



CAREER SEARCH GUIDE



2016-2017

Everything you need to jumpstart your career

This guide will assist you in conducting a successful job search for internships and your first job after graduation. The job market is very competitive today so you must market yourself with a professional resume and cover letter as well as prepare extensively for your interviews.

Career Search Guide

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO JUMPSTART YOUR CAREER

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USING THIS GUIDE

This guide is a useful tool for you to jumpstart your job search and prepare for interviewing for professional positions. Using this guide in conjunction with in-person services at the Career Services Center will improve your prospects for finding and securing an internship or a full-time position. Reading this guide in its entirety will be the most beneficial approach, but if you are short on time, jump to the sections where you need the most help.

SERVICES AVAILABLE TO YOU AT CAREER SERVICES

The Career Services Center is not just concerned with helping you with your resume. The CSC is here to give you the tools to build a successful future. The CSC works towards this goal by offering a variety of services to help meet students' career and life goals.

- **Discussing a major change** – Sometimes things do not go according to plan and your current major is not right for you. Utilizing the FOCUS2 assessments tools, the CSC will help you get on the path to happiness by helping you find the major that will make best use of your skills as well as align with your future goals.
- **Career coaching** – A question many college students ask after choosing their major is, “Can I find a job being a _____ major?” The experienced staff at the CSC will discuss what career options are available to you with any major offered at NDC and the best way to go about reaching your career goals.
- **Resume and Cover Letter critiques** – Did you know that the average employer looks at a resume for only 15-30 seconds? The staff at the CSC will help you identify your experience, skills, and achievements to prepare for the job search.
- **Mock Interviews** – Your resume did its job! Now all that stands between you and your dream job is the interview. The CSC team will work with you to hone your interview skills by answering questions in the STAR method and going over proper interview etiquette.
- **Social Media cleanup** – College is a time to find yourself and have fun. However, embarrassing photos or posts can cost you an important opportunity. CSC will help you make a plan to be sure people see the best side of you on social networks while still showing your personality.
- **LinkedIn optimization** – This emerging career resource can seem overwhelming at first. The CSC can help you with a professional photograph, rewording career statements, and how to build a powerful and dynamic online professional network.
- **Graduate/Professional School coaching** – Not all students are finished with their education after receiving a bachelor's degree. Many career paths require additional education. The CSC will help you navigate the process of applying to graduate/professional school. From entrance exams to acceptance the CSC staff will help give you the optimal chance to be admitted into a graduate/professional school program.

IDENTIFYING YOUR SKILLS AND PROMOTING YOURSELF

To be successful in the job market, you need to practice self-promotion. You are a product the consumer (recruiters and hiring managers) are looking to acquire. In order to promote yourself effectively, you need to know what your strengths and skills, sometimes referred to as transferable skills, are. After you have identified these selling points, you have to be prepared to talk about yourself (this is your elevator pitch). After you know your pitch, you have to put yourself out there and network with potential employers and industry contacts. This section will prepare you for all of these elements of the job search.

Transferable Skills

To be successful in the workplace, you must possess transferable skills. Transferable skills are non-job specific skills that you have acquired during any activity or life experience and are a product of your talents, traits, and knowledge. These skills determine how you respond to new activities, work situations, or jobs. Everyone has transferable skills, though it isn't always obvious when and how you've used them. It's your job to identify these skills and highlight them on your resume. Draw from activities and experiences such as campus and community activities, class projects, assignments, hobbies, athletic activities, internships, and summer part-time jobs.

For example, the fact that you served customers their food during a summer job isn't necessarily going to win you points with a recruiter. However, describing on your resume how working in this situation helped you develop your interpersonal skills is relevant.

Before: Served customers their food.

After: Successfully interacted with a diverse customer base while providing exceptional customer service.

According to the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE), the top eighteen personal qualities/skills employers desire most are:

1. Leadership
2. Ability to work in a team
3. Communication skills
4. Problem-solving skills
5. Strong work ethic
6. Initiative
7. Analytical/quantitative skills
8. Flexibility/adaptability
9. Technical skills
10. Interpersonal skills (relates well to others)
11. Computer skills
12. Detail-oriented
13. Organizational ability
14. Friendly/outgoing personality
15. Strategic planning skills
16. Creativity
17. Tactfulness
18. Entrepreneurial skills/risk-taker

Checklist of Transferable Skills

Transferable skills are skills that you can take with you from one situation or job to another. The skills below are important to employers. *Which ones do you have?*

Communication Skills

- Speaking effectively
- Writing clearly and concisely
- Listening attentively and objectively
- Expressing ideas
- Facilitating group discussion
- Interviewing
- Editing
- Responding appropriately to +/- feedback
- Using various media to present ideas imaginatively
- Providing appropriate feedback
- Negotiating
- Perceiving nonverbal messages
- Persuading
- Reporting information
- Public speaking
- Using various styles of written communication

Research/Planning/Investigation

- Forecasting/predicting
- Creating ideas
- Identifying problems
- Imagining alternatives
- Identifying resources
- Gathering information
- Solving problems
- Setting goals
- Extracting important information
- Analyzing
- Developing evaluation strategies
- Designing an experiment or model
- Formulating questions
- Making conclusions
- Conceptualizing
- Observing and discovering

Human Relations/Interpersonal

- Developing rapport
- Being sensitive
- Listening
- Conveying feelings
- Providing support for others
- Motivating
- Sharing credit
- Helping others
- Counseling
- Cooperating
- Keeping a group “on track”
- Being patient
- Interacting effectively with peers, superiors, and subordinates
- Persuading others
- Being willing to take risks
- Teaching/instructing others
- Demonstrating effective social behavior
- Perceiving feelings and situations
- Delegating with respect
- Working with diversity or multi-cultural issues

Work Survival

- Enforcing policies
- Managing time and stress
- Working effectively under pressure
- Taking initiative in job-related duties
- Discerning appropriate behaviors for the workplace
- Meeting goals
- Accepting responsibility
- Setting and meeting deadlines
- Seeking opportunities for professional development
- Evaluating personal and professional strengths and weaknesses

Organization/Management/Leadership

- Initiating new ideas and tasks
- Handling details
- Coordinating tasks
- Coaching/mentoring
- Managing conflict
- Motivating and leading people
- Organizing people/tasks to achieve a specific goal
- Conducting meetings
- Giving praise and credit to others for a job well done
- Solving problems/mediating
- Taking risks
- Implementing sound decisions
- Managing groups
- Delegating responsibility
- Teaching/instructing
- Promoting change
- Selling ideas or products
- Making decisions with others
- Identifying people who can contribute to solutions of problems or tasks
- Developing goals for an organization
- Prioritizing tasks
- Encouraging and inspiring
- Negotiating agreements
- Taking responsibility for decisions

Financial Management

- Developing a budget
- Accurately estimating expenses and income
- Keeping accurate and complete financial records
- Accounting
- Assessing
- Ensuring timeliness of payments
- Fundraising
- Calculating
- Projecting/forecasting
- Investing

Critical Thinking/Problem Solving

- Anticipating problems before they occur
- Defining problems and identifying possible causes
- Identifying possible solutions and selecting the most appropriate ones
- Creating innovative solutions to complex problems
- Involving group members to evaluate solutions
- Developing plans to implement solutions
- Multi-tasking
- Identifying a general principle that explains interrelated experience

Crafting Your Elevator Pitch

If you're looking for a job, one of the first tasks on your to-do list should be crafting an ideal "elevator pitch."

What is an elevator pitch?

Imagine stepping into an elevator in a downtown office building. As the doors close, the person standing next to you says, "Hi, I'm a recruiter at your dream company. Tell me about yourself." Are you prepared for an opportunity like this? Could you concisely introduce yourself, your background, and your career aspirations in the time of a quick elevator ride—30 seconds or less? 'Elevator pitch' is a popular term for the basic introduction of who you are and what you are looking for. It can be used in a variety of professional situations such as networking events, career fairs, cover letters and formal interviews.

Why is an elevator pitch important?

In most situations, you will not have time to tell someone your life story or to list every accomplishment on your resume. The best elevator pitches provide enough background information and enthusiasm that the other person wants to continue a conversation with you.

4 Steps to Developing an Elevator Pitch

1. Know yourself.

The first step to introducing yourself effectively is knowing who you are and what makes you unique. Ask yourself the following questions and jot down your answers:

Which of your previous jobs, even if they were part-time jobs, internships, or volunteer positions, provided you with experience relevant to what you hope to do now? If none, what about your college major or extracurricular activities?

What are your strongest skills?

What are your strengths and passions, career-wise?

What kinds of internships, jobs, companies, or industries are you pursuing now?

What can you say about yourself that will set you apart from other candidates?
What makes you memorable and special?

2. Craft your pitch.

Think of your pitch in three parts:

1. **Who are you?** Remember that your primary goal is simply to introduce yourself. Share your name and place yourself in context by explaining what school you attend, what you are studying, and/or where you currently work.
2. **What are your major accomplishments/passions/unique skills?** Leverage the skills you listed earlier and frame them in a way that is meaningful to a potential employer or networking contact. What can you say that will make a recruiter or a networking contact want to know more about you?
3. **What do you want/Where are you going?** This is the part of your pitch that lets the other person know what you're looking for and the topics you're interested in talking about. Don't be pushy or aggressive, but do be forthright about the fact that you're looking for a job.

Finally, be sure to tailor your delivery to the interpersonal circumstances of the moment: the goal is to maintain a conversational tone and not sound rehearsed. Think of the above elements as "sound bites" that you can mix, match, and cater to each unique interaction.

Some examples:

1. *“I’m currently studying education at Notre Dame College. One of my greatest strengths is my ability to make the conceptual practical and I’m interested in securing an entry-level role at a nonprofit that allows me to teach and develop curriculum. Because nonprofit programs and fellowships were a key part of my development, it’s important for me to pay it forward and help students develop to their highest potential.”*
2. *“Hi, I’m Natasha Brown. I’ll be receiving my BA in Accounting in May from Notre Dame College and I interned last summer at PricewaterhouseCoopers in the Assurance practice. During my internship, I participated in the firm’s community service project in New Orleans, which was an incredible experience. I’m also the vice president of NDC’s business club. I’m currently seeking an auditor position in the Chicago area, which is why I’m here at this conference.”*

Draft your elevator pitch here:

3. Consider body language.

The effectiveness of your elevator pitch is not just based on what you say, but how you say it. Did you know it takes only seven seconds for people to make eleven impressions about you? You may be completely serious, passionate, and confident about what you have to say, but your body and clothing may be sending a different message. Image matters. When practicing and delivering your elevator pitch, consider:

- Posture
- Handshake
- Eye Contact
- Volume
- Hand Gestures
- Tone
- Facial Expression
- Clothing
- Personal Hygiene

4. Practice, practice, practice.

Once you're satisfied with your elevator pitch's content and delivery, be sure to practice it enough to comfortable and confident. If possible, try to video or audio tape yourself to see if you have any speech tics ("um" or "you know" or "like") or if you have a nervous habit like putting your hands in your pockets or brushing your hair aside. Your goal should be a natural delivery that feels confident but not canned.

When you are happy with the way your intro sounds to your own eyes and ears, try it with friends, family members, advisors, or career services counselors. Remember that every time you test your introduction and get feedback, you're also getting more and more comfortable talking about yourself.

Additional Resources

- <http://www.pwc.tv/>
PricewaterhouseCoopers, LLC student career development information
- <http://www.howcast.com/videos/297027-How-to-Perfect-the-Elevator-Pitch/>
A video overview explaining how to develop an elevator pitch
- <http://www.youtube.com>
Search for "elevator pitch" or "elevator speech" to view example elevator pitches

Networking

Networking is the process of gathering helpful information from personal and professional contacts. Networking is important in all career fields and at all professional levels as it is an effective way to research career paths of interest to you and later create job leads. It is also a good way to build a business, sell services or products, or promote your favorite cause.

Only 20% of all jobs are advertised in newspapers or online job boards, yet 80% of job seekers only look there! Network to reach the “hidden” job market.

Getting started

- Consider and list your existing and potential network.
 - Friends
 - Family and their friends
 - Former or current supervisors and/or customers
 - Faculty and alumni from the College
 - Neighbors
 - Professionals such as your doctor, dentist, etc.
 - Fellow church members
 - Club members, teams, etc.
- Practice your 60-second introduction that tells a person about your background, experience, and what direction you are headed.
- Join networking clubs and professional associations to meet people in your career field
- Connect on social media
 - LinkedIn.com – you can find people, research organizations, join groups, and find job postings on the world’s largest professional online network
 - Twitter.com – you can find jobs and talk to others in your career field
 - Check out professional associations connected with your major or future career path. A quick Google search will most likely bring you to several professional associations!

Conduct informational interviews

- Call, write, or email people that you want to meet and schedule a meeting. Emphasize that you are researching an industry or position in which you are interested (reiterate that you know that they may not be hiring).
- Set a time limit of 20-30 minutes and have 5-10 questions prepared so you do not waste your contact’s time. Questions might be: Why did you choose this career? How did you get started at this organization? What education and experiences have prepared you for this position? What professional associations do you belong to?
- Always thank the contact for their time and input. Ask your contact for the names of two other contacts in the industry. Keep talking to people!

JOB SEARCH MATERIALS

Basic Sections of a Resume

The job market is very competitive, so marketing yourself with a professional resume is critical in landing you an interview. You can create your resume in Microsoft Word. If you have trouble getting started, you may reference the Resume Builder in Falcon Career Network, our online job board, at: <http://www.notredamecollege.edu/FCN>

Header/Contact Information

- Your formal name including middle initial (use a larger font than the body of your text or bold your name to make it prominent)
- Mailing address
- Home telephone number or cell number (record a professional message on your answering machine or voice mail)
- One professional e-mail address; avoid using your NDC student email address.
- Personalized LinkedIn profile URL
- Efolio, Professional Website, or Professional Blog URL
- Never include a photograph of yourself

Career Summary/Professional Profile

The career summary or professional profile is a very short, specific description of the immediate type of work you are targeting and what you can offer to the organization. Avoid the use of pronouns such as I, my, and me. If submitting a cover letter, you may not need the Career Focus. Your Career Focus should be able to give the employer the **who, what, when, where, and why** about you.

- List the type of position you are applying for (Full-Time, Part-Time, Internship).
- Indicate which specific area you are seeking (if you're unsure of your area, use the What Can I Do with This Major or Focus 2 tools on our website).
- State how you or your skills can benefit the employer, rather than how the employer can benefit you. Use the job description to determine those desirable skills for that position.
- Indicate type of work setting you desire: hospital, non-profit agencies, school, government, etc.
- When including a Career Focus, follow this simple formula:

Action Verb + Position and Organization or Industry + Key Skills or Experience

*Example: *Detailed, analytical accounting professional with a strong finance background seeking a full time CPA-track position at a public accounting firm.*

Skills Summary

A Skills Summary section is usually 3-5 concise sentences and is the first section listed on a resume after your Profile or Goal Statement. It is a summary of your most related experience and qualifications that is customized for the position in which you are applying. Use the job description to help identify the areas of expertise you have, and be sure not to use the words "I" or "My".

Example:

- Three years of experience working in the _____ industry
- Proficient in Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Access and Publisher
- Skilled at interacting with customers of various socioeconomic backgrounds

Education/Licensure

- List your most advanced degree or most recent degree, i.e. a Ph.D. would appear first, then a M.S. or M.A., and finally a B.S. or B.A. degree. *You do not need to include your high school diploma!*
- List your degree earned or expected to earn and major, i.e. Bachelor of Arts; Elementary Education, Expected May 2017
- List the name of the college or university and location, i.e. Notre Dame College, South Euclid, Ohio
- Include your GPA if 3.0 or higher as well as President's or Dean's List by semester
- Your Education section will move lower in your resume as you gain more experience after graduation

Professional Experience

- Start with your current or most recent position and list experience in reverse chronological order (present to past)
- Professional or relevant experience should be related to the position for which you are applying
- List the position. Examples: Customer Care Representative, Server, Sales Associate
- Include specific skills and knowledge you've used; special projects completed, internships, and any other training. ***Make sure you're listing your accomplishments and not just your job duties!***
- Use short work phrases with ***strong action verbs*** to describe your work experience using a bulleted format for easy reading, (refer to the "key words" list)
- *Do not use pronouns such as "I" or "me."*

Campus Activities/Awards/Community Service

- Provide names of organizations (professional, community, campus) with which you have been involved
- Indicate professional awards or scholarship recognition
- List academic, volunteer, community, or professional organizations in which you held a position or membership; they should be relevant to the position you seek
- You may also include any presentations or publications that you have created

Quantification of your accomplishments

- Make your work phrases stronger by describing your accomplishments as much as you can in terms of dollars, numbers, and percentages
- You can add numbers to describe almost anything:
 - How many people you supervised
 - Production numbers
 - Project budgets managed
 - Schedules
 - Turnover rate
 - Number of projects handled and success rate of your projects
 - Cost of projects

- Accuracy
- Rankings
- Sales, revenue
- Customer numbers
- Procedures that improved something

References

- Develop a list of 3-5 professional references and create a separate document from your resume
- You do not need to state “references available upon request” on your resume
- Your references may include supervisors, faculty, and/or co-workers or peers who know you in terms of your work history and ability
- Make sure that you ask permission before listing a reference and provide them with a copy of your resume. ***Ask which email address and phone number they would prefer to use as well***
- Include the following information about each reference: Name, title, organization, address, telephone number, and email address

Key Words for Resume Preparation

Below is a sample list of action words. Go down the list and check those you feel could be used in sentences or paragraphs to describe your accomplishments.

Achieve	Define	Interpret	Receive
Analyze	Deliver	Investigate	Record
Answer	Demonstrate	Judge	Reduce
Apply	Determine	Lead	Refer
Assemble	Diagnose	Maintain	Repair
Assess	Edit	Manage	Research
Assist	Eliminate	Measure	Respond
Calculate	Estimate	Mediate	Review
Chart	Evaluate	Modify	Search
Classify	Examine	Monitor	Select
Coach	Explain	Obtain	Serve
Code	Formulate	Offer	Solve
Collaborate	Generate	Operate	Study
Collect	Guide	Order	Succeed
Communicate	Handle	Outline	Summarize
Compile	Identify	Perform	Support
Complete	Implement	Prepare	Teach
Conduct	Improve	Prescribe	Test
Consolidate	Increase	Process	Train
Consult	Install	Protect	Troubleshoot
Control	Instruct	Prove	Utilize
Counsel	Interact	Provide	Verify

Sample Phrases for Resume Preparation

When constructing your bullet points, follow this formula:

Active Verb + What you did + End Result

Example:

Trained and supervised 11 new employees to follow-up with clients after each delivery which resulted in 92% customer satisfaction

Example:

Provided excellent customer service to approximately 50 customers daily

Example:

Provided standard wait-staff services and balanced out cash and tips each day

Example:

Motivated and trained new employees on products and procedures

Example:

Advised management regarding accounting processes, findings, and financial performance

Example:

Devised strategic marketing and sales plans to improve revenues, market share, and profitability

BEFORE YOUR PRINT IT, PROOFREAD IT!

- Is your resume free of grammatical, spelling, punctuation, and typographical errors?
- Is it all on one page?
- Have you used an appropriate font style such as Times New Roman or Arial, size 11-14?
- Is the text centered and balanced on the page?
- Did you use Microsoft Word to create it (rather than a template)?
- Did you give it an appropriate title using your name (example: Smith_Resume_2016)?
- Did you ask someone in Career Services to review it?
- Did you save it as a PDF?

SAMPLE

LYDIA FALCON

4545 College Road | South Euclid, OH 44121
216.555.5555 | student@gmail.com | Personalized LinkedInURL

PROFILE

Focused, enthusiastic Human Resources Development major with excellent communication skills seeking a summer internship at Primary Realty that emphasizes the recruitment and on boarding of new employees.

SUMMARY OF SKILLS

- Detail-oriented and organized motivator with demonstrated leadership experience
- Effective writing and communication skills
- Proven ability to handle multiple projects and excel under tight deadlines
- Proficient in Microsoft Word, Excel, Publisher, PowerPoint and Adobe InDesign

EDUCATION

Notre Dame College, South Euclid, OH

Bachelor of Arts in Human Resources Development

Expected May 2017

- 3.3/4.0 GPA
- Dean's List: Spring 2015, Fall 2015
- **Relevant Coursework:** Organizational Behavior, Compensation and Benefits, Labor Relations

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Customer Service Representative, Target, Mayfield Heights, OH

June 2012-Present

- Greet customers and promote electronic products
- Conduct inventory checks and stock new merchandise
- Train 11 new employees in cashiering, customer service and inventory systems

Resident Advisor, Notre Dame College, South Euclid, OH

August 2014-June 2015

- Supported residence life in safety and security of 36 first-year residents
- Promoted healthy lifestyle and referred residents to various campus resources
- Coordinated activities and managed entertaining programs to engage students

Special Events Intern, Greater Cleveland Sports Commission, Cleveland, OH

May- August 2014

- Wrote and formatted letters to individual and corporate sponsors
- Collaborated with experienced writers to complete projects in a timely manner
- Created promotional materials including sponsorship brochures, flyers, and postcards using InDesign
- Presented plan for increased attendance to senior leadership within organization

CAMPUS ACTIVITIES/AWARDS/COMMUNITY SERVICE

President of the Business Club, Notre Dame College, South Euclid, OH

January 2015-Present

- Communicated with NDC faculty to arrange events and sponsorship
- Promoted the club to students
- Organized community service projects

Member of Softball Team, Notre Dame College, South Euclid, OH

May 2011-May 2013

SAMPLE

LARRY FALCON

4545 College Road • South Euclid, OH 44121
 216.555.5555 • student@gmail.com • [LinkedinURL](#)

CAREER FOCUS

Motivated, detail-oriented accounting major with a strong work ethic seeking a summer internship in internal auditing at CPA America.

SUMMARY OF SKILLS**Time Management**

- Balances academics while working 40 hours per week
- Effective organizational skills used to accomplish multiple projects early and allow time for task improvement or modifications

Communication

- Demonstrates excellent reading and writing abilities through coursework
- Good public speaking skills and comfortable speaking in front of crowds

Technological Experience

- Proficient in Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, and Excel, as well as Adobe Photoshop and InDesign

EDUCATION

Notre Dame College

South Euclid, Ohio

Bachelor of Arts in Accounting

Expected: May 2017

GPA: 3.76

Dean's List: Fall 2014, Fall 2015

Relevant Coursework: Advanced Accounting, Corporate Finance, Managerial Accounting, Business Law

EXPERIENCE

Smith's Landscaping

Smallville, Ohio

Landscaper

June 2013- Present

- Motivate and train 11 new employees on products and procedures
- Assist customers to find the desired products
- Work independently to complete large jobs with tight deadlines
- Design and create landscaping within the clients' budgets

Cityview Pool

Smallville, Ohio

Lifeguard

June 2015 – August 2015

- Ensured the safety of patrons by enforcing pool rules
- Taught swimming lessons to six groups of adolescents
- Promoted a safe, healthy environment by performing facility maintenance

Cover Letter Basics

Now that you have written your resume, you have to get employers and recruiters to read it. Every resume should be accompanied by a cover letter or application letter to introduce yourself to the recruiter. It must be positive, brief, and attract the reader's attention. Every cover letter should be customized to the employer and highlight your attributes, skills, and experience. **COVER LETTERS FOCUS ON WHAT YOU CAN DO FOR THE EMPLOYER, NOT WHAT THEY CAN DO FOR YOU!**

- Cover letters should resemble your resume and be one page with three to four paragraphs in 11-12 point font.
- Whenever possible, **address** your letter to a specific individual by name (i.e. Ms. Kelly Smith). If you don't know who you're writing to, you can use "Dear Human Resources Manager," or "Dear Recruiter." You should attempt to find out who you're writing to by calling the employer and asking who will be reviewing your application.
- Be clear and **specific** about why you are writing – Tell them what position you're applying for, where you found the job posting, or if someone within the company referred you to the position, include their name and title.
- Demonstrate how you can **help** the employer and detail your experience as it relates to the job opening or organization, but do not simply repeat what is on the resume.
- Use specific concrete work accomplishments and write in the active voice i.e. "I increased sales". This is different from your resume, where you will avoid words like "I", "me", or "my".
- Show you have done some research on the organization. An example would be explaining why the company's mission statement appeals to you or how it aligns with your own values.
- Ask for an interview at the end and thank the reader for their consideration.
- The letter should be brief and no more than three or four paragraphs.
- Be sure to convince the employer that you would be a good match with what they are looking for. Demonstrate how you will benefit their organization with your **SKILLS**.
- Offer a graceful closing, request an interview, and include your best contact information (like your cell phone number) for their convenience. Include "Enclosure" if you are enclosing additional materials.
- Remember that the resume and letter are examples of your written communication skills and organizational skills, so as always, **PROOFREAD**.

Sample Cover Letter OUTLINE (full block format)

Your Address
Your City, State, Zip Code

Date

Name
Title
Organization
Address
City, State, Zip Code

Dear Mr. /Ms. Last Name:

First Paragraph: State **why** you are writing and how you learned of the position. Remember to include the name of a mutual contact if you have one. Be clear, concise and enthusiastic regarding your request.

Middle Paragraphs: State **what** qualifications you can bring to the employer/job. Convince the reader that you are a strong candidate and use specific examples rather than vague or canned phrases. Do not replicate your resume. Convey energy and enthusiasm and remember that this letter is an example of your writing skills.

Final Paragraph: State **how** you will follow up to obtain an interview. Refer to your resume and include a telephone number where you can be reached. Close with an enthusiastic, positive statement about the position.

Sincerely,

Your Signature

Your Typed Name

Enclosure

SAMPLE COVER LETTER

123 First Street
South Euclid, Ohio 44123

May 20, 2015

Dr. Robert Cook
Superintendent
River City School District
220 First Street
North River, Ohio 44266

Dear Dr. Cook:

I am writing with interest for the first grade teaching position for River City School District which was posted on ElementaryEdJobs.edu. With experience working at both the elementary and high school levels, as well as in activities outside of the traditional classroom, I have a diverse background with much to offer.

My first classroom teaching experience was as a volunteer elementary school religion teacher at a local church where I worked for three years during high school. In addition, I worked for several summers at Sunny Beaches Arts Camp teaching theater where I staged a play each season. I have student teaching experience at the first and third grade level, in both suburban and urban school districts. My passion developed while working with "at-risk" children and carefully preparing lessons that allowed me to break down sometimes complicated concepts to simple examples that my young students could grasp.

Last year I taught English to high school students. Managing the difference of abilities among my students proved a difficult, but satisfying, challenge. I tailored activities to maintain the interest of high-level students without intimidating less skilled English speakers.

My resume is enclosed for your review. I look forward to meeting with you to discuss my qualifications in person.

Sincerely,
Jane Brown
Jane Brown

Enclosure

CREATING A PROFESSIONAL CAREER PORTFOLIO

It is highly recommended that you create a portfolio as a convenient and comprehensive way to organize and display your career information and academic achievements. This tool will help you stay organized throughout your time in school (beginning as early as your sophomore year), during a job search, and when you transition into your professional career.

Purchase a three-ring binder or padfolio and divider sheets with tabs for easy identification. You can also create an electronic or e-portfolio (take a look at www.efolioworld.com or www.foliospaces.com, for example).

Assemble personal documentations of your accomplishments. **Photocopy or scan the originals (keep the originals safely at home as you take your portfolio to job interviews).**

While there are many portfolio variations, below is a recommended table of contents:

- Short statement of career goals/plans for the future
- Current resume
- Education
 - Academic transcript(s)
 - Diploma(s)
- Certifications (if any)
- References and recommendation letters
- Course projects, work samples, and graded papers/exams documenting skills and other evidence of effectiveness and achievement
- Presentations (PowerPoint, handouts)
- Writing samples (published articles in journals, newsletters, reviews)
- Professional associations/ memberships
- Awards/recognition
- Employee performance evaluations
- Continuing education units (CEUs)
- Committee work

Remember, you can build, edit, and maintain a professional portfolio through **College Central Network!** Be sure to check out the "Create a Career Portfolio" option on the home page once you've logged in. Follow the link to get to the login page: <http://collegcentral.com/NotreDameCollege/>

When conducting a job search, you may want to include a section to track your search efforts (i.e. networking contacts, potential employers, applications, interviews, etc.).

INTERVIEW PREPARATION

The job interview is arranged... now what? The interview is a chance for both parties to determine if you are the most qualified candidate and to evaluate whether or not the position is right for you.

Before the Interview

- Research the organization. Consult their website for information about their mission, goals, and organizational structure.
- Know yourself. Identify your strengths and weaknesses. Be able to demonstrate your achievements.
- Ensure that your social media accounts are cleaned up and locked down.
- Prepare your questions. Write down 4-5 good questions to get specific details about the position.
- Assemble a professional outfit.
- Practice your responses to interview questions. We highly recommend that you schedule a mock interview with the Career Services Center to practice your responses with a staff member and to gain feedback.
- Review the contents of your career portfolio; bring pen and paper to take notes.

During the Interview

- Arrive 10-15 minutes prior to your appointment time.
- Interviews are usually comprised of **three stages**:
 - Introductions are made and rapport is established.
 - Information is exchanged. The employer will ask questions first and then you will have a turn to ask questions.
 - The close. Emphasize your interest and ask what the next step is.
- Take notes. Listen. Be positive in your responses.
- Maintain good eye contact and use good posture.

After the Interview

- Immediately after the interview, do a written recap. Consider what went well and what aspects went poorly.
- Write thank you notes to everyone you met within 24 hours after the interview. Express your enthusiasm for the job and reiterate a specific discussion point.
- Be prepared to complete a drug test. References may be contacted and a criminal background check may be conducted if you are a strong candidate for the job.

Professional Attire

Though dress codes in the workplace have become much more informal in the past several years, job interview attire has remained strictly professional. Men and women alike are expected to wear conservative business suits to interviews.

- Dark color suit in neutral colors: black, navy blue, dark brown or charcoal gray
- White shirt and conservative tie (should reach your belt)
- Polished leather, dress shoes
- Wear dark socks that match your shoes, neutral hosiery or trouser socks
- Shave before your interview (go easy on the aftershave)
- Clean nails
- Cover tattoos and remove visible body piercings
- Pants or skirt in neutral colors
- Closed toe shoes and medium heel
- Little or no perfume
- Simple accessories

Things to Avoid

- Chewing gum
- Weak handshake
- Poor body language including eye contact and posture
- Cell phone ringing (phone should be OFF or not with you at all)
- “Um”, “Like”, and “You know”
- Negative comments about a prior employer
- Personal information or opinions on ethnicity, religion, gender, politics, age, sexual orientation, marital/family status
- Excessive cologne or accessories



Interview strategies and questions

The interview consists of a series of general questions and behavioral questions. Be prepared to discuss: instructional strategies, working collaboratively, assessment methods, student engagement, classroom management and parent interaction.

General questions

- Tell me about yourself.
- Why did you select a career in _____?
- Why are you interested in this position/organization?
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- What are your most significant accomplishments?
- Why should I hire you?
- What are your long-term and short-term career goals?
- How has your education prepared you for this position?
- How would you describe yourself?
- What challenges have you overcome?
- What is your ideal work environment?

Behavioral interview questions

- Describe a stressful situation and how you handled it.
- Tell me about a time when you handled rapid change.
- Describe a challenging customer experience you encountered.
- Describe a time when you delegated a task to a peer.
- Tell me about a time when you did not know the answer to a customer's question.

Possible questions to ask the interviewer:

- Describe a typical day on the job.
- What type of orientation will be provided for this position?
- What qualities does the ideal candidate possess for this position?
- To whom would I report?
- How will my performance be evaluated? How often?
- What do you enjoy about working for this organization?
- What are the next steps in the hiring process?

Don't forget to ask the interviewer(s) for their businesses card(s) before you leave.

TYPES OF INTERVIEWS

Telephone Screen: A human resources representative or recruiter may contact you first and ask you general questions about your interest in the position. The screener is looking for enthusiasm and good communication skills.

Selection Interview: This is a face-to-face interview typically with the unit supervisor. You will be asked more specific questions about your skills and education.

Panel or Team Interview: You may also meet with other staff members from the unit and/or from various departments so that they may question you at the same time.

Job Shadow: Be prepared to conduct a job shadow after the formal interview. Ask appropriate questions and display interest as you are still being evaluated by the staff.

Phone/Skype Interview Prep

Dress the part

- Dress in an outfit that you would wear if you were doing the interview in person.

Pay attention to body and facial language

- Smile. Breathe. Sit up straight. Be animated with your hands.
- Keep your voice upbeat by smiling and being alert.
- Position a mirror in front of you so that you can be sure you are smiling and pleasant.

Enunciate

- Avoid chewing gum or snacking during the interview.
- Speak slowly and clearly.

Be prepared and do your homework

- Print out notes, speaking points, your resume, questions you think your interviewer might ask (with your prepared answers), and questions that you have for your interviewer.
- Don't read from your notes or resume, but have it easily accessible in case you completely blank and need a trigger.
- Research your interviewer's background and know what he/she looks like so you can create a mental image when you are talking on the phone. Check out his/her LinkedIn profile.

The first impression matters

- Make yourself relatable at the right time during the conversation.

Find a quiet place to talk

- Talk to your career services center – perhaps they have an empty meeting room you can use.
- If you plan on talking in your residence hall room, make sure your roommate will be out of the room. Turn off music and the television.
- Make sure that the space is as peaceful and quite as it can be.

Use a landline

- If possible, always use a landline.
- If you have to use your cell phone, make sure you have a clear connection and a full charge.

Do a practice interview

- Before the day of your phone interview, practice with a friend, parent, counselor, or teacher.
- Have them ask you questions that your interviewer might ask, and answer the questions as if you were actually being interviewed for the job or internship.

Avoid any filler words

- When in doubt, in an awkward situation, or if you can't think of something to say, simply pause, breathe, and then continue.

Always say thank you

- As the conversation comes to a close, remind your interviewer why you would be a great fit for the position and say thank you.
- After the phone call, follow up with a thank you email with a sentence or two about what you discussed during the conversation.
- Within 24-48 hours, follow up with a handwritten note.

Bonus: Always be extra prepared.

- Have a computer or laptop nearby.

Behavioral Interviewing

Interviews are typically looking for the following qualities in an employee:

- Communication Skills
- Honesty and Integrity
- Teamwork
- Interpersonal Skills
- Strong Work Ethic
- Motivation and Initiative
- Flexibility
- Problem-Solving Skills
- Technical Skills
- Organizational Skills

Your interview preparation should include examples from experiences where you demonstrated these qualities. Most interviewers will use behavioral style questions (past behavior is a good predictor of future success) to assess these qualities. For example: “By providing examples, convince me that you can adapt to a wide variety of people, situations, and environments.” (interpersonal skills).

Your objective should be to clearly communicate how your past experience and knowledge can benefit the organization. You can use specific examples from your academic experience, work experiences, and leadership involvement in student or community groups. Can you talk about a time when you defined a problem, how you planned the solution, what obstacles you encountered, and the outcome? Tell what you did specifically. Your answer should contain these parts: Situation, Task, Action, and Result. This is known as the STAR method.

STAR Method

S: Describe the situation or problem that you faced that had a positive outcome.

T: Describe the task that you needed to accomplish.

A: Describe the action that you took.

R: Describe the result you achieved.



Example

Tell me about a time when you showed initiative.

Response

I have a lot of initiative. For example, I thought it would be beneficial to my residence hall to start a student council to address our concerns. So I recruited interested students and went to the college administration with a proposal. Now we have an active residence hall council which meets monthly with the dean of students and the residence hall staff. This has increased communication and decreased conflicts and misunderstandings between students and college staff.

STAR Exercise

Interview Preparation Exercise: Under each heading, cite examples of your own using the STAR method. Develop short stories around your experiences to describe your strengths and possible obstacles you had to overcome.

Teamwork

S

T

A

R

Communication Skills

S

T

A

R

Problem Solving/Research Skills

S

T

A

R

Strong Work Ethic

S

T

A

R

Motivation and Initiative

S

T

A

R

Interpersonal Skills

S

T

A

R

Technical Skills

S _____
T _____
A _____
R _____

Organizational Skills

S _____
T _____
A _____
R _____

Flexibility/Adaptability Skills

S _____
T _____
A _____
R _____

Integrity/Honesty

S _____
T _____
A _____
R _____

Leadership

S _____
T _____
A _____
R _____

Multi-Tasking

S _____
T _____
A _____
R _____

Time Management/Prioritization

S _____
T _____
A _____
R _____

Sample After-Interview Letter

Sara Parker

1234 Broad Lane | South Euclid, OH 44266
440-555-1717 | sparker@gmail.com

May 7, 2016

Letter is dated, with proper inside address and heading; professionally done. It is OK to hand-write on a note card if you have neat hand writing.

Ms. Jane Smith
Human Resources Manager
Cleveland Clinic Foundation
123 Euclid Avenue
Cleveland, OH 44241

Dear Ms. Smith:

Thank you very much for interviewing me yesterday for the management position at The Cleveland Clinic. I enjoyed meeting you and learning more about your organization. The opportunities and learning environment in the Emergency Care Unit sound exciting and challenging.

The position we discussed certainly seems to have many of the features I am seeking as I begin my career. I think my education and clinical experiences fit well with the job requirements, and I am sure that I could make a significant contribution. I was very impressed by the professional development opportunities for staff and administration that we discussed.

I want to reiterate my strong interest in the position and in working with you and your staff. Please feel free to contact me if I can provide you with any additional information.

Again, thank you for the interview and your consideration.

Sincerely,

Sara Parker

Sara Parker

Make sure to "ask for the job" again. Show that you are very interested!

Mentioning something specific learned during the interview is a good idea. Restate your qualifications.

Don't forget to sign your letter.

USING SOCIAL MEDIA

Networking is one of the most important aspects of a successful career. However, many recent graduates lack the experience and network connections that make the difference for many successful professionals in the workforce. Utilizing social media networks can provide numerous connections and strategies for finding the best opportunities. Job seekers are also encouraged to leverage social media when advertising their skills and experience.

Linked [®]

LinkedIn is the world's largest professional online network which provides an excellent resource for job and internship seekers. Through a website like LinkedIn, students can establish a professional online presence, learn about companies, network with professionals, find jobs, and set themselves apart from others.

Visit <http://students.linkedin.com/> to learn how to create and use your LinkedIn profile.

Visit <http://linkedin.com/studentjobs> to view opportunities in the Student Job Portal.

Visit <http://university.linkedin.com/> for resources specifically for students and beneficial associations and groups for your job search.



It's important to clean up your **Facebook** profile so you're not caught by surprise when your boss or a company that is interested in hiring you sees something inappropriate on your page. You need to make a positive impression online – wherever a prospective employer might be able to find you. There is also good information for job seekers on Facebook – job site pages, company pages, and groups that can help with your search. When you're interested in working for a specific company, you can "like" their page to get updates and company news.

Visit <https://www.facebook.com/help> and click on "privacy" to learn how to manage your privacy settings.



Twitter is a more than just a social networking site, too. It's a tool you can use to make connections, find job listings, and expedite your job search. It's free to register and create a profile. When you sign up, use your name as your Twitter page title. Include a brief professional bio that highlights your experience and a link to your LinkedIn profile or online resume. It's important to use a photo that is professional in nature. Once you have signed up for Twitter, you will be able to follow people, job sites, and companies to get job leads and job search advice.

JOB SEARCHING ONLINE

Below are some job and internship boards that may help your search, but **do not limit** your search to online job boards! Apply the 50/50 rule while searching for a job: 50% of your time should be spent networking and 50% should be spent doing online research and application.

Websites for Job Searching:

wwwIndeed.com – pulls information from various job search websites

www.Collegecentral.com/NotreDameCollege - log onto your College Central account to search job and internship postings as well as helpful career services events that could aid in your search

www.CollegeGrad.com – find jobs, internships, and degree programs from all over the country

www.CollegeRecruiter.com – website for recent graduates to find entry-level jobs and internships

wwwSimplyHired.com – search jobs from company sites, job boards, and the web

www.Job.com – post your resume for employers and search part-time and full-time jobs all over the country

www.Monster.com – post your resume, search for jobs, and utilize valuable career resources

www.CareerBuilder.com – post your resume for employers and search part-time and full-time jobs all over the country

www.Experience.com – search for jobs and internships all over the country

www.ohiomeansjobs.com – explore careers, search jobs, attend events and plan and track your job search

www.USAJobs.gov – create your profile to apply for government positions

Seasonal & Internship Search:

www.noche.org/neointern - Internships in Northeast Ohio

www.CareerBoard.com – find internships all over the country

www.CareerBuilder.com – find internships all over the country

www.idealists.org – Non-profit internships

www.teamworkonline.com – Sports related internships

www.ohiomeansinternships.com – Internships in Ohio sponsored by the Ohio Means Grant

Job Search Wisdom

- Use LinkedIn.
- Visit the Career Services Center.
- Focus your job search – don't apply to everything you see. Focus your search on one or two specific areas.
- Practice interviewing with friends, mentors, or Career Services.
- Buy interview clothes before you graduate – that way you will be ready when the interview comes.
- Set a professional voicemail on your phone.
- Don't panic! It's not the end of the world if you don't have a job lined up after graduation. Try to fill your time with a part-time job or volunteer work.
- Stay connected with your professors – they may know of individuals or companies that are hiring.