WELCOME TO THE ENGINEERING CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING CENTER

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

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

Throughout the year they hold a variety of corporate information sessions for companies such as ExxonMobil, AbbVie, Tighe & Bond, General Dynamics, Verizon and Pratt & Whitney. They also work closely with companies to organize networking events, workshops, and plant tours.

When you are ready to gain relevant engineering experience, check out the UMass Engineering job board at umass.joinhandshake.com and the UMass Career Services CareerConnect searchable job database which includes internship, co-op, and full-time positions.

— Cheryl Brooks
Assistant Dean, Experiential Learning and Corporate Relations
College of Engineering

“The Engineering Career Center helped me kick-start my professional development skills from the beginning of my freshman year! I remember walking into the career center as a timid freshman to get my resume checked. After getting tips on how to improve it and talking with the staff, I left the office smiling with confidence. Throughout my four years in college I continued to receive help and guidance from the career center. The staff is very inviting, friendly and knowledgeable. They are more than happy to help you with your resume, perform a mock interview, or simply answer any questions you may have. Companies are always recruiting UMass Amherst students and the career center is sure to let their students know! The weekly emails with job postings, on-campus company recruiting events, as well as the career fairs provided me with ample opportunities to apply and find internships and a job. The Engineering Career Center helped me intern in three different industries and land my dream job in the industry I liked the most!”

— Marina Di Cocco, Eaton
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Handshake has a great help center full of Q & As, short videos, tutorials and materials to help you find your way! https://support.joinhandshake.com/hc/en-us
Trouble with sign in? Need help? Contact the Engineering Career Center at coecareers@engin.umass.edu or 413-545-4558.
The Engineering Career Development and Experiential Learning Center uses Handshake as a platform for posting job and internship opportunities and recruiting events such as career fairs, networking events, information sessions, and career development workshops.

Internships, Co-ops and Undergraduate Research

Experiential learning can take a variety of forms including internship, co-op, service learning, research, projects through student societies, and study abroad. The UMass College of Engineering values these experiences and recognizes the benefits that hands-on learning provides. Two of the most common forms of experiential learning, internships and co-ops, provide hands-on learning within a professional setting. However, it is important to know that the terms “co-op” and “internship” may be used by different groups or individuals to mean different things.

- Internship: According to the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE), “An internship is a form of experiential learning that integrates knowledge and theory learned in the classroom with practical application and skills development in a professional setting. Internships give students the opportunity to gain valuable applied experience and make connections in professional fields they are considering for career paths; and give employers the opportunity to guide and evaluate talent. These programs are important because they help students find engineering-related internship and co-op opportunities. There are also many important forms of experiential learning that must be filled out and approved by your department, so please stop by the Career Center in 112 Marston Hall for assistance. For complete details, go to: http://engineering.umass.edu/current-students/career-development/internships-coops-research

CareerConnect Job, Internship & Co-op Database—A Supplementary Resource

While Handshake is the primary resource for jobs, internships and co-ops, engineering students also have access to the UMass Career Services CareerConnect job board. The UMass Amherst CareerConnect job and internship database is now easier to log onto! To access CareerConnect:

- Go to: www.umass.edu/careers
- Click on the CareerConnect button on the right-hand side of the page.
- Enter your UMass Net ID and password
- First-time users must complete a quick and simple registration.

For assistance, contact UMass Career Services at 413-545-2224.

Accepting Offers

When you accept an offer for an internship or co-op, both the UMass College of Engineering Career Center and the employer expect that you are acting in good faith and that you will honor that commitment. It is your responsibility to thoroughly evaluate an offer and decide if the opportunity is right for you before accepting it.

How Do I Know if I am Eligible to Apply for CPT?

To be eligible for CPT, you must:
- Be in lawful F-1 status
- Have been enrolled on a full-time basis for one academic year (i.e. two full, consecutive semesters before applying for CPT), and be in good academic standing
- Have a job offer
- The position must be relevant to your field of study
- Not be enrolled in an intensive English language training program
- Have UMass approved health insurance

*Note: students are NOT ELIGIBLE for CPT once you have completed all degree requirements.

The Engineering Career Center provides many resources to help students find engineering-related internship and co-op opportunities. There are many important forms of experiential learning that must be filled out and approved by your department, so please stop by the Career Center in 112 Marston Hall for assistance. For complete details, go to: http://engineering.umass.edu/current-students/career-development/internships-coops-research

CAREER SERVICES

FIND JOBS AND INTERNSHIPS

Third Year

- Update your resume.
- Attend professional workshops EARLY in the semester so that you will be prepared for the career fairs.
- Attend the Engineering Career Fair in the fall and the Career Center workshops.
- Attend company information sessions and begin thinking about the type of work you would be doing for a company, the company culture, ability to grow, utilization of skills, as well as the company locations.
- Check out the National Science Foundation’s website: www.nsf.gov/crssprgm/reu/. Make a list of REU sites you are interested in and plan to apply to (note deadlines!).
- Ask your advisor for letters of recommendation for REU applications and follow up with a thank-you letter.
- Explore internship opportunities through the Engineering job board at umass.joinhandshake.com and the UMass Career Services job board called CareerConnect.
- Continue to participate in student societies and organizations—begin to take on leadership roles.
- Attend the Graduate School information session and talk to faculty, former students, or College of Engineering Career Center advisors to help make this decision.
- If you decide on graduate school, set up a timeline for studying and taking the GRE, LSAT, or GMAT and for meeting all grad school deadlines.

Fourth Year

- Polish your resume.
- Attend various workshops to fill any gaps in interview or networking skills, job-search techniques, etc.
- Attend the Engineering Career Fair in the fall, the Campus-Wide Career Fair in the spring, and all information sessions. Make sure you know what recruiters are looking for and be prepared to present your technical and communication skills at these various events.
- Regularly check the Engineering job board at umass.joinhandshake.com and UMass Career Services for new listings.
- Follow up with companies you meet at information sessions, career fairs, or interviews. Make sure you present yourself in a professional manner—through phone conversations, email, thank-you notes, or in person.
- Prepare to take the FE exam before leaving school—many companies require this for employment. The FE is now a computer-based exam that is administered year-round by NCEES (National Council of Examiners for Engineering and Surveying) at NCEES-approved test centers. Advance registration is required and is available at http://ncees.org/exams/.

CAREER CHECKLIST

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

READ YOUR EMAIL from the Engineering Career Center. We will send you information about specific jobs, networking events and workshops on a regular basis.

First Year

- Join Handshake!
- Attend company information sessions to learn more about the various engineering careers and begin to build relationships with recruiters.
- Assess and develop your skills in critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, and teamwork through both academic and extracurricular activities. Take initiative to start a project and see it through to completion.
- Begin your resume—attend a resume workshop.
- Begin building a network of support through friends, mentors, upperclassmen, staff, and faculty.
- Work hard in your academic classes—companies often base internship offers on student grades.
- Plan a related work experience for the summer between your first and second year. While a research position or an internship would be ideal, other experiences can also be useful. For example, if you are a civil engineer, look for a construction or landscape job. If you are a mechanical engineer, jobs in manufacturing or at the hardware store could prove helpful.
- Join and participate in engineering student societies or other student organizations or community service.

Second Year

- Update your resume—add any experience or soft skills you gained over the previous summer or semester.
- Attend company information sessions to learn more about what companies in your field of interest are doing.
- Attend the Engineering Career Fair in the fall and the Campus-Wide Fair in the spring.
- Attend various workshops on resume writing, interviewing, networking or career fair preparation to hone your skills.
- Join and participate in engineering student societies or other student organizations or community service.
- Check out the National Science Foundation website: www.nsf.gov/crssprgm/reu/. Make a list of Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) program sites you are interested in and plan to apply to (note deadlines!).
- Ask faculty for letters of recommendation for REU applications and follow up with a thank-you letter.
- Explore internship opportunities through the Engineering job board at umass.joinhandshake.com and the UMass Career Services job board called CareerConnect.
- If you decide on graduate school, set up a timeline for studying and taking the GRE, LSAT, or GMAT and for meeting all grad school deadlines.

Guidelines for International Students

If you are on an F-1 student visa, you must fulfill certain requirements in order to gain practical training through either an internship or co-op so that you do not violate the terms of your visa. Curricular Practical Training (CPT) is off-campus work experience (training) that is an integral part of an established curriculum.
Any employers use career fairs—both on and off campus—to promote their opportunities and to pre-screen applicants. Career fairs come in all shapes and sizes, from small community-sponsored events to giant regional career expositions held at major convention centers. Most career fairs consist of booths and/or tables manned by recruiters and other representatives from each organization. On-campus events, some employers also send alumni representatives. Large corporations and some government agencies have staffs who work the career fair “circuit” nationwide. An employer’s display area is also subject to wide variance. It could be a simple table with a stack of brochures and business cards and a lone representative or an elaborate multimedia extravaganza with interactive displays, videos, posters and a team of recruiters.

Fashions and Accessories
Generally, the appropriate attire for career fair attendees is “business professional”. For women, this can be a career style dress, skirt or pants suit, and dress shoes. Men can wear a blazer with dress pants or suit with a button down collared shirt, tie and dress shoes. Think clean, pressed, and conservative.

Remember to bring copies of your resume (or resumes, if you have several versions tailored to different career choices), a few pens and pencils (have backups—they have a way of disappearing), a folder or portfolio and some sort of note-taking device (paper or electronic pad). Keep track of the recruiters with whom you speak and send follow-up notes to the ones who interest you.

Stop, Look and Listen
Keep your eyes and ears open—their’s nothing wrong with subtly eavesdropping on the questions asked and answers received by your fellow career fair attendees. You might pick up some valuable information, in addition to witnessing some real-life career search “do’s and don’ts.”

In order to maximize your career fair experience, you must be an active participant and not just a browser. If all you do is stroll around, take company literature and load up your way of disappearing), a folder or portfolio and some sort of note-taking device (paper or electronic pad). Keep track of the recruiters with whom you speak and send follow-up notes to the ones who interest you. the effect of, “You were so busy that we didn’t get a chance to meet. I’m very interested in talking to you.”

Look around the display for the recruiter’s business card (or at the very least, write down his or her name and get some literature with the company’s address) and send a follow-up note and another copy of your resume.

5. If you know ahead of time that one of your “dream companies” is a career fair participant, do some prior research (at minimum, visit their website). A little advance preparation goes a long way and can make you stand out among the masses of other attendees.

A Few Words About Career Fair Etiquette
1. Don’t interrupt the employer reps or your fellow job-seekers. If someone else is monopolizing the employer’s time, try to make eye contact with the rep to let him or her know that you’re interested in speaking. You may be doing a favor by giving the recruiter an out. If all else fails, move to the next exhibit and plan to come back later.

2. If you have a real interest in an employer, find out the procedures required to secure an interview. At some career fairs, initial screening interviews may be done on the spot. Other times, the career fair is used to pre-screen applicants for interviews to be conducted later (either on campus or at the employer’s site).

3. Sincerely always wins. Don’t lay it on too thick, but don’t be too bland either. Virtually all employers are looking for candidates with good communication skills.

4. Don’t just drop your resume on employers’ display tables. Try to get it into a person’s hands and at least say a few words. If the scene is too busy and you can’t get a word in edgewise, jot a note on your resume to the effect of, “You were so busy that we didn’t get a chance to meet. I’m very interested in talking to you.”

5. If you know ahead of time that one of your “dream companies” is a career fair participant, do some prior research (at minimum, visit their website). A little advance preparation goes a long way and can make you stand out among the masses of other attendees.

You’re a Prospector—Start Digging
The questions you ask at a career fair depend upon your goals. Are you interested in finding out about a particular career field? Then ask generalized questions about working within the industry. If you’re seeking career opportunities with a specific employer, focus your questions on the application and interview process, and ask for specific information about that employer.

Fair Thee Well
By all means, try to attend at least one career fair before beginning your formal job interviewing process. For new entrants into the professional career marketplace, this is a good way to make the transition into “self-marketing mode” without the formality and possible intimidation of a one-on-one job interview. It’s an opportunity that’s too valuable to miss.
What is Professional Networking?
Networking is about making connections. It involves the exchange of information between you and another person in your field of interest.

Who do I “network” with?
In addition to obvious people such as recruiters who come to the career fair, think outside the box in terms of networking. There is a wide range of people who can help connect or advise you about opportunities in your professional field such as:
- On-campus recruiters (these folks come to career fairs, corporate information sessions, technical talks, formal networking events)
- Alumni come back to campus for a variety of events such as reunions, technical presentations, award ceremonies and fundraisers. Many schools, including UMass, have an alumni association that offers an online connection to alumni.
- Faculty/Staff
- People you meet at professional conferences
- Family, friends, neighbors, acquaintances from religious institutions, sporting teams, the gym, etc.
- (Does your uncle work for an engineering company? 
- Co-workers (Other students, especially lab or team mates will be key connections in your future. Ask yourself: what kind of teammate am I? Would a current teammate recommend me to their employer in a few years? Why or why not?)
- LinkedIn, other social media that is directly related to your field of interest (AICHE, ASME...)

What kind of results can I expect from networking?
Don’t expect that someone else is going to “get you a job”. You must get yourself the job by presenting your skills, competencies, knowledge and personality well. However, networking CAN help provide:
- Leads on openings at specific companies
- “Inside information” on what a company is looking for when hiring
- The name of a contact within the company such as a hiring manager or HR person
- Career advice on what type of path to choose in order to meet your career goals
- Names of companies who are doing the type of work you are interested in

What do I say when I am “networking”?
Many people feel awkward at networking events, not knowing what to say or how to present themselves without sounding like a salesperson. However, being prepared with some general information will help you feel more confident in talking about your career interests. Possibly the best thing to remember is to “keep it real”. Start as you would any conversation, by introducing yourself, then be prepared to follow up as the conversation progresses. Don’t forget to ask about them as well. Questions like, “What is your job like”, “How long have you been in the field” or “What types of problems do you encounter” make the conversation a two-way street. Make sure you have thought about the following things in advance and practice them out loud:
- Name, major (or degree), and school level (senior, junior, sophomore)
- Your career area of interest. (It is important to find the balance between being very specific yet staying open-minded about career fields. For example, if you are interested in working with high-end sound systems and you are at a networking event with Bose, you should be very specific about your interest. However, if you are talking with a neighbor who works at company that manufactures medical devices, you should broaden the conversation to talk about your interest in gaining experience in a manufacturing environment.)
- A brief summary about the relevant classes you have taken. This will vary depending on the person you are talking with. For example, if the person works for a specialty materials company, you might talk about your polymer class. However, if the person works for an oil refinery, you might talk about your process design or controls class.
- A brief summary about any relevant projects or internships you have had.
- Activities that demonstrate teamwork, technical writing, leadership skills.

Examples:
Depending on the nature of the networking event, your level of preparation will vary. If you are going to a formal networking event, career fair, or professional conference, you should definitely spend some time researching who will be in attendance so that you will be able to tailor your conversation to match the needs of the various attendees. For example: Imagine that you are going to the Society of Women in Engineering Conference and you are participating in the Abbott Networking Night. Your “pitch” could sound something like this:
Hi, my name is Jessica and I’m a senior Chemical Engineering student at the University of Massachusetts. I am very interested in the pharmaceutical field and am doing a biochemical engineering concentration that includes specialty classes in bioprocessing. Last year, I went on a plant tour of Bristol Myers Squibb which really got me interested in working on the manufacturing side of bioprocessing.
Or, if you are at a sporting event and find yourself sitting next to the town engineer, you could say:
(continued on page 10)
Hi, I'm Dan, I will be graduating next year with my degree in Civil Engineering from UMass Amherst. I am interested in structural engineering and am looking to gain some hands-on experience in the field. I’ve had classes in concrete design, soil mechanics and wastewater/wastewater systems. I’m also the captain of the concrete canoe team. I would love the opportunity to apply some of these principles to a real-world environment.

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

BUILDING AN EFFECTIVE LINKEDIN PROFILE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

INTERNSHIPS, CO-OPS, ACADEMIC RESEARCH

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elevant engineering experience allows you to apply academic concepts in practice and explore possible career options. In addition, the skills and knowledge acquired through experiential learning make you more marketable to companies. Reports from a variety of sources show that, compared to the average student, those who participate in these programs:

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

Other benefits of Internships and Experiential Education Programs include developing transferable skills such as:

- communication, critical thinking, teamwork, change management, information technology, leadership, self-managed learning, interpersonal diversity, ethics, social responsibility, and technical knowledge.

Internship

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

Co-op

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

Research Experience

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

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

Student Societies

In the College of Engineering there are currently 18 official student organizations with various missions including serving humanitarian causes, participating in community service and outreach initiatives, developing leadership skills, and making connections with engineering professionals, faculty and other students within the college. For more detailed information about engineering student societies, go to https://engineering.umass.edu/current-students/student-organizations.

“A Full-Time Position

The Engineering Career Center helped me grow as a student and a professional, and it was a valuable guide that helped me get the job that fits my skills and personality perfectly. The Career Center staff helped me fine tune my resume and hone my networking and interviewing skills, giving me a clear advantage while searching for jobs. They provided a strong basis from which to work, hosting many companies for information sessions and sending out job opportunities each week. The Engineering Career Center is one of the most invaluable resources available to the UMass Amherst students, and was a game changer for me as I begin my career.”

— Dan Amichetti, Bristol-Myers Squibb

Your learning agenda should target specific skills and competencies that you wish to acquire and demonstrate. Armed with the learning and employment opportunities available through internships, you are up to the challenge of establishing your learning goals and developing an employment strategy. To establish realistic goals, maintain a journal of your activities and accomplishments in order to monitor your progress. Seek regular reviews from your supervisor to assess your performance and reinforce the fact that you mean business.

6. Communicate Respectfully

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

7. Be Flexible

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

8. Be a Team Player

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

9. Get a Mentor

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

10. Have Fun!

Last but not least, enjoy learning, sharpening your skills and growing professionally and personally. Participate in work-related social functions and become an active member in your work community. Make your internship or co-op experience work for you. It can be the first link in the chain of your career.

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

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CREATING AN EFFECTIVE RESUME

The Top 10 Pitfalls in Resume Writing

1. Too long. Restrict your resume to one page.
2. Too vague. Say as much as possible with as few words as possible, avoid use of jargon.
3. Hard to read. Keep it simple with clean lines and white space.
4. Too wordy. Avoid repeating words, especially the first word in a sentence.
6. Irrelevant information. Customize each resume to each position you seek (when possible). Of course, include education and work experience, but emphasize relevant experience, skills, accomplishments and activities. Do not include marital status, age, sex, color, religion, height, weight, health, church membership, etc.
7. Obviously generic. The employer needs to feel that you are interested in the particular position within the company. Therefore, use key words from the job description in your resume and cover letter.
8. Too fancy. Avoid exotic fonts, colored paper, photographs, binders, and graphics. Electronic resumes should include appropriate industry keywords and use a font size between 10-12 points. Use italics and bold face sparingly.
9. Too static. Make your resume as dynamic as possible. Begin every statement with an action verb. Use active verbs to describe what you have accomplished in past jobs. Take advantage of your rich vocabulary and avoid repeating words, especially the first word in a section.
10. Too modest. The resume showcases your qualifications in competition with the other applicants. Put your best foot forward without misrepresentation, falsification, or arrogance.

The Three Rs of resume writing are Research, Research, Research. You must know what the prospective company does, what the position involves and whether you will be a fit, before submitting your resume. A great tool that means doing research—about the company, the position and about the type of employee the company typically hires.

Research the company. Read whatever literature the company has placed in the career library. For additional information, call the company. Ask for any literature it has placed in the career library. For additional information, call the company. Ask for any literature it has placed in the career library.

Research the position. The more you know about the position, the better able you will be to sell yourself and to target your resume to that position. If possible, interview someone who does that same job. In addition to finding out the duties, ask if there is on-the-job training, whether they value education over experience (or vice versa) and what kind of turnover the department experiences. Ask what they like about the position and the company; more important, ask what they don’t like about it.

Finally, research yourself. Your goal is not just to get a job. Your goal is to get a job that you will enjoy. After you find out all you can about the company and the position, ask yourself honestly whether this is what you really want to do and where you really want to be. The odds are overwhelming that you will not hold this position for more than two or three years, so it’s not a lifetime commitment; however, this first job will be the base of your lifetime career. You must start successfully so that future recommendations will always be positive.

The Three Rs

1. Relevant information. Customize each resume to each position you seek (when possible). Of course, include education and work experience, but emphasize relevant experience, skills, accomplishments and activities. Do not include marital status, age, sex, color, religion, height, weight, health, church membership, etc.
2. Obvious generic. The employer needs to feel that you are interested in the particular position within the company. Therefore, use key words from the job description in your resume and cover letter.
3. Static. Make your resume as dynamic as possible. Begin every statement with an action verb. Use active verbs to describe what you have accomplished in past jobs. Take advantage of your rich vocabulary and avoid repeating words, especially the first word in a section.

ACTION VERBS

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From Tobby DFS: Practical Career Advice for Scientists, by Peter S. Forkey

RESUMES—continued
RESUMES—continued

RESUME OUTLINE

NAME

EMAIL ADDRESS

PERMANENT ADDRESS

PHONE NUMBER

CURRENT ADDRESS

PHONE NUMBER

SUMMARY STATEMENT

• A summary statement is a one- or two-sentence description of the skills and qualities that you would bring to the job that would make a recruiter interested in hiring you. It is like an introduction which is supported by the details in the body of your resume. It is a good way to put keywords in the head of the reader, so that they are thinking of them as they read through your resume.

• Avoid self-serving statements such as “...a company where I will be able to advance my career.” Show your interest in the company, not what you hope the company will do for you.

EDUCATION

Institution, Location

Degree, Major, GPA, Date of (anticipated) Graduation

• Traditionally, either education or experience is the first category after Objective/Professional Summary. Which one you choose will depend on where you are in your career and the types of jobs for which you are applying.

• Check with your major department to make sure you have listed degree information correctly.

• It is up to you whether or not to list your GPA. If it is above a 3.0, it is suggested.

• You can include academic honors here or in a separate section.

• List coursework if it is unique for your major and relates to the position for which you are applying, or if you are an underclassman applying for an internship and want to include the engineering courses that you have taken thus far.

EXPERIENCE

Company, Location (mm/yy-mm/yy of total time employed by company)

Title (mm/yy-mm/yy in that position, if you have held more than one position with same company)

• List experience in reverse chronological order.

• Begin each point with an action verb of the appropriate tense.

• Begin with an overall summary of the project you did in context of the problem you were trying to solve. Then, walk through the process you took to solve the problem in a logical, systematic way, making sure that you include any instrumentation, computer software, or standardized methods that you used. What were the results you achieved?

• Quantify wherever possible—“Increased the efficiency of the process by 20%.”

• Make sure your descriptions make sense and have enough detail to be meaningful.

• Make sure to include any communication skills that you used in the project or job such as writing a technical report, giving a presentation, or working in a team.

OTHER

• Use this section to highlight any additional skills, qualification or experiences. Label this section appropriately (Global Profile, Computer Skills, Certifications, Volunteer Experience, etc.).

• Computer Skills should contain programs you are familiar with, especially those mentioned in the job description. If you are applying for technology positions and have extensive computer skills, consider placing this section between the Education and Experience sections.

• Volunteer Activities can be listed here or with your experience.

• If you held a leadership position with an organization, consider including your notable duties/accomplishments.

• If necessary, you can list your work authorization in this section.

GENERAL RESUME TIPS

• Spell check, proofread, read backwards, have someone check your resume, etc.

• Don’t include “References available on request.” This is assumed by the employer and wastes valuable space.

• In general, resumes should be kept to one page. Individuals with extensive full-time work experience or multiple degrees can extend their resume beyond the one-page limit. The danger of having a long resume is that the recruiter may not make it past your first page.

• Present your qualifications in the best possible light, but do not exaggerate or mislead. Employers will verify the information with your references and educational institutions.

• Resumes should be tailored to the type of position/industry for which you are applying.

• High school information should start to come off your resume when you enter college and be completely gone by graduation.

• Remember the guidelines for scannable resumes, such as avoid italics and underlines, don’t fold a resume that might get scanned, and use keywords where possible.

• Don’t use smaller than 10 pt. font.

We’re proud to sponsor the UMass College of Engineering Career Development & Experiential Learning Center – a valuable resource for students looking to connect with the perfect internship or full time position after graduation.

Speaking of rewarding careers, there are many exciting opportunities to explore right here at Verizon. And because better matters, you can be certain of a bright future with us.

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After years of hard work, choosing a job should be easy.

https://engineering.umass.edu/careers 17
SAMPLE SOPHOMORE RESUME

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

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

Education
University of Massachusetts Amherst Anticipated May 2019
Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering, GPA: 3.7
Dean’s List

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

Experience
Intro to Electrical & Computer Engineering Fall 2016
• Worked in a team to create hardware buzzer system for four person game show that would accept first contestant response only
• Designed circuit using D flip-flops, AND gates, switches, and LEDs
• Wrote project report including description of internal circuitry
• Constructed successful circuit and demonstrated to faculty and peers

Relevant Projects
Concrete Mix and Testing Spring 2017
• Developed concrete mix to meet compressive strength of 4,000 psi based on properties of fine and coarse aggregates including particle-size distribution, moisture content, and specific gravities
• Prepared the concrete by batching and mixing and performed compressive and splitting tensile strength tests on the cured specimens
• Detailed process and results in written lab report

Surveying & Measurements Spring 2016
• Created topographic map of local public park as part of a four member team
• Measured elevations and surfaces features using total station
• Used AutoCAD to create a topographic map from data collected
• Wrote a technical report including project details and final map

Engineers Without Borders, Kenya Fall 2015
• Traveled with UMass EWB group to help improve water quality in Kenyan village
• Constructed new spring boxes and repaired existing boxes using local tools
• Collected water samples at various sources and analyzed quality with a bacteria agar
• Educated local community on safe water storage, disinfection, and hygiene

Work Experience
• Worked with construction crew electrician, plumber and carpenters on residential renovations
• Gained hands-on experience from a wide range of projects including barn construction, support beam replacement, and kitchen remodels

Leadership
Co-captain, University of Massachusetts Intramural Soccer Fall 2016-Present
• Organize team, schedule games, reserve fields and communicate with members

Skills
AutoCAD, MATLAB, Microsoft Office Suite, Total Station, construction hand tools

Activities & Interests
Engineers Without Borders, hiking, intramural soccer, skiing, guitar

SAMPLE FRESHMAN RESUME

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

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

Education
University of Massachusetts Amherst Anticipated May 2020
Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering, GPA: 3.4
Abigail Adams Scholarship

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

Experience
Tech Connections, Sharon, MA October 2015 – May 2016
• Worked with business and consumer clients providing technical support for computer and hardware, software, and mobile devices
• Diagnosed and solved networking, device security, and backup problems
• Supported tech team that earned first place in corporate wide customer satisfaction survey

YMCA Camp, Sharon, MA Summer 2016
Camp Counselor
• Coordinated and lead the daily activities of 20 children
• Planned camp events with other camp counselors and assessed camper activities

Skills
Java, C, MATLAB, Microsoft Office Suite

Volunteer Experience
Sharon Community Food Basket Summer 2016
• Helped serve meals to over 150 low-income individuals and families
• Assisted with food intake and inventory

Affiliations & Activities
Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE)
Society of Hispanic Engineers (SHPE)
Travel, team cycling, swimming
SAMPLE JUNIOR RESUME

Brent Riff
49 Pelly Rd.
Sudbury, MA 01776
(413) 555-1234
bri@umass.edu

Permanent Address
49 Pelly Rd.
Sudbury, MA 01776

School Address
16 Montarm Rd.
Amherst, MA 01002

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

Education:
University of Massachusetts Amherst
Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering, 3.2 GPA
Anticipated May 2018

Additionally, pursuing Certificate in Material Science

Relevant Courses:

Work Experience:
Adler Controls, Sudbury, MA – Mechanical Engineering Intern
May – August 2016

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

Academic Projects
Carbon Fiber Composite Sandwich Design
Fall 2016
• Group leader for lab project in which the highest specific flexural modulus of a composite was to be attained by use of carbon fiber facing and a foam core with specific dimensional constraints.
• Tested foam core materials, contacted vendors and acquired samples of ridged PVC foam.
• Prepared specimens, conducted three-point bend test and Charpy impact test in accordance with ASTM 790D-07.
• Collected data and compiled into formal PowerPoint presentation and technical report to present to course instructor/lab.
• Final result was a composite material that was determined to have had the highest specific flexural modulus.

Rocket Prototype Modeling & Design
Fall 2014
• Group leader for engineering project in which the trajectory of a water rocket at varying initial pressures, water loads, and launch angles was mathematically modeled with MATLAB.
• Coordinated logistics of meeting times/locations, deadlines, and final presentation.
• Constructed prototype rockets and launch pad with ProEngineer.
• Physically built three rocket types and launch pad for field testing based on ProEngineer specs.
• Collected data on the varying launch distances and compared them to the MATLAB model.
• Delivered a PowerPoint presentation and submitted a technical paper to Professor, TAs, and class.

Research Experience:
Independent Study – Wind Turbines Effect on Radar Interference
Spring 2017
• Researched the effects wind turbines have on radar interference to assess and eliminate issues facing the wind industry.
• Reproduced the wind turbine effects experimentally.
• Received a grade of an “A” for the research done.

Technical Skills:
• ProEngineer, MATLAB, Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook, Instron tensile & Charpy impact testers, drill press, table saw, chop saw, bandsaw, pneumatics, CAD, and soldering.

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

SAMPLE SENIOR RESUME

Samuel T. Mitchell
33 Jodi Lane
Townsend MA, 01469
(413) 555-1234
sam@caltech.edu

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

Education:
University of Massachusetts, Amherst
Bachelor of Science in Chemical Engineering, GPA: 3.5
Concentration in Biomedical Engineering
May 2017

Additional Coursework:
Cellular and Molecular Biology, Biochemistry for Chemists, Intro to Biomedical Engineering, Bioprocessing

Engineering Experience:
Bioprocessing Lab, University of Massachusetts Amherst
January 2017 – Present
• Synthesizing, purifying and analyzing a novel protein (HPPI) with potential cancer treatment applications.
• Used PCR to engineer primers for the gene encoding the protein of interest, inserted completed gene into pet-242 inductive expression plasmid and transformed plasmid into bacterial cells via petri dish cell culture.
• Cultured the engineered cells to produce protein of interest in bioreactor, monitored batch information through growth and production phases and adjusted agitation, temperature, and pH as needed.
• Currently designing a process to purify HPPI from the fermentation broth using various forms of chromatography.
• Performed assays to determine if cells contained DNA for HPPI by PCR and gel electrophoresis. Will quantify amount and activity of protein present in the purified fermentation product.

Byers PharmaTech, Boston, MA
Engineering Experience:
Bioprocessing Co-op
August 2015 - January 2016
• Coordinated the review and updating of over 500 electronic records of the Clean In Place (CIP)/Steam In Place (SIP) systems as Engineering teams identified necessary modifications to the CIP/SIP routes.
• Created and presented a Plant Hazards Training Seminar to over 25 professionals including the site-wide First Aid/Safety Team (FAST) and Environmental Health and Safety Department (EHS).

Steam In Place Validation Engineer
May 2016 – August 2016
• Executed over 100 Steam in Place Performance Qualification tests on biopharmaceutical manufacturing equipment including Bioreactors, Liquid Filters, Chromatography skids and an Ultra-Filtration device.
• Troubleshoot failed tests, analyzed data and compiled extensive data packages that will be used by the FDA during their final review of the plant.

Leadership & Activities:
President of American Institute of Chemical Engineers (AIChE) UMass Student Chapter
April 2016 – April 2017
• Organized Executive Board and General Chapter Body of over 80 students to decide the direction of the society.
• Interacted with leadership of other school’s societies, organized a delegation to the National Student Conference.

Chem-E-Car Team – American Institute of Chemical Engineers (AIChE) Competition
2014
• Worked in team of four to build a hydrogen fuel cell powered model car to travel specified distance at set weight.
• Applied pressure-distance curve to predict travel distance based on varying pressures of hydrogen vessel.
• Produced chassis components to ensure optimal structural integrity using 3D printer.
• Earned 1st place among 40 cars in the AIChE regional competition

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

Bachelor of Science in Chemical Engineering, GPA: 3.5
Concentration in Biomedical Engineering

What Happens During the Interview?

It’s Your Turn to Ask Questions

When the recruiter asks, “Now do you have any questions?” each interview will be judged. Dr. C. Randall Powell, author of Career Planning Today, suggests some excellent strategies for dealing with this issue. He says questions should elicit positive responses from the employer. Also, the questions should bring out your interest in and knowledge of the organization.

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

The Close Counts, Too

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

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

Shake the recruiter’s hand and thank him or her for considering you. Refrain from saying things aloud that you’ve been repeating in your mind. You can use the time to relax. It gets easier later. It may mean counting to ten slowly or wiping your hands on a handkerchief to keep them dry.

How’s Your Small Talk Vocabulary?

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

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

The Recruiter Has the Floor

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

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

Evaluations Made by Recruiters

The employer will be observing and evaluating you during the interview. Erwin S. Stanton, author of Successful Personnel Recruitment and Selecting, writes that evaluations made by the employer during the interview include:

1. How mentally alert and responsive is the job candidate?
2. Is the applicant able to draw proper inferences and conclusions on the course of the interview?
3. Does the applicant demonstrate a degree of intellectual depth when communicating, or is his/her knowledge of the subject matter non-existent or elementary?
4. Has the candidate used good judgment and common sense regarding life planning up to this point?
5. What is the applicant’s capacity for problem-solving activities?
6. Is the candidate able to positively affect the outcome of the interview? Would you hire this person to work for you?

Prep yourself to talk about your major accomplishments—they will more likely be believed.

4. Has the candidate used good judgment and common sense in life planning up to this point?

5. What is the applicant’s capacity for problem-solving activities?

6. Is the candidate able to positively affect the outcome of the interview? Would you hire this person to work for you?

7. How well does the candidate respond to stress and pressure?

In Summary

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

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

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

Written by Rosanne R. Bansen, Career Services, New Mexico State University

https://engineering.umass.edu/careers

INTERVIEWING

The interviewing process can be scary if you don’t know what to expect. All interviews fit a general pattern. While the underlying structure is the same, there are three common characteristics: the beginning, middle and conclusion.

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

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

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

It Starts Before You Even Say Hello

The typical interview starts as soon as you even get into the inner sanctum. The recruiter begins to evaluate you the minute you are identified. You are expected to shake the recruiter’s hand upon being introduced. Don’t be afraid to do it. It is a good idea to arrive at least 15 minutes early.

Research the company, product lines and competitors.

Research will provide information to help you decide whether you’re interested in the company and important data to refer to during the interview.

Keep an interview journal.

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

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

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

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

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

3. Repeat your key strengths three times. It’s essential that you comfortably and confidently communicate on an informal basis. This means you must do more than smile and nod.

4. Put yourself on their team.

Ally yourself with the prospective employer by using the employer’s name and products or services. For example, “As a member of the...”

5. Research will help you in this area.

6. Put yourself in and knowledge of the organization.

7. Consider the following factors:

   • Impressions made during the interview
   • Recommendations
   • Acceptance
   • Work record
   • Personality
   • Communication skills
   • Loyalty
   • Initiative

8. Impressions made during the interview.

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

10. Maintain a conversational flow.

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   • Loyalty
   • Initiative

8. Impressions made during the interview.

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

10. Maintain a conversational flow.
Tell me about a time when you were on a team, and  
one of the members wasn’t carrying his or her weight.  
What did you do?  
What did you learn?  
What did you feel?  
What was the result?  
You will notice an absence of such questions as, “Tell me  
about your strengths and weaknesses.”

How to Prepare for a Behavioral Interview

1. Recall recent situations that show favorable behaviors or actions, either those involving coursework, work experience, leadership, teamwork,  
projective, creative, planning and customer service.  
2. Prepare short descriptions of each situation; be ready to give details if asked.  
3. Be sure each story has a beginning, a middle and an end; i.e., be ready to describe the situation, your action and the outcome or result.  
4. Be sure the outcome or result reflects positively on you (even if the result itself was not favorable).  
5. Don’t embellish or omit any part of the story.  
6. The interviewer will find out if your story is built on a weak foundation.  
7. Don’t generalize about several events; give a detailed accounting of one event.  
8. A possible response to the question, “Tell me about a time when you were on a team and a member wasn’t pulling his or her weight” might go as follows: “I had been assigned to a team to build a computer. One of our team members wasn’t showing up for our lab sessions or doing his assignments. I finally met with him in private, explained the frustration to the rest of the team and asked if there was anything I could do to help. He told me he was preoccupied with another class that he wasn’t passing, so I found someone else to help him with the other course. He was only able to spend more time on our project, but he was also grateful that I found someone to replace me. We finished our project on time and got a ‘B’ on it.”  
9. The interviewer might then probe: “How did you feel when you confronted this person? What was the nature of the project?” “What was his responsibility as a team member?” “What was your role?” “At what point did you take it upon yourself to confront him?” You can see it is important that you not make up or “shade” information and lie to the interviewer.  
10. Don’t forget the Basics

- Instead of feeling anxious or threatened by the prospect of a behavioral interview, remember the essential difference between the traditional interview and the behavioral interview. The traditional interviewer may allow you to provide examples of what you might or might not have done in a particular situation, whereas the behavioral interviewer is looking for past actions only. It will always be important to put your best foot forward, but you will be asked to describe a situation where you handled a problem or conflict, not simply your thoughts about how you would handle it.  
- What did you do to follow-up on the interview with appropriate attire, good grooming, a firm handshake and direct eye contact. There is no substitute for promptness, courtesy, preparation, enthusiasm and a positive attitude.

A BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEW?

While on-campus screening interviews are important, on-site visits are where jobs are won or lost. After an on-campus interview, student candidates are usually invited to visit the employer’s facility. Work with the employer to schedule the on-site visit at a mutually convenient time. Expect the employer to try to arrange site visits for several candidates to take place at the same time, so there may not be much flexibility… but you’ll never know if the employer is flexible unless you ask.  
1. An invitation to an on-site interview is NOT a guarantee of a job offer. It is a chance to examine whether either of you is a good match for the job and for the organization.  
2. If invited to an on-site interview, respond promptly if you are sincerely interested in this employer. Decline politely if you are not. Never go on an on-site interview for the sake of the trip. Document the name and phone number of the person coordinating your trip, verify who will be handling trip expenses. Most medium- and large-size companies (as well as many smaller ones) will pay your expenses, but others will not. This is very important, because expenses are handled in various ways:  
3. The employer may handle all expenses and travel arrangements;  
4. You handle your expenses and arrangements (the employer may assist with this), and the employer will reimburse you later;  
5. The employer may offer an on-site interview, but will not pay for your travel.  
6. Know yourself and the type of job you are seeking with this employer, especially if you are in your interview session for the first time; “I am willing to consider any job you have.”  
7. Thoroughly research the potential employer. Read annual reports, newspaper articles, trade journals, etc. Many companies have websites where you can read their mission statements, find out about locations, see who is who on the executive level, and view corporate photos. Don’t limit your research only to company-controlled information. The Internet can be a valuable investigative tool. You may uncover key information that may influence—positively or negatively—your decision to pursue employment with a given organization.  
8. Bring extra copies of your resume; copies of any coursework you may have forwarded to the employer; names, addresses, phone numbers and email addresses of your references; an updated college transcript; business cards as a writing sample, a notebook and blue and/or blue pen for filling out forms and applications; and names and addresses of past employers.  
9. Many employers have a set salary range for entry-level positions and others are more negotiable. Though salary shouldn’t be brought up until an offer is extended, it is wise to know your worth in advance. In as much as you are a potential employer, you also represent a valuable skills-set product. You should know what kind of product you have created, its worth and whether or not you are willing to sell.  
10. Contact your campus career center to obtain more information on salaries.

The Site Visit/Interview: One Step Closer

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

Literature Cited

Rosanne R. Bensley, Career Services, New Mexico State University.
INTERVIEWING—continued

FREQUENTLY ASKED ENGINEERING INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Tell me about yourself?
2. What do you know about this company?
3. Why do you want to work here?
4. Why should I hire you?
5. What is your greatest strength/weakness?
6. Tell me about a conflict you had with another person and how you dealt with it.
7. Tell me about the most challenging engineering project that you have been involved with during past year.
8. Describe the most significant written technical report or presentation that you had to complete.
9. What is your most/least favorite class and why?
10. Think of a specific engineering project when you answer this question. What could you have done to be more successful in achieving your goal?
11. Describe a time when you confronted a problem that really tested your engineering know-how.
12. What is your overall career objective? Where do you see in 5-10 years?
13. In what ways is a career with your company better than one with your competitors?
14. Is this a new position or am I replacing someone?
15. What is the largest single problem facing your staff and how do you plan to get off to a jackrabbit start?
16. Give me an example of a time when you had to teach a skill to other engineers.
17. Some of the best-engineered ideas are born out of an individual’s ability to challenge others’ ways of thinking. Tell me about a time when you were successful in doing this.
18. If I offer you a position as an engineer with us, how do you plan to get off to a jackrabbit start?
19. Give me an example of something that you have learned from a mistake that you made on a project or at an internship.
20. Tell me about a time when a project team effort that you were involved in failed.
21. Describe a time when you had to interact with a variety of people.
22. What resources do you use when you run into technical problems?
23. Why did you choose engineering and your specific major?
24. Give me two examples of technical decisions that you had to make in a class project or at an internship.
25. In the field of engineering, priorities often change quickly. Give yourself a simple of a time when that happened. How did you handle it?
26. What personal characteristics do you feel are necessary to be a successful engineer?
27. What single technical skill or ability is your best asset?
28. Tell me about a time when you surpassed all expectations by going “above and beyond” in a class project or at an internship.
29. How do you feel about the workload in the engineering department at school or in an internship?

QUESTIONS TO ASK EMPLOYERS

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

ADVICE FROM THE EXPERTS

INTERVIEWING TIPS FROM ON-CAMPUS RECRUITERS

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

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

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

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

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

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

Kate Fay, ME ’12, Equipment Engineer, Verizon
DRESSING FOR THE INTERVIEW

DEALING WITH REJECTION IN THE JOB SEARCH

BUSINESS ETIQUETTE BLUNDERS AND HOW TO FIX THEM

INTERVIEWING—continued

Depending upon your fashion style, whether it is the latest trends for the chic scene or merely college senior casual, a job interview may be cause for some drastic wardrobe augmentation. For your interviews, some of your individualism might have to be curbed. In most business and technical job interviews, when it comes to your appearance, conservatism and conformity are in order.

While many companies have adopted the “office casual” dress code, don’t try to set new standards in the interview. When in doubt, it is better to be too conservative than to be too flashy. For men and women, a suit is the best bet. Here are some guidelines:

**MEN**
- A two-piece suit will suffice in most instances. Solid colors and tighter-woven fabrics are safer than bold prints or patterns.
- Bright ties bring focus to the face, but a simple pattern and makeup help to present a professional look.
- Keep hemlines and necklines conservative.

**WOMEN**
- A suit with a knee-length skirt or dress pants and a tailored blouse is most appropriate.
- Although even the most conservative organizations allow more feminine Looks these days, accessories should be kept simple. Basic pumps and modest jewelry and makeup help to present a professional look.
- Conservative makeup
- Neatly trimmed hair
- Solid colors and tighter-woven fabrics are safer than bold prints or patterns.

A Final Checklist
- And, of course, your appearance is only as good as your grooming. Create a final checklist to review before you go on an interview:
  - Neatly combed hair
  - Conservative makeup
  - Shoes polished
  - No missing buttons, crooked ties or lint

You want your experience and qualifications to shine. Your appearance should enhance your presentation, not overwhelm it.

A Final Checklist (Continued)
- For men, if you’d wear khakis and a polo shirt on the job, wear a suit with a knee-length skirt or dress pants and a blazer. Women should follow a similar “step up” plan. (Scope out company dress codes during the pipeline to the future. We confirm that we couldn’t get a job offer and to show how you can work together to solve them.

Eight Guidelines to Ward Off Rejection

1. Depersonalize the interview.
   - Sometimes, we begin to dread the BIG NO so much that we don’t stop pursuing additional interviews, thereby shutting off our ability to land a job. Employers may get as many as 500 resumes for one job opening. It’s not only rude, but every industry has a grapevine, and word of flakiness gets around. Failing to show for an on-campus interview can have even more severe consequences, so make sure you cancel the interview and to show how you can work together to solve them.

2. Sell your skills, not your self.
   - Make sure you have a greeting on your voicemail—some employers won’t leave a message if they aren’t sure they’ve reached the right party. And if your phone number is blocked, they can’t call you back if you don’t leave a message. “I’ve called candidates and gotten obnoxious voicemail messages, ‘You know who this is? You know what to do,’ she says. ‘That’s not the way to win over a recruiter.”

3. Don’t leave a message.
   - Make sure you have an email account that your interviewer to entertain you, or do your job for you as you’re about to dine with a mastodon on your plate, you won’t be invited to dine with that interviewer to entertain you, or do your job for you as you’re about to dine with a mastodon on your plate, you won’t be invited to dine with

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5. Don’t get mad at the system.
   - Does anything less plausible exist than hunting for a job? Sometimes, the small things you do in the world other than make the world address you. The easiest thing is to conform, to do what 400,000 other people are doing. When you work to play bridge or poker or drive a car, do you complain about the rules?

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

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

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

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

INTERVIEWING—continued

Getting a handle on business etiquette is even more important in this digital age, when the HR process is in flux and the rules aren’t always clear. Here are the top ten most common etiquette complaints from recruiters, and ways you can avoid those mistakes and be an interview pro.

No Show = No Job
- This should go without saying, but actually showing up on an interview is necessary to lock down a job offer. Yet, too many candidates cancel or fail to show up on their own. One of the easiest ways to make a good impression is to arrive for interviews 10-15 minutes early, so you have plenty of time to get settled and perhaps check your appearance one last time.

If something pressing does come up, immediately call to cancel or reschedule. Decided you don’t want the job after all? Don’t just disappear. It’s not only rude, but every industry has a grapevine, and word of flakiness gets around. Failing to show for an on-campus interview can have even more severe consequences, so make sure you cancel the interview and to show how you can work together to solve them.

Too Negative
- “Keep your emotional baggage outside the interview door,” says Peggy Klein, author of HR/ART: The Art of Treating Your Own How Without Blushing It. We all have days when the alarm doesn’t go off, the weather is a mess, and there’s no parking spot. Don’t whine. Be enthusiastic, eager, flexible, and most of all—likeable. “Do not expect the interviewer to entertain you, or do your job for you by drawing out your interview,” she adds.

Thankless
- Sending a thank-you note is an important way to demonstrate gratitude. Rules don’t always apply, but courtesy is considered and specific. “An email is fine, but make sure it shows consideration and respect,” says Yate. “You want them to treat you as they would expect someone to treat you.”

And if your phone number is blocked, they can’t call you back if you don’t leave a message. “I’ve called candidates and gotten obnoxious voicemail messages, ‘You know who this is? You know what to do,’ she says. ‘That’s not the way to win over a recruiter.”

Poor Profile
- You can’t make it to inform that job is a bad idea. It was stuck. He had to go to the tattoo parlor a few miles away and get a makeover ASAP. She has her Facebook profile set to private, and directs business contacts on an applicant’s social media profile. “You can try to make that info private, but somehow, someway, there’s a way to get it,” Downs says. She then her Facebook profile to her LinkedIn profile. “You don’t post a picture of yourself in a bikini—even if you look good!”

Tattoos and Piercings
- Tattoo and piercing blunders that are not seen in nature, or dreadlocks may turn off conservative employers. If your personal style doesn’t go well over in interviews, cover up (easy with some tattoos) or get a makeover ASAP. She has her Facebook profile set to private, and directs business contacts on an applicant’s social media profile. “You can try to make that info private, but somehow, someway, there’s a way to get it,” Downs says. She then her Facebook profile to her LinkedIn profile. “You don’t post a picture of yourself in a bikini—even if you look good!”

What Dress Code?
- Dressing appropriately for an interview is a balancing act. One level of formality above what people normally wear on the job is just right. Some men, if you’re not wearing a tie (you’re doing your job on the job, wear a suit with a knee-length skirt or dress pants and a blazer). The interviewer to entertain you, or do your job for you as you’re about to dine with

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Written by Jebra Turner, a former human resources manager, who writes about career issues, and other business topics. She lives in Portland, Ore., and can be reached at www.jebra.com.
Uses and Formats
Job search letters—or cover letters, as they are known generically—are a vital part of your search for a professional position. The different types of letters are an opportunity for you to prove your communication and organizational skills to prospective employers.

Follow several basic principles when composing the letters:

- Know your audience and purpose
- Use an active voice, not passive
- Be professional—proofread, check for spelling, grammar, and a professional tone

Uses/types of job search letters:

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

Formats include:

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

While descriptions and samples follow, remember these tips:

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

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

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

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

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

Sincerely,

Your Name

Sincerely,

Your Name

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

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

Thank-You Notes

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

Dear Ms. Jones:

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

Sincerely,

John Doe

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

Tips

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

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

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

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

Cover Letter Format

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

Date

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

Dear Mr./Ms. Last Name:

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

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

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

Sincerely,

Your Signature

Your Name Typed

QUALITIES DESIRED IN NEW COLLEGE GRADUATES

By Businesses, Industries and Government Agencies

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

Adapts Textbook Learning to the Working World
- Quick learner
- Asks questions
- Analytical; independent thinker
- Willing to continue education and growth
- Committed to excellence

Open-minded, willing to try new things

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

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

Leadership Skills
- Organizational skills and attention to detail
- Accepts and handles responsibilities

Action-oriented and results-driven
- Loyal to employers
- Customer-focused
- Team-spirited; understands group dynamics
- Always willing to help others
- Mature, poised and personable
- Diversity aware; treats others with respect and dignity

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


JOB SEARCH RESOURCES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESOURCE</th>
<th>INFO</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HANDSHAKE</td>
<td>umass.joinhandshake.com Search for jobs, internships, co-ops, and recruiting events such as career fairs and info sessions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ON-CAMPUS RECRUITING</td>
<td>One of the primary ways companies recruit for technical positions. This includes Career Fairs, Networking events and company-sponsored information sessions, tech talks, workshops and resume drop tabling. Check the Engineering Career Center events calendar at <a href="http://engineering.umass.edu/current-students/career-development/events">http://engineering.umass.edu/current-students/career-development/events</a>.</td>
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<tr>
<td>YOUR UMASS EMAIL</td>
<td>UMass Engineering Career Center sends weekly emails with job, internship, co-op and research opportunities.</td>
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<td>UMASS CAREERCONNECT</td>
<td>UMass Career Services searchable online job board Go to <a href="http://www.umass.edu/careers">http://www.umass.edu/careers</a> then CLICK ON CAREERCONNECT.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCIAL MEDIA</td>
<td>LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter. Follow your favorite companies and check for job openings. Complete your LinkedIn profile and highlight your technical skills/experience and display an appropriate photo. Perform a search on your name to review your internet presence, clean up results if necessary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NETWORKING</td>
<td>Talk to everyone you know to develop contacts; ask for information on jobs/companies/industries and circulate your resume. You may learn of unadvertised openings or get a courtesy interview.</td>
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<tr>
<td>OCCUPATIONAL INFORMATION</td>
<td>The O*NET is the nation’s primary source of occupational information, containing information on hundreds of jobs. The database provides the basis for the Career Exploration Tools that describe occupations in terms of the skills and knowledge required, typical work settings, and average salaries.</td>
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<tr>
<td>NETWORK (O*NET)</td>
<td><a href="https://www.onetonline.org">https://www.onetonline.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>FEDERAL JOBS</td>
<td>Engineering undergraduates can search for Federally sponsored opportunities including research and non-research based internships, scholarships, fellowships, etc. across many U.S. government organizations.</td>
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<td><a href="http://stemundergrads.science.gov">http://stemundergrads.science.gov</a></td>
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<td>INTERNATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES</td>
<td><a href="http://www.umass.edu/careers/jobsearch/workingabroad">http://www.umass.edu/careers/jobsearch/workingabroad</a> Explore a variety of resources for international job opportunities as well as resources for international student looking to work in the U.S.</td>
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/ From advanced safety systems for automated driving to hybrid and electric vehicle components—we’re crafting the core technologies of modern mobility. We want to lead society to a new and better place by drawing on the strengths of individual inventors who are joining together to become an unstoppable force for global good. /

Explore joining the DENSO team today. Apply at www.densocareers.com.
CHOOSING BETWEEN JOB OFFERS

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First question many of your friends will ask when you receive a job offer is “What’s the pay?” For many college graduates this consideration is near the top of the list, which is not surprising.

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

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

FACTOR IN BENEFITS

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

WHO’S THE BOSS?

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

CORPORATE CULTURE

There are three aspects to a work environment: 1) the physical workspace, 2) the “corporate culture” of the employer, and 3) fellow co-workers. Don’t underestimate the importance of a good workplace. If you are a private person, you probably will not be able to do your best work in a cluster of cubicles. If you are an extrovert, you won’t be happy shut in in an office for hours on end. Corporate culture encompasses the attitudes, experiences, beliefs and values of an organization. What’s the hierarchy of the organization? Is there a dress code? Is overtime expected? Do his values contribute to the type of environment and interest. It always pays to be polite in your correspondence. You never know what you’ll encounter when you take the job and it might just take you back to an employer you initially rejected.

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

ACCEPTING A JOB OFFER

When you accept an offer for an internship or full-time position, with the UMass College of Engineering Career Center and the employer are expected that you are acting in good faith and will honor that commitment. Accepting an offer after receiving a counter offer is considered a breach of contract and may result in disciplinary action. Once you accept the offer, you must, at least, be able to work well with them professionally. You may not be able to get a good job offer from another company or correct mistakes or boss during the interview process. But if you do develop strong feelings one way or the other, be sure to take them into consideration when making your final decision.

LIKE WHAT YOU DO

Students tend to overemphasize things like health insurance, vacation time and retirement savings. But employers are constantly coming up with more and more creative ways to compensate their workers, from health club memberships to flextime. The value of a benefits plan depends on your own plans and needs.

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

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

TIME IS ON YOUR SIDE

It’s unethical to renegotiate an offer. If you accept an offer, you should stop your job search and cancel any interviews or discussions with employers that are actively considering you for a job. Employers expect and value this professional behavior, and it allows them to engage with other students to fill the position. If you have any questions or need help in evaluating an offer or making your decision, please contact the Engineering Career Center, we are happy to help!

THE COST OF LIVING INDEX

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

THE JOB SEARCH—continued

UMass Amherst College of Engineering Career Development and Experiential Learning Center

https://engineering.umass.edu/careers

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FEDERAL JOBS: WORKING FOR UNCLE SAM

So you want to work for the federal government? You are not alone. Uncle Sam employs approximately 2.1 million civilian workers worldwide. Federal employees receive a generous benefits package, and as of 2015 they earned an average salary of $83,500. In the United States, the federal government offers a variety of career opportunities unparalleled in the private sector. Federal employees work with (and on behalf of) the American people. They create policy, programs and services that impact the health, safety and welfare of millions of people worldwide. But with these benefits come bureaucracy. If you do not like working within a system and following a defined chain of command, a federal job might not be for you. This bureaucracy is evident in the hiring process as well. Federal agencies follow strict hiring procedures, and applicants who do not conform to these procedures may be disqualified. Typically, the federal hiring process can stretch on for months. In fact, many career professionals recommend that students applying for federal jobs begin the process at least two semesters before their graduation date.

Types of Federal Jobs

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

Hiring managers for excepted service agencies are not required to follow the same hiring procedures or pick from a pool of candidates who have been rated on a points system. Instead, these agencies set their own qualifications requirements, as occurs in private industry. However, both competitive service and excepted service positions must be filled in keeping with civil service laws passed by Congress. Job requirements, educational requirements, necessary experience, required tests and even a description of how applicants are evaluated.

Most importantly, all federal job postings include a section titled “How to Apply.” Instead of letting this avalanche of information overwhelm you, use it as a resource to help you put together the best application possible. Paying particular attention to the “How to Apply” section helps applicants to present themselves in the best possible light. Most federal agencies require that applicants carefully read the “How to Apply” section before applying. Furthermore, some agencies may require that you submit additional forms for application. Additional information about the employment process and related topics can be found through your career center and on the Internet.

Searching for Federal Jobs

Students apply for federal jobs like private industry by allowing applicants to contact the agency directly for job information and applications. However, most of these positions are not accessible through USAJOBS. All competitive service positions must be posted on the USAJOBS site, and although agencies are not required to post the positions they provide to USAJOBS, many do. Registered visitors to USAJOBS can create and post up to five resumes, which can be searched by all agencies. In addition, job applicants can create as many as ten “search agents,” which search for job openings using certain criteria (such as location, job type, agency, salary requirements), and email these postings directly to applicants. Applicants can also search for jobs directly using the “search jobs” button on the USAJOBS homepage.

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

How to Apply

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

Most importantly, all federal job postings include a section titled “How to Apply.” Instead of letting this avalanche of information overwhelm you, use it as a resource to help you put together the best application possible. Paying particular attention to the “How to Apply” section helps applicants to present themselves in the best possible light. Most federal agencies require that applicants carefully read the “How to Apply” section before applying. Furthermore, some agencies may require that you submit additional forms for application. Additional information about the employment process and related topics can be found through your career center and on the Internet.

OPM and USAJOBS

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

Written by Chris Entrom, a freelance writer from Nashville, Ind.
**Graduate School**

**Is Graduate School Right for You?**

At some point in your college career, you must decide what you would like to do after graduation—and that decision includes whether to attend graduate school. If you’re trying to determine whether graduate school is right for you, here are some pointers to help you make an enlightened decision.

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

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

2. Is it better to work first or attend graduate school immediately after I complete my undergraduate degree?
   - Work first if...
     - you would like to get some real-world experience before investing thousands of dollars in a graduate degree.
     - you cannot afford to go to graduate school now, and you haven’t applied for any scholarships, grants, fellowships and assistantships, which could pay for a great deal of your education.

   Go to graduate school now if...
     - you are absolutely sure you want to be a college professor, doctor, lawyer, etc., and need a graduate degree to pursue your dream job.
     - you have been awarded grants, fellowships, scholarships or assistantships that will pay for your education.
     - you’re convinced that once you start earning real money, you won’t be able to return to the lifestyle of a “pack with individual departments to make sure you know how they handle funding.

   • Student Loans: Even if you’ve taken out loans in the past, another $50,000 - $75,000 may be a sound investment in your graduate education.

   • Fellowships/Scholarships: A free education is always the best option. The catch is you need a high GPA, good GRE/GMAT/LSAT/MCAT scores and the commitment to search out every possible source of funding.

   • Teaching/Research Assistantships: Many assistantships include tuition waivers plus a monthly stipend. It’s a great way to get paid for earning an education.

   • Employer Sponsorship: Did you know that some companies actually pay you to continue your graduate education? The catch is they usually expect you to commit to working for them after you complete your degree so they can recoup their investment.

4. What are the pros and cons of going to graduate school full-time vs. part-time?
   - Benefits of attending graduate school full-time:
     - you’ll be able to complete your degree sooner.
     - you can totally commit your intellectual, physical and emotional energy to your education.
     - ideal if you want to make a dramatic career change.

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

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

Written by Roslyn J. Bradford.

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**Guidelines for Writing Your Personal Statement**

**Step 1: Brainstorming**

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

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

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

2. How has your college experience influenced your decision to pursue graduate study in your field?
   - Think about: College courses, professors, research, special programs, student organizations, and community work.

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

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

**Step 2: Writing Your Personal Statement**

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

**Suggested Outline**

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

**Paragraph 1** A personal background or story

**Paragraph 2** Your academic interests and achievements

**Paragraph 3** Your relevant work and/or research experiences

**Paragraph 4** Your career interests

**Paragraph 5** Why you are interested in this particular school

**Paragraph 6** The qualities you will bring to this school

**References**

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


**Personal Statement Critiques**

Contact your campus career office and make an appointment with a career counselor to have your personal statement critiqued. A professor or the counselor should review it as well. Having feedback from professionals with different points of view can only make for a stronger personal statement overall.

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

https://engineering.umass.edu/careers
Let’s focus on understanding the main points of the letter of recommendation: it should be written by someone who knows you well and has observed your performance and personal qualities. The letter should include your achievements, skills, work ethic, talents, and future capacities, as these are critical for the selection process. It’s also important to provide a one-page summary of your employment you desire or other detailed information related to your current resume, transcript, job descriptions for the type of work you’ve done, and how you’ve contributed to your field.

**Selecting People to Serve as References**

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

**Try to Meet Face to Face**

- **Never assume someone will want the responsibility to serve as your reference.** Make an appointment to discuss your career goals and purpose of the letter. Determine if the person would want the responsibility of serving as your reference, which involves not only writing a letter supporting your skills, but also handling any phone inquiries and responding to other questions which may be posed by a selection committee. Persons who serve as a reference have responsibilities that go beyond the words they put on paper. They should feel well they know how much they want to assist you in reaching your goals. You have come too far to let someone jeopardize your future.
- **A personal meeting is always best because you can observe your potential reference’s body language to see how interested he/she is in assisting you.** A slow response to a question or a neutral facial expression may be this person’s way of trying to show you that he/she doesn’t feel comfortable serving as your reference. Trust your instincts. If you don’t feel that you want to pursue this person as a reference you are not required to inform them of your decision. At any rate, always thank the person and end the meeting on a positive note.

**Help Them Help You**

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

**What’s the Magic Number?**

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

**Maintain Professional Courtesy**

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

- **Maintaining a good list of references is part of any professional’s success.** Continue to nurture valuable relationships with people who will want to do whatever they can to aid in your success. Your personal success is based on surrounding yourself with positive people who all believe in you. No one makes it alone; we all need a little help from our friends. "Written by Roseanne R. Bensley, Career Services, New Mexico State University."