered the job! Now you can begin planning your new monthly budget.

Monthly Gross Pay \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Subtract \_\_\_\_\_ % for taxes \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL Take-Home Pay** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

## Typical Living Expenses:

Rent \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Renter's Insurance \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Electricity and Water \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Cable/Internet \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Car Payment (including insurance) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Food (groceries and dining out) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Gas for car \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Dry Cleaning \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (cell and/or land line) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Clothes \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Hair Care and Maintenance \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Gifts \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Charitable Contributions \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Gym/Health Club Memberships \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Entertainment (movies, ball games, concerts, trips) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Magazine Subscriptions and Books \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Electronics, CDs, DVDs, etc. \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Pet Expenses \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL Living Expenses** \$ \_\_\_\_\_