## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Our Mission</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic &amp; Career Advising Services: Events &amp; Services</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get Started on Tomorrow...Today!</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Exploration Strategy</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exploring Majors and Careers</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill Building</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job and Internship Search</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Networking</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Résumé And Cover Letters</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewing and Job Offers</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate School</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Our Mission

Understanding that career development is a lifelong process of exploration and decision making, the Center for Academic, Career and Student Success seeks to provide services to all undergraduate and graduate students to become leaders in the job market and the community. These will be fulfilled by:

Goal 1. Offering individual career counseling, career exploration, interest and personality assessments and the resources to help students select their major or career;

Goal 2. Advising students on graduate school, understanding that their academic careers will lead to the pursuit of graduate programs;

Goal 3. Facilitating workshops and events designed to increase students understanding of career fields, and coaching them in acquiring job search strategies, résumé and interview preparation;

Goal 4. Providing students access to jobs, internships, and volunteer opportunities to define, develop and realize their career potential.

Career Development is committed to the professional success of all students.
Personalized Career Assessment - FOCUS is an online tool which helps you identify your key skills, interests, values, and personality traits; a crucial first step in planning your career. FOCUS is quick, interactive, fun, and provides a wealth of useful information.

Access it at csumb.edu/career/focus

Workshops – Learn expert tips and strategies on writing a dazzling résumé, acing your upcoming interview, putting together a successful graduate school application, and other timely career topics.

Find out about upcoming workshops at csumb.edu/career/workshops-request

OtterJobs – Your first stop for on and off-campus jobs and internships is this online database.

Review the guide, log-in, and start your search at csumb.edu/career/otter-jobs

Job Fairs – Each semester you have an opportunity to meet face-to-face with employers who are actively recruiting. Whether you are looking for a full-time, part-time, or internship position; Fairs are an exceptional opportunity to gain experience in networking and promoting yourself.

Find information on upcoming Career Development Events at csumb.edu/career

One-On-One Advising – We are here to help you:

- Clarify your major and career interests
- Create a polished résumé
- Prepare for a successful interview
- Conduct an effective job search
- Navigate the graduate school application process
- To make an appointment, call 831-582-3845
# Get Started on Tomorrow...Today!

## 4-Year Career Development Plan: Preparing for YOUR Professional Career

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Freshman Year</th>
<th>Sophomore Year</th>
<th>Junior Year</th>
<th>Senior Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ASSESS</strong></td>
<td><strong>EXPLORE</strong></td>
<td><strong>DEVELOP</strong></td>
<td><strong>LAUNCH</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Take FOCUS assessment: csumb.edu/career/focus</td>
<td>1. Become an active leader in a student organization &amp; in the classroom</td>
<td>1. Do an internship, part-time job, or project related to your field</td>
<td>1. Join a professional organization, set-up a LinkedIn profile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Meet with a career advisor to make a plan</td>
<td>2. Meet with a career counselor to update résumé &amp; learn about informational interviews</td>
<td>2. Develop your network: classmates, family, friends, faculty, alumni, &amp; employers</td>
<td>2. Apply to graduate school, &amp; take examinations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Study and discuss major options, make an initial selection</td>
<td>3. Conduct informational interviews with working professionals</td>
<td>3. “Professionalize” your online profile, voicemail, email, wardrobe</td>
<td>3. Meet with a career counselor to finalize your résumé, cover letter, personal statement and interviewing techniques</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Check for on campus or off campus jobs at csumb.edu/career/otter-jobs</td>
<td>5. Attend an Etiquette Dinner</td>
<td>5. Start researching graduate schools</td>
<td>5. Attend a Professional Networking Event</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TO DO EVERY SEMESTER:** Meet with a career advisor, attend career fairs & 2-3 workshops.
Career Exploration Strategy

**How do I choose a major?**

Choosing the right major for you is a complex process. We recommend that you study a field that you enjoy and find stimulating, as then you are more likely to stay motivated and do well academically. You should consider how your personality, skills, interests, and values factor into a major and subsequent career. Start by taking the FOCUS assessment (csumb.edu/career/focus) and talking about it with a career advisor.

**Does choosing a major mean I am locked into that specific field for the rest of my life?**

Not at all. In fact, most college graduates are successfully employed in fields unrelated to their major. You can expect to hold different jobs as your working life unfolds; the current average is 7-10 jobs. From a career perspective it is critical to have a broad set of skills to make you appealing to multiple employers. Your CSUMB education will equip you with a foundation for those skills.

**To get a stable job, shouldn't I choose a major in a field that is expected to grow – like computer science?**

This idea sounds good at first, but if you don’t have the passion for computer science you may struggle to complete your degree, and finishing your degree is the goal at this point. We often see news stories by experts claiming a certain college major will lead to “hot job” or the best-paying industries. But there are no guarantees. For you to get the most of your education you need to choose the right major for YOU, and only you can decide what that is.

**My cousin is happy and successful in his job, I’m thinking I want to work for that company too.**

Good for your cousin! But remember every individual – including your family and friends – is unique. People will advise you to follow in their footsteps because it worked out for them, but you need to figure out your own path. There is no shortcut. You have to carefully consider who you are and what you want out of your education and career.

**What else can I do to figure out the right major and career for me?**

- Read through the rest of this Career Guide
- Review available majors and course pathways at csumb.edu/academics
- Talk to faculty about their areas of expertise
- Talk to friends and classmates about their classes

**I’m still feeling uncertain about my major, what should I do?**

Don’t worry, you are not alone…and we’re here to help. Check out the FOCUS assessment and then call 831-582-3845 to set-up an appointment with a career advisor.
We take our research regarding the world of work seriously. Every year, the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) surveys a large variety of employers across the country. The big question they want to know the answer to is:

**What skills are you looking for in recent college graduates?**

If you want to be successfully employed, and we know you do, this is a crucial question to consider. Year after year, the same skills show up on this NACE survey. Take a look at the top 5 most-desired workplace skills (and how you can develop them).

**#1 Communication Skills**

Many job announcements indicate that you need to have “Communication Skills.” What does this really mean? Employers need to know you can convey an idea clearly and concisely, persuade others to see things from your point of view, and speak convincingly to a group.

What’s more, your future boss expects you to do all of the above in written format as well! Your classes at CSUMB give you great opportunities to sharpen your communication skills. Consider some of these activities as well:

- Practice speaking in front of a group
- Engage in debates
- Take a job in customer service
- Seek feedback on your written work
- Get writing help at ASAP
- Keep a journal or blog

**#2 Strong Work Ethic**

Work ethic is always important, especially when the job market is tight and there are other qualified, hardworking people who would be glad to have your job. Here are some aspects of a solid work ethic:

- Show up to work & meetings on time; get back to work promptly after breaks
- Know your priorities and see them through to completion
- Volunteer for assignments, meet your commitments
- Learn new skills, systems, & procedures; step-up to revise or update outdated material
- Always be thinking about how to make yourself indispensable to your employer

**#3 Teamwork Skills**

Why does almost every class you take at CSUMB require you to do group projects? Because we want you to leave this school with strong teamwork skills. Wherever you end up working, you will be doing at least some work with a team and employers need to know you can be a productive workgroup member. A group’s finished product is important, but how you contribute to the group’s success is also important. Consider:

- Do you naturally take up a leadership role? If so, what kind of group leader are you?
- How do you contribute to brainstorming ideas, solving problems, creating timelines?
- If someone is not carrying their load, how do you address that?
- Can you explain the advantages of working in a group vs. working alone?
- Do you have a compelling story of when you worked in a successful group?
#4 Flexibility and Adaptability

Today’s workplaces are changing and evolving rapidly. “Business as usual” has been replaced by continuous overlapping changes. How do you handle changes in your life? How can you demonstrate you are an adaptable worker? Here are some examples:

- Consider issues from multiple perspectives. Strike a balance between what’s good for you and what’s good for others.
- Become a good brainstormer. Practice generating ideas – and encouraging others to do so – without immediately judging their merit.
- Think positively about the future and its possibilities, while maintaining a realistic approach.
- Don’t be defensive; be willing to give up what you are familiar with to try something new.
- Push yourself out of your comfort zone; strive to learn new technical and interpersonal skills.

#5 Problem Solving Skills

- Employers want to know that you can systematically analyze and solve problems. You need to demonstrate that you can handle complex assignments on your own, without being told what to do step-by-step.
- Think of several problem situations you have successfully navigated and be ready to articulate the steps you took: Define the Problem > Gather Information > Identify Solutions > Choose and Implement a Solution > Evaluate the Results.
- Develop your analytical and problem solving skills by playing Sudoku, chess, crossword puzzles, or strategic computer games.
- Learn how to work on a car engine, repair a computer, hook-up TVs and stereos, etc.
Job and Internship Search

Researching Jobs and Employers

Know something about an employer before you approach them. By researching jobs and careers you can learn about employers’ needs, expectations, job responsibilities, qualifications for various job titles, and find entry-level positions.

Start by identifying employer sectors (non-profit, private, government agencies or educational institutions). Develop a list of potential employers. Once you have a list of potential employers you’ll like to work for, identify specific employers and start researching them. Talk with personal contacts, such as current or former employees, professors or a knowledgeable professional in the field. Conduct informational interviews, as a way to find out more about the career that interests you (see page 12 for information on informational interviews).

Resources

Job and internship searches can seem like a task. To begin your search, start by searching on OtterJobs, attending career fairs, contacting employers directly and joining professional associations.

OtterJobs

Is the official job listing site on campus. It is an online searchable site of jobs and internships where employers list opportunities. You will find short/long term, full/part-time jobs and internships in many locations, including on/off campus. You can access OtterJobs from csumb.edu/career/otter-jobs, anywhere you have internet access. Call Academic & Career Advising Services at 831-582-3845 with any questions.

Career Fairs

A few times per year, employers come to campus for the CSUMB Career Fairs in order to provide information about their organizations and to discuss job and internship opportunities.

Contact Employers Directly

Many organizations’ websites include a careers section that allows you to search open job listings. Keep in mind that not all opportunities in an organization get widely advertised. When contacting an organization about opportunities that have not been advertised there a couple of strategies for connecting with the right people. Take the time to research who has the hiring authority. Also consider calling the organization and ask about who would be the best person to receive your résumé.

Professional Associations

Many professional Associations allow students to join at a discounted rate, and are an excellent job search resource. Many national associations have local chapters. Attending an association meeting or event can help you meet people that provide you with job leads and advice. The FOCUS assessment recommends national professional associations for each job title in the system.

6 job and internship search musts

• Keep your online image clean
• Always have an updated résumé and now how to write a good letter
• Never miss an opportunity to network
• Appreciate an informational interview
• Start early and do not expect your job search to be quick and easy.
• Use different search methods to maximize your job search.
• Think beyond a major. Most people don’t work in the field they studied.
Gain Experience

In today’s increasingly competitive job market, just having a college degree is often not enough. Employers are looking for experience. Whether you are looking to work for a year or two before entering graduate school or you need to build more career related experience. Explore ways to get experience before you graduate.

Internships

An internship is work experience that is either directly related to your major or you career interest. They can be called “internships,” “part-time,” “co-ops,” or “summer jobs.” The title is not important, the quality of the experience is. Some internships are paid, others will offer to help you receive academic credit.

3 Reasons to Intern

1. Experience in a field of interest will help you make more educated career choices.
2. Professional contacts in the field can help you get hired and get ahead in your career.
3. Many organizations use internships as extended interviews for full-time employment.

Service Learning & Volunteering

Consider your service learning as an opportunity to gain valuable experience and polish your skills. Your upper division service learning at CSUMB should relate at least to your major, if not your specific field. Use it as an opportunity to network with people that may be useful in your future career endeavors.

On campus jobs

Working on campus can give you great experience in a professional environment. If you are interested in teaching, look at tutoring and teaching assistant opportunities; if considering counseling explore the peer advising jobs, etc.

Temporary work

Many employers use temporary employment agencies to fill staffing gaps and complete projects. Working as a temp can help you:

- Gain exposure to a field
- Earn money as you obtain experience and skills
- Get your foot in the door at a particular organization
- Spend your time productively between graduation and attending graduate school
Making the most of a Job and Internship Fair

Job and Career Fairs are excellent opportunities for you to gain information about the world of work and inquire about internship, summer work, or career opportunities. Start by researching companies you would like to approach, prepare a 1-minute commercial to tell employers about yourself, have your résumé ready and most importantly, dress to impress!

Before the Fair: Do Your Research

Learn about the products, services, and employment needs of participating companies by researching employers on the internet. Identify the organizations you want to interact with by previewing the list of participants. Visit csumb.edu/career for an updated list, employer information and job descriptions.

- Dig deeper than a company name. Many retailers have nationally recognized internship and management training programs for college students.
- Take time to target those organizations that are of interest to you.
- Companies may offer more types of jobs/internships than you realize.
- Create questions to ask related to the general occupation and career field you are interested in as well as questions specific to the organization (see page 13).
- Prepare your résumé (see page 14).

1-minute commercial

A one-minute commercial is a great tool to use to start conversations with employers at job fairs and networking events. It’s a summary of your skills, accomplishments, and interests. Use your one-minute commercial to highlight your background and experience. Give someone enough information to know they want to know more about you.

Typical things to include:

- Your name
- Your major
- Type of positions you are seeking
- Work experience
- Class projects
- How your background and future goals fit the organization’s needs

Tip: When introducing yourself, avoid being tongue-tied, prepare a self-introduction that is clear, and well delivered.

Change what you say in your one-minute commercial depending on with whom you are talking. Practice your commercial, get comfortable with the types of things you want to say about yourself.

Example:

“Hi, I’m Emily Chang and I’m currently looking for an entry-level position in Human Resources. I will be completing my bachelor’s degree in Business this May.”

“I recently finished a summer internship at XYZ Inc. in their human resources department. During my internship, I helped organize sign-ups for a new benefits package, coordinated a company picnic, and gave tours of the office to new employees. I understand that Globo Corp currently has a position available in the HR department. The company is appealing to me because I have read about its high rankings in national employee satisfaction surveys. Can you tell me a little bit about what it’s like to work there?”
Career fairs are opportunities to make good first impressions. Treat career fairs as if you were going to a job interview, dress up! Depending on the company you may be interested in, dress accordingly. If you are not sure what company you want to work for, be safe and dress conservative.

At the fair
- Dress and look professional – visit Otter Outfitters
- Smell good!
- Introduce yourself and demonstrate enthusiasm—a positive attitude goes a long way
- Tell the representative if you are gathering information or are an active job/internship seeker
- Launch into your one-minute commercial if you are seeking a position
- Ask questions, inquire about the application procedure
- Provide a copy of your résumé
- Request a business card or obtain a contact name in the organization

TIP: If you do not have appropriate business attire, visit Otter Outfitters for free new and gently used professional clothing. Contact our office at 831-582-3845 for details.

After the fair
- Follow-up in a timely manner
- Send a thank you note thanking representatives for their time and information
- In your correspondence, include your résumé and any other information you discussed with the recruiter at the fair.
- Set up a tracking system for your job leads and keep organized
Networking

Networking is at the center of most successful job/internship searches. When you make contact with people in a career field or organization in which you want to work, you may get tips on improving your marketability, names of more people to contact, inside information about what it takes to get hired, or even a job offer.

Networking is the act of meeting people with whom you can develop mutually beneficial relationships and exchange information, advice, contacts or support. It is also an occasion to find what you have in common with others. Here’s some advice to get started:

- Take the initiative to approach others, introduce yourself, and share a piece of information that could reveal the common thread you share with them
- During conversations, listen carefully to discover shared interests or goals
- Use your shared background or interests as the basis for sustaining conversations
- Identifying the goals you want to achieve at the networking event before you go (e.g., to learn more about a career, to develop internship leads, etc.)
- Do you want to meet six people and leave with six business cards, or do you want to meet three people and get to know them really well? Either is OK, just have a strategy.
- Keep a healthy sense of humor
- Networking is not a one-time shot, it takes practice

Networking Etiquette Tips

- Make sure to look people in the eyes and smile.
- Show that you are focused on the conversation by nodding, smiling, and using other nonverbal affirmative gestures.
- If you are seated while being introduced to someone, stand to greet that person and shake his/her hand.
- Don’t stay together with people you’re familiar with, challenge yourself: mingle with other people and get to know them.
- Move around. You cannot work a room sitting down!

Social Networking Sites

If you haven’t done so already, now is the time to create an account with the most popular networking sites – Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter. Getting your next job may depend on how robust your network is. Social networking sites offer tools to connect users with companies and show-off your skills. The objective is to create your personal brand. Here are some pointers to best use social media:

- When filling out your information, stay professional! (Especially with pictures)
- Get recommendations from past/present colleagues
- Follow the right people: friends, colleagues, industry leaders, recruiters, and companies
- Be an active user, but post wisely! Employers can look back at everything you post
- Use common sense: don’t post anything you would not want your parents (or potential employers) to see
Informational Interviewing

What is it? Informational Interviewing is the basic building block of networking. It is connecting with people who work in a field that you have interest in. It is not a job interview nor is it simply asking someone if they know about any openings for you.

The point of an informational interview is to build knowledge about how your skills and interests might lead to a job or career. Talking with working professionals is the #1 way to learn about a field, discover career paths you didn’t know about, and get the inside scoop.

How do I find people to meet with? Start with your existing network of family, friends, professors, colleagues, and classmates. Leverage your social media connections. Use Facebook, LinkedIn, etc. Join online groups, start visiting chat rooms related to your field.

Join a professional organization for your field, attend sponsored conferences and mixers through it. It's easy to find them by asking around or doing a web search for “[your field] + professional organizations.”

Explain to those in your network what your career goal is and then ask them if they know anyone who is working in that field. Make a long list. Don’t rule anyone out in the beginning of this process. Remember you won’t be asking these people about job openings, you are simply looking to talk with them.

How do I set-up informational interviews? When you are making your list; collect names and titles, emails, and phone numbers. The initial contact should be a phone call because an email can easily get lost. Plus, your enthusiasm is conveyed more directly over the phone.

Tell your contact who referred you and that you are looking to make an appointment to chat with them for 15-20 minutes about their work and their career. You’ve got to be assertive to get informational interviews, but always be respectful of people and their time. If an individual is located near you, offer to meet them for coffee or lunch (only offer if you can afford to pay).

Plan for your meeting by doing some research on your contact’s organization. Be ready to articulate your background and your goals. Have questions ready to ask.

“The most valuable thing you leave college with isn’t your diploma – it’s that list of names in your contact manager. Studies show that a full 90% of new graduates find employment through referrals.”

– Joe Mayne, Your Hire Calling

“Don’t be afraid to include your parents, your parents’ friends, and the parents of your friends...No one remembers after six months in the job how you landed the job or through what set of contacts.”

– Kenneth Wachtel, Executive Recruiter

Connecting with strangers and asking for their time can be awkward. But you’ll find it’s easy to get people to talk about their favorite subject: themselves! If it helps, think of it as a research project rather than part of your job search.
What questions should I ask?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How did you get started in this field?</td>
<td>What did you study in college?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is a typical day like for you?</td>
<td>What additional training or certifications have you completed?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are your favorite aspects of your job?</td>
<td>What are your challenges in this job?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How does a typical career path look in your field?</td>
<td>What are some current trends in your field?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What professional organizations, magazines, or on-line groups can you</td>
<td>Can I connect with you on LinkedIn?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>recommend for me?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What other strategies can you suggest for me?</td>
<td>Can I email you a copy of my résumé?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ALWAYS ASK: What other people do you suggest I talk to?

What happens during and after the meeting? If you are meeting someone in person, dress as if you are going to a job interview. If it is a phone appointment, dressing professionally is still recommended as it reminds you to take the process seriously.

Keep your appointment time. Listen attentively, show your interest in this person’s story. Take notes and be sure to thank them sincerely for their time.

When the meeting is over, immediately write and send a thank-you note (a mailed card is preferable, an email is OK). Keep in touch with this person through social media or with periodic email updates. Then get back to your list of potential contacts and schedule your next informational interview.
Résumé

The submission of a résumé is to stimulate the interest of a potential employer enough to want to interview you. Résumés provide a brief overview of your skills and experience. It doesn’t need to include every detail of every job you’ve had. Your résumé should clearly articulate how your skills and experiences align to the selection criteria defined by the job announcement.

Think about keywords that communicate multiple skills and qualifications. Use numbers to highlight your accomplishments. Numbers are powerful and bring attention and context to your accomplishments. Think about ways to incorporate numbers that show you’ve saved, earned, or managed money/time/customers efficiently.

How to Develop a Résumé in 4 steps

1. Analyze the Job Description
   - Highlight the required and preferred skills, abilities, and qualifications in the description.

2. Create a list of accomplishments
   - Think about tasks that you enjoyed doing, did well, and of which you are proud.
   - Include education/training, volunteer experience, jobs, projects, school assignments, and group activities.
   - Describe in detail what you did, the equipment you used, the personal strengths and skills you employed, and the outcomes.
   - Quantify your results.

3. Compare Experiences to Relevant Skills Areas
   - Identify the skills you used that fit the position(s) for which you are applying.

4. Write Descriptive Phrases
   - Write short phrases to describe what you did that illustrates each skills – be concise and specific.
   - Arrange the phrases in order of relevance to the position you are applying for.

TIP: Top five skills
- Communication
- Strong Work Ethic
- Teamwork
- Flexibility/Adaptability
- Problem-Solving

Source: Job Outlook 2015, NACE

TIP: Résumé Tips for Re-Entry Students and Career Changers
Résumé content must be current and include relevant information only, don’t go back more than 10 years. Consider using a Skills Résumé format to highlight your transferrable skills.
Résumé Components

The structure of the résumé will vary depending on the format you choose, but most of these components will need to be part of your résumé.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mandatory Components</th>
<th>Basics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Heading: Identifying Data</td>
<td>Full name, street address, email address, phone number, personal webpage (if you want it seen)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Degree received or pursuing, concentration, name of school, (projected) graduation date, city &amp; state of school. Only list colleges that conferred a degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience/work history</td>
<td>Include paid and volunteer positions, job title, employing organization, month &amp; year of employment, &amp; city and state. Emphasize tasks, skills, abilities and accomplishments. Present results, contributions, and achievements.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Optional Components</th>
<th>Basics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job Objective</td>
<td>One-line description of the type of position you want.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills and Abilities</td>
<td>Computer skills, office skills, and/or lab techniques</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languages</td>
<td>Indicate if you are fluent in a foreign language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community, club/organization involvement</td>
<td>List student organizations, committees, community involvement, and volunteer activities you have participated in. List any offices held with skills and tasks involved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honors</td>
<td>Can include academic honors, honor societies, and scholarships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research &amp; Publications</td>
<td>Briefly describe relevant research projects. List published articles, papers or books.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Résumé Do’s and Don’ts

Do
- Use a readable font (Calibri, Times New Roman, Arial. Use 10-12 pt)
- Emphasize results produced, significant achievements and recognition from others
- Quantify when possible and use specific examples
- Check the spelling of every word, have someone proofread your résumé
- Begin phrases with action verbs such as “developed,” “initiated,” etc. (see pages 16-17)
- Keep your résumé to one page unless you have extensive experience

Don’t
- Use résumé templates
- Use 1st person ( “I, we, me, my, us, our,” etc.)
- Use flashy graphics or fonts
- Include high school accomplishments (if you’re in your 3rd year or beyond)
- Start phrases with “My responsibilities (or duties) included”
- Use abbreviations that others may not understand such as ASAP, UROC, etc.
Keywords List for Résumés and Letters

To demonstrate your breadth of skills, use this list of keywords when describing your work experience. Start each phrase with a verb, and use a variety of these words.

### Communication Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Addressed</th>
<th>Convinced</th>
<th>Identified</th>
<th>Negotiated</th>
<th>Reported</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advertised</td>
<td>Created</td>
<td>Incorporated</td>
<td>Obtained</td>
<td>Responded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aided</td>
<td>Defined</td>
<td>Influenced</td>
<td>Outlined</td>
<td>Sold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arranged</td>
<td>Developed</td>
<td>Interacted</td>
<td>Participated</td>
<td>Solicited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Articulated</td>
<td>Directed</td>
<td>Interpreted</td>
<td>Persuaded</td>
<td>Specified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authored</td>
<td>Discussed</td>
<td>Interviewed</td>
<td>Presented</td>
<td>Suggested</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarified</td>
<td>Drafted</td>
<td>Involved</td>
<td>Promoted</td>
<td>Summarized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborated</td>
<td>Edited</td>
<td>Joined</td>
<td>Proposed</td>
<td>Translated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicated</td>
<td>Enlisted</td>
<td>Led</td>
<td>Publicized</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composed</td>
<td>Explained</td>
<td>Marketed</td>
<td>Read</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condensed</td>
<td>Expressed</td>
<td>Mediated</td>
<td>Recruited</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conveyed</td>
<td>Formulated</td>
<td>Motivated</td>
<td>Referred</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Creative Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adapted</th>
<th>Designed</th>
<th>Established</th>
<th>Innovated</th>
<th>Originated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Combined</td>
<td>Developed</td>
<td>Fashioned</td>
<td>Instituted</td>
<td>Perceived</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composed</td>
<td>Devised</td>
<td>Founded</td>
<td>Introduced</td>
<td>Performed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conceptualized</td>
<td>Directed</td>
<td>Generated</td>
<td>Launched</td>
<td>Planned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Created</td>
<td>Displayed</td>
<td>Illustrated</td>
<td>Modeled</td>
<td>Revisited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customized</td>
<td>Entertained</td>
<td>Initiated</td>
<td>Modified</td>
<td>Shared</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Data / Financial Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Administered</th>
<th>Budgeted</th>
<th>Decreased</th>
<th>Maintained</th>
<th>Prepared</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allocated</td>
<td>Calculated</td>
<td>Determined</td>
<td>Accuracy</td>
<td>Projected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyzed</td>
<td>Computed</td>
<td>Developed</td>
<td>Managed</td>
<td>Reconciled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audited</td>
<td>Conserved</td>
<td>Estimated</td>
<td>Measured</td>
<td>Reduced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balanced</td>
<td>Corrected</td>
<td>Forecasted</td>
<td>Planned</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Helping Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adapted</th>
<th>Attended</th>
<th>Educated</th>
<th>Integrated</th>
<th>Referred</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted</td>
<td>Clarified</td>
<td>Encouraged</td>
<td>Insured</td>
<td>Rehabilitated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advised</td>
<td>Coached</td>
<td>Ensured</td>
<td>Intervened</td>
<td>Related</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocated</td>
<td>Collaborated</td>
<td>Expedited</td>
<td>Led</td>
<td>Represented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aided</td>
<td>Contributed</td>
<td>Facilitated</td>
<td>Listened</td>
<td>Resolved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Answered</td>
<td>Cooperated</td>
<td>Familiarized</td>
<td>Mentored</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arranged</td>
<td>Counselled</td>
<td>Furthered</td>
<td>Motivated</td>
<td>Volunteer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessed</td>
<td>Demonstrated</td>
<td>Guided</td>
<td>Prevented</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assisted</td>
<td>Diagnosed</td>
<td>Helped</td>
<td>Provided</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Teaching Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adapted</th>
<th>Conducted</th>
<th>Empowered</th>
<th>Individualized</th>
<th>Taught</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advised</td>
<td>Coordinated</td>
<td>Enabled</td>
<td>Instructed</td>
<td>Trained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarified</td>
<td>Counselled</td>
<td>Facilitated</td>
<td>Persuaded</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coached</td>
<td>Developed</td>
<td>Guided</td>
<td>Stimulated</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Management /Leadership Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Administered</th>
<th>Delegated</th>
<th>Expanded</th>
<th>Managed</th>
<th>Recruited</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Analyzed</td>
<td>Developed</td>
<td>Fine Tuned</td>
<td>Motivated</td>
<td>Reorganized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appointed</td>
<td>Directed</td>
<td>Generated</td>
<td>Organized</td>
<td>Scheduled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approved</td>
<td>Doubled</td>
<td>Handled</td>
<td>Originated</td>
<td>Secured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assigned</td>
<td>Eliminated</td>
<td>Implemented</td>
<td>Overhauled</td>
<td>Selected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attained</td>
<td>Emphasized</td>
<td>Improved</td>
<td>Oversaw</td>
<td>Streamlined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chaired</td>
<td>Enforced</td>
<td>Incorporate</td>
<td>Performed</td>
<td>Strengthened</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Considered</td>
<td>Enhanced</td>
<td>Increased</td>
<td>Planned</td>
<td>Supervised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consolidated</td>
<td>Established</td>
<td>Initiated</td>
<td>Prioritized</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Converted</td>
<td>Evaluated</td>
<td>Instituted</td>
<td>Produced</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinated</td>
<td>Executed</td>
<td>Led</td>
<td>Recommended</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Organizational / Detail Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approved</th>
<th>Compiled</th>
<th>Filed</th>
<th>Ordered</th>
<th>Screened</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arranged</td>
<td>Configured</td>
<td>Generated</td>
<td>Organized</td>
<td>Standardized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catalogued</td>
<td>Distributed</td>
<td>Implemented</td>
<td>Purchased</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charted</td>
<td>Diversified</td>
<td>Incorporated</td>
<td>Prepared</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classified</td>
<td>Executed</td>
<td>Maintained</td>
<td>Recorded</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coded</td>
<td>Facilitated</td>
<td>Monitored</td>
<td>Scheduled</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Research Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analyzed</th>
<th>Evaluated</th>
<th>Inspected</th>
<th>Organized</th>
<th>Systematized</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clarified</td>
<td>Examined</td>
<td>Interpreted</td>
<td>Research</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collected</td>
<td>Experimented</td>
<td>Investigated</td>
<td>Summarized</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compared</td>
<td>Explored</td>
<td>Linked</td>
<td>Surveyed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conducted</td>
<td>Gathered</td>
<td>Observed</td>
<td>Synthesized</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Technical Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Automated</th>
<th>Debugged</th>
<th>Developed</th>
<th>Operated</th>
<th>Utilized</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Calculated</td>
<td>Designed</td>
<td>Devised</td>
<td>Overhauled</td>
<td>Upgraded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Converted</td>
<td>Determined</td>
<td>Maintained</td>
<td>Restored</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Miscellaneous Verbs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Achieved</th>
<th>Reduced (losses)</th>
<th>Resolved (problems)</th>
<th>Spearheaded</th>
<th>Transformed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pioneered</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Résumé Checklist

STOP! Don’t submit your résumé until you check this list off.

- Did you tailor your résumé for the position?
- Have you gotten your résumé critiqued by a career advisor? Schedule an appointment at 831-582-3845
- Is the résumé pleasing to the eye?
- Does the objective (if used) state clearly the area in which you seek employment?
- Is the information listed in order of importance and relevance to the position?
- Did you check that spelling, grammar, and punctuation are perfect?
- Do most phrases begin with action verbs such as “developed,” “initiated,” etc.?
Chronological Résumé

María García
mgarcia@csumb.edu | (510) 123-4567 | mgarcia@linkedin.com

OBJECTIVE
Summer internship as a Software Engineer

EDUCATION
B.S. Computer Science and Information Technology Expected May 2016
Cal State University Monterey Bay, Seaside, CA
A.S. Network Administration May 2014
Sacramento City College, Sacramento, CA

SKILLS
C++, Photoshop, HTML, Java Script, TCP/IP Protocol Suite, Cisco IOS, and UNIX
Fluent in Spanish

PROJECTS
Robotics, CSU Monterey Bay / Naval Postgraduate School 8/14- Present
- Assist professor with drafting and creating aquatic robot
- Operate robot during test-run, perform trouble-shooting with motor

Computer Lab, CSU Monterey Bay Fall 2014
- Upgraded virus software, networked 5 computers, and re-imaged a website with team of 3 classmates
- Assisted students to create websites and recover lost data

EXPERIENCE
Stockroom Assistant, Costco, Sand City, CA 8/13 – Present
- Maintain appropriate inventory
- Improve accuracy of monthly inventory counts from 90% to 96%
- Develop knowledge of production protocols and manufacturing environments

Promotional Assistant, Old Navy, Sacramento, CA 5/12 – 8/13
- Worked cooperatively with a group of 5 individuals to effectively execute 4th of July promotional activities which led to 5% increase in summer sales
- Interacted with hundreds of people each week

Training Manager, McDonalds, Sacramento, CA 2/10 – 4/12
- Provided excellent customer service and was employee of the month for 2 consecutive months
- Promoted from Associate to Training Manager after 6 months
- Trained 5 new employees
Skills Résumé

María García
mgarcia@csumb.edu | (510) 123-4567 | mgarcia@linkedin.com

OBJECTIVE
Summer internship as a Software Engineer

EDUCATION
B.S. Computer Science and Information Technology May 2013
Cal State University Monterey Bay, Seaside, CA

A.S. Network Administration May 2011
Sacramento City College, Sacramento, CA

SKILLS
Design and Problem Solving
• Improved accuracy of monthly inventory counts from 90% to 96%
• Took initiative to organize work area resulting in greater efficiency
• Successfully designed software program to keep track of inventory

Robotics and Lab
• Assist professor with drafting and creating aquatic robot
• Operate robot during test-run, perform trouble-shooting with motor
• Upgraded virus software, networked 5 computers, and re-imaged a website with team of 3 classmates

Computer and Language Skills
• C++, Photoshop, HTML, Java Script and UNIX
• Able to assist students with different computer needs in a lab setting
• Fluent in Spanish

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY & PROJECTS

Robotics Project, CSU Monterey Bay / Naval Postgraduate School 8/14- Present

Computer Lab Project, CSU Monterey Bay Fall 2014

Stockroom Assistant, Costco, Sand City, CA 8/13 – Present

Promotional Assistant, Old Navy, Sacramento, CA 5/12 – 8/13

Training Manager, McDonalds, Sacramento, CA 2/10 – 4/12
MARY JOHNSON
24 Trenton Ct, Marina, CA 93933
mjohnson@csumb.edu | 831-123-4567

OBJECTIVE
Summer internship with Accounting Firm

EDUCATION
May 2016 B.S Mathematics
Cal State University Monterey Bay, Seaside, CA
GPA: 3.5

SKILLS
Conversational American Sign Language
Leadership experience
Knowledge of PC, Macs, MS Office, CMS PeopleSoft, Google Mail, and Photoshop

EXPERIENCE
1/2014-Present Teaching Assistant
Cal State University, Monterey Bay, Seaside, CA
• Lead Statistics class discussions with 35 students
• Presented new material, created lesson plan for lecture and small class activity, taught 2 classes
• Meet with students individually and foster a safe learning environment

8-12/2013 Tutor
Extreme Learning, Monterey, CA
• Tutored 10 students in Algebra, geometry and pre-calculus
• Motivated 2 struggling students to improve from F’s to B’s in mathematics

Spring 2013 Math Club, Founder
Cal State University, Monterey Bay, Seaside, CA
• Recruited 12 students to join, found an advisor, wrote funding proposals and club constitution, transitioned to secretary of club
• Conducted 2 successful fundraisers and raised $500 to attend a conference
• Created agendas, scheduled guest speakers, and led meetings

6-12/2012 Child Care Worker
Various families, Salinas, CA
• Provided safe, enjoyable environment for up to 3 children ages 3-10
• Planned activities, assisted with homework, mediated disputes
• Prepared meals, cleaned, escorted children to activities
Hybrid: Chronological/Skills Résumé

Monte Ray
206 Willet Hall, Seaside, CA 93955 | mrey@csumb.edu | 831-123-4567

Education
B.A. Visual and Public Art
Expected Graduation Fall 2015
Cal State Monterey Bay, Seaside, CA

Skills
- Leadership training, management skills and community involvement
- Trained in crisis management, conflict resolution, advocacy and advertisement
- Work well in an ever-changing environment
- Intermediate Japanese
- Strong knowledge of computer programs: PC and Macintosh, MS Office, Audacity, Google Calendar, PeopleSoft CMS

Employment Experience

Resident Advisor, Willet Hall, Cal State Monterey Bay, Seaside, CA 1/2014-Present
- Create, plan and implement, cultural and social activities for 80 students
- Encourage and facilitate discussions of social, political and ethical issues among the students
- Coordinate the “Willet Welcome Back Week,” which includes scheduling performances, budget organizing and publicity: created and distributed flyers through social media and email

Chair, Inter Club Council, Cal State Monterey Bay, Seaside, CA 8/2013-5/2014
- Increased member participation in meetings through innovative motivational techniques by making meetings shorter and providing food
- Managed a $25,000 budget and provided funding to 30 clubs
- Conducted and led meetings with 25-30 participants

Student Assistant, Office of Admissions, Cal State Monterey Bay, Seaside, CA 8/2012-5/2013
- Provided excellent customer service in person and over the phone to incoming students, families and friends including clarification on deadlines and campus information
- Accurately opened, labeled, and filed over 100 transcripts a week
- Gave 144 campus tours to small and large groups, up to 40 people per group
Cover Letters

A cover letter is an opportunity to distinguish yourself from other applicants. Use it to connect the dots between what the employer is looking for and the skills you have.

- Write an original cover letter for each employer and position – never copy cover letters
- Demonstrate originality and enthusiasm
- Make your points succinctly; every point should support your application
- Proofread for typos, accuracy of address and telephone numbers, and get feedback
- Don’t exaggerate your skills or experience
- Cover letter should be one page, in a 3-paragraph format

To begin writing your cover letter, there are four components that need to be included: headline, opening, body, and closing.

**Headline:** Address, phone number, and date. Then, name of person you are addressing the letter to, title, name of organization, and address. Also, include “Dear Mr. /Ms. ___”. Use LinkedIn, a company directory, or call the organization to find out the hiring manager to address your letter to. No one is impressed when you begin your letter “To Whom it May Concern…”

**Opening:** “Why are you writing?” and “what do you want?” are the questions you should answer in this paragraph. If you are applying for an advertised opening, indicate the position’s title and the publication in which it was advertised.

**Body:** Discuss your “3 Best” selling points. This paragraph includes information that may not have been covered in your résumé. Also, let the employer know that you’ve done your homework. Indicate that you know something about the organization, and how you would contribute. Comment on their vision or mission statement and show how their philosophy connects with your own.

**Closing:** This is your closing paragraph. You may say: “Enclosed is my résumé. Thank you for your consideration.” Or “I look forward to hearing from you.” If you wish to be more assertive try: “I will be calling you on (date) to discuss an appointment.” If you try the last approach, you must follow up and call when you said you would. Lastly, don’t forget to sign your cover letter, even if you are submitting it electronically.

**TIP: A word on CVs**

Use a Curriculum Vitae (CV) to apply to graduate school or an academic position. A CV is an expanded version of your resume which paints a picture of you as a scholar. It should be multiple pages & can include sections for: relevant classes, research/academic projects, publications, workshops/classes taught, internships, memberships, & conferences attended.
Cover Letter

Samuel Hampton
206 Saratoga Ct, Marina, CA 93933
shampton@csumb.edu | (123) 456-7890

March 20th, 2015

Monte Ray
Dean of Student Life
Cal State Monterey Bay
100 Campus Center
Seaside, CA 93955

Dear Mr. Ray,

I am applying for the Student Services Coordinator position posted on the CSUMB’s employment website. I think I’m a good fit because I have 3 years’ experience working with students.

I believe the qualities you seek are well matched by my track record:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your Needs</th>
<th>My Qualifications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>College Degree</td>
<td>Bachelor of Arts in Psychology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer Service / Communication Skills</td>
<td>Assisted 20 customers per hour at a retail store, worked cashier desk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Management / Event Coordinator</td>
<td>Planned and collaborated orientation events for 200 incoming students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assists / Guide Students</td>
<td>Guided students through registration process, answered questions and welcomed them to campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer / Software literacy</td>
<td>Experience with CMS PeopleSoft, MS Office, Google Mail, and Photoshop</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I would like the opportunity to discuss how I can make a significant contribution to Student Activities. Attached is my resume. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Samuel Hampton
Samuel Hampton
March 20th, 2015

Sandy Smith
Student Employment Programs Manager
U.S Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., SW
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Ms. Smith,

As a third year student in Environmental Science Technology and Policy with a minor in Marine Biology, I am interested in expanding my skills in research through an internship with the USDA. The scientific research summer internship position listed through CSU Monterey Bay’s Career Services website is the type position that not only can build my skills, but will contribute to improve chemicals used to grow vegetables.

I have laboratory and field experience in chemistry, biology, and ecology. I have performed tests on water samples, examined specimens for reactions to toxins at the Salinas River, and entered findings into databases for analysis. I have conducted outdoor labs to assess water chemistry. Last summer, I worked as conservation assistant at Yosemite National Park.

I believe that I would be an asset to your program. Thank you I look forward to hearing from you. Attached is my résumé.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Lopez
Jonathan Lopez
**Employment References**

You do not need to include references on your resume, nor do you need to write “References Available Upon Request” as this is assumed. When a potential employer requests them, provide references that A) you have a professional relationship with, B) are knowledgeable about your work and skills, and C) you are sure will say wonderful things about you.

- Never give someone’s name as a reference without asking that person’s permission in advance
- Verify spelling of names, titles, and all contact information
- Give each reference a copy of your résumé. This lets your references know about your interests, abilities and experiences
- Keep your references up to date on your activities and progress
- Give them a copy of the job description for the positions for which you are applying
- Send thank you notes to each reference for their assistance

Here is an example of a reference sheet.

```
REFERENCES

Kimberly Chang
57 Gettysburg Avenue, Marina, CA 93955
(831) 555-1234
kchang@csumb.edu

References:
Deborah Burke
Assistant Professor, Service Learning Institute
Cal State University, Monterey Bay
100 Campus Center, Seaside, CA 93955
831-582-3631
dburke@csumb.edu
Deborah was my professor for service learning. She guided me as I was looking to serve the community and finding a site. She has been influential in my development.

Christina Lofgren
Academic Advisor
Cal State University, Monterey Bay
100 Campus Center, Seaside, CA 93955
831-582-3941
clofgren@csumb.edu
Christina has been my advisor for the last 2 years.

Kevin Hampton
Ticket Sales Supervisor
Monterey Bay Aquarium
123 Canery Row, Monterey, CA 93940
831-123-4567
hamptonK@montereyaquarium.com
Kevin was my supervisor when I worked at the aquarium as a ticket attendant for the last 3 years.
```
If you are offered an interview, congratulations! This victory means your résumé is in good shape and your job search is heading in the right direction. It is natural to be anxious about an interview, but with the right preparation you can show up confident and ready to impress.

An interview is not an interrogation, it is a two-way conversation. In addition to the employer learning more about you, you will also be learning about the organization and determining if it is a good fit for you.

**Interview Preparation** There are 3 steps to get ready for an interview: RESEARCH, WRITE, & PRACTICE.

**RESEARCH** the organization – Review the website and chat with anyone in your network who has worked there. Know the basics of their history, mission statement, products and services. Study their target market, new directions, competitors, challenges, etc. You want to be able to make informed comments and ask insightful questions about the organization during the interview.

**WRITE** stories – Brainstorm your accomplishments in previous jobs, volunteer, and class projects. How did you turn around an angry customer? How were you able to increase sales or efficiency? What special projects were you involved in? Did you create/streamline/document a system or process? Have you trained others? Come up with anecdotes for everything on your résumé. People remember stories, not bullet points. Consider bringing a portfolio with evidence of your accomplishments, which you can refer to while you are telling your stories.

**PRACTICE** your responses to common interview questions – In most interviews, you will be asked at least a few of these standard questions. Select 10 or so and practice answering them out loud: in front of a mirror or into a recorder. Have a friend or career advisor give you a “mock interview.”

As you’re practicing, pay attention to your facial expressions and body language – are you conveying confidence and warmth? Are your answers organized and detailed? Do they convey your skills and enthusiasm? The more you practice, the smoother your answers will be.

**Common Questions**

- Why should we hire you?/What can you offer us?
- Why are you interested in our organization?
- Describe an accomplishment you are proud of.
- Why did you choose your major?
- How is your background related to this position?
- How would a former supervisor describe you?
- Describe your ideal job.
- What do you know about our products/services?
- What kinds of people (or supervisors) do you work well with?
- Do you prefer working independently or in a group? Why?
- Why did you leave your last position?
- How do you communicate with supervisors?
- How do you evaluate success?
- What else do you want me to know about you?
**Strategies for answering interview questions**

- The ideal window for answers: 20 – 120 seconds. Any shorter than 20 seconds and you haven’t given enough information; any longer than 2 minutes and you’ve gone on too long.
- Answers should focus on your skills and what you can do for the organization. Have 3 key skill sets in mind (e.g. customer service, leadership, organization) and refer back to those 3 key skills a couple of times during the interview.
- Be enthusiastic, countless interviewees don’t get job offers simply because they show too little passion.
- Demonstrate your knowledge of the company and industry. Talk about how you will add to sales, increase profits, or decrease expenses.
- Maintain a steady pace and an even tone while you are talking. This is not a casual conversation, so avoid verbal filler such as “like” or “uh” or “um” or “you know?”

**Strategies for challenging questions** - A few questions deserve individual consideration.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUESTION</th>
<th>STRATEGY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tell me about yourself…</td>
<td>Use the 1-Minute Commercial strategy (page 10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is your biggest weakness?</td>
<td>Choose an actual weakness of yours (that won’t torpedo your professional image) and “sandwich” it between 2 positive remarks. “I keep busy and tend to have a lot of projects going on so sometimes my workspace is disorganized. But I always know where to find everything and I finish my assignments on time.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where do you see yourself in 5 years?</td>
<td>There is no right or wrong answer to this question, the interviewer is just looking for a well-articulated plan. “I will have accomplished my goals in this current position and created a positive reputation for myself in this organization. I expect that I will have nearly completed an MBA and will be looking forward to the next step of my career.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are your salary requirements?</td>
<td>Ideally you want to delay the money discussion until you are being offered the job (usually after the interview) as you hold more cards at that point in the process. “If I am chosen for this position, I am confident we can reach a mutually agreeable salary.” If you are pushed to give an answer, offer a range (always a range!) based on research you’ve done on the average pay for this type of position.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What questions do you have for us?</td>
<td>Absolutely have some questions ready to ask:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What does a typical day in this position look like?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What kind of training would I receive?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What are some of the challenges in this industry?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Can you offer me this job?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• When can I expect to hear from you?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sometimes you’ll get an off-the-wall question that doesn’t seem to relate to the job you are applying for. The purpose of this question may be to see how you think on your feet. The key is to not be rattled by anything thrown at you. Ask for a moment to collect your thoughts, take a deep breath and answer as best as you can.
**Behavioral interview questions** – It is likely you will be asked a few questions designed to elicit a story about a past experience. Some common behavioral interview questions are:

Tell me about a time when you…

- Dealt with a difficult customer
- Were on a team and one of the members wasn’t carrying his or her weight
- Had to think on your feet, make a decision without all of the pertinent information
- Convinced someone of your point of view

Employers figure that if you were able to successfully handle these situations in the past, you can do it again for them. When answering behavioral interview questions, remember these points:

- Each of your stories should have a clear beginning, middle, & end. Frame accomplishments using the STAR model: Situation/Task > Action > Result
- Use a specific example: “My boss had assigned me a project to organize the inventory…” DO NOT talk in generalities: “Usually when I get an assignment, I start by defining the goal…”
- Focus on you: What was your role? What did you think? How did you react? “The customer was really upset. I assured him I would do whatever it took to help him. I listened to his complaint, I asked several questions to make sure I understood, I explained his options and helped him decide. When we were finished, he was so pleased he sent my manager an email praising me.”
- Your stories should be filled with details and focused on the actions you took (not the actions of the other characters in the story). The more action words you include, the better.

**Post interview:**

1. Immediately after the interview, make notes on all of the questions & answers you can recall. Interviewing is a skill and if you study and practice, you will do better next time.

2. The same day, send a thank-you email to your interviewer. The next day, drop a hand-written thank-you card in the mail. Yes, do both. These notes should briefly express appreciation, reminisce on a poignant moment from the interview, and re-iterate your interest in the position.

3. 1-2 weeks after your interview, follow-up with the employer to restate your interest in the position and see if they have chosen their candidate yet.

**Appropriate Attire:** It goes without saying, but we’ll say it anyway: dress up for your interview. Buy a suit if you don’t have one, the default dress for an interview is conservative business wear. Stay with solid colors (gray, black, white, blue) and make sure your clothes are neatly pressed and clean. Hair should be under control and away from your face. Keep jewelry & accessories minimal & tasteful. When in doubt about any part of your outfit, use common sense.
Job Offers

Getting a job offer is a thrill! You have successfully completed a job-search, but there may still be some unanswered questions and anxiety.

- **I need to accept a job offer immediately, right?** No. It is usually good strategy to ask for a couple of days to consider the offer. Thank the employer and indicate that you are very interested in the job, ask for a job offer letter and a few days to think about it. Be sure to call them back when you say you will.

- **Can I ask for more money?** Yes. The employer is typically offering the low end of the salary range they have allocated for this position. Once you have the complete offer (including benefits) take some time (even if it's only a minute) to consider it. You should have a fair range in mind based on your research. Counter with the high end of your range. They might not budge and that’s OK, it doesn’t hurt to ask. If they are unwilling to raise your starting salary, get a clear understanding of what you need to do to get a raise.

- **What if I have multiple job offers?** If you are in the running for multiple jobs, always ask for time to consider all your offers. Carefully evaluate all aspects: salary & benefits, location, opportunities for advancement, the work environment, team, and most importantly the job’s effect on your career. You don’t know how everything will turn out, so make your best educated guess. Accepting a job and then turning it down soon thereafter because you have a better offer is unprofessional and not recommended. Better to delay the decision and make the right choice the first time.

- **How do I decline a job offer?** As soon as you are sure you won't be accepting a position, politely inform the employer. Either a written or verbal declination is generally acceptable. You can explain why you are declining but are not required to.

- **How do I officially accept a job offer?** Once you have made your decision, inform the employer by phone, and follow-up with a letter or email. Make sure you have documentation of the offer including salary and benefits. When negotiating a start date, be sure to give yourself plenty of time. If you have pending vacations, this is the time to indicate that you will need time off.

Landing a job is a time for celebration…and appreciation. Remember all those good people in your network who helped you out with informational interviews, referrals, and recommendations? Send out an email with your good news and a big “thank-you” to all of them.
In today’s competitive job market, a bachelor’s degree is often not enough. Graduate study is a major commitment of time, money, and energy – you need to be very clear about how it will advance your career. There are two basic types of graduate programs: master and doctorate.

Master degrees are usually two year programs. Some master degrees are terminal, while others continue onto a doctorate degree.

Doctorate (Ph.D.) degrees are intense and research focused. This is the highest degree possible. This degree will require students to write and defend a dissertation and may take 5-7 years.

**Tip:** You can go directly from a B.A. to a Ph.D. program.

As an undergraduate student, you need to start thinking about graduate school as early as your junior year.

- Start by researching websites like gradschools.com, petersons.com, cpec.ca.gov and csumb.edu/career.
- Talk to professors, professionals and current students - They often are aware of top schools in the field and programs available. Ask about their experiences.
- Attend the Graduate and Professional School Fair on campus.

**Questions to Consider**

In order to have a better understanding of the career field you are interested in, speak with professors, meet with a career advisor and/or conduct informal interviews (see pages 13-14).

- Have I had sufficient academic/career exposure to make this commitment?
- Does my field of interest require a graduate degree?
- Will I have more opportunities with a graduate degree than a bachelor’s degree?
- Can I commit to graduate school?
- Can I afford it?
- Am I psychologically/emotionally prepared to return to formal academic studies?
- Do I want to attend graduate school right after receiving a bachelor’s degree or should I take time off?
- If I enter the job market and find a job that I enjoy, would it be more difficult to continue my studies?
- Am I flexible in terms of geography and handling personal relationships while in school?

**Tip:** Your grad program can be in a totally different field than your bachelor’s degree.

**Keep Organized**

It is important that you develop a system to keep track of your graduate school information early on. Your graduate school search will be as successful as you are organized. It is easy to miss deadlines, don’t let that happen to you.

- Set up a system to keep organized: applications, phone calls, research, etc.
- Track the requirements and deadlines of programs in one location
- Track your personal statement(s) and requests for letters of recommendation in the same central place
**Deciding Where to Apply?**

After you’ve done some research and found graduate schools you would like to apply, there are key factors to consider.

1. Identify key faculty in the program with whom you share research interests.
2. Graduate programs tend to have a specific strength or focus in one or two areas within a discipline, investigate how these match up with your interests.
3. Determine the quality of the program by talking to faculty members and graduate students in the field. You may consider graduate school rankings; however, keep in mind that rankings may be based on criteria different from your own.

**Cost**

Graduate schools tend to be pricier than undergraduate schools. But as with your undergraduate education, there are different ways to pay for it. If you need financial assistance, you will still complete the FAFSA, but there are other types of aid available, such as fellowships, assistantships and tuition payments from employers.

- **Fellowships** are graduate scholarships or grants. There are many types of grants available to graduate students, with most being sponsored by the federal government to encourage study in certain disciplines. They could cover the costs of everything you need while getting an advanced degree (tuition, housing, food, etc).
- **Assistantships** are like work-study, they provide students with a stipend to help cover education expenses. Each college or university administers its own Assistantship program and expects that you may have teaching responsibility for one or more courses, while also carrying a full course load.
- **Tuition Payments from Employer** is a win-win situation for employers, as they are essentially investing in their employees while their employees enjoy a free/partially free benefit. Many employers attach certain terms to this benefit, such as committing employees to work for the company for a certain period of time.

**Application Process**

Similar to the undergraduate application process, you will need to submit an application, write an essay, submit transcripts, letters of recommendation, and take entrance exam(s). A component that often gets overlooked is visiting the campus and connecting with professors.

Connecting with a faculty member that you would potentially do research with can be key to gaining admissions. Some programs host open houses to mix and mingle with faculty.

Also, depending on the graduate program, you may be required to take an entrance exam. The importance of scores varies from program to program. Here are some exams you may have to take:

- Graduate Record Examination – GRE
- Graduate Management Admission Test – GMAT (for MBA programs)
- Law School Admission Test – LSAT
- Medical College Admission Test - MCAT

To start preparing for graduate school, you can take a class, a practice test, or buy a study book. Academic & Career Advising Services has some preparation materials for these exams.
**Personal Statement**

Writing the personal statement can be difficult, but it is important that it’s a masterpiece. Consider the following when writing your essay:

- Don’t be boring! Catch and keep the attention of the reader by writing from the heart.
- Describe the value and meaning of your experience, such as what you learned about yourself and your field, future goals, and career plans.
- Have others read it for both grammar and content. A career advisor can do this for you.
- Don’t tell your life story, just the parts relevant to this program.
- Avoid sentences beginning with “I’ve always wanted to be a ____” – this is overdone.
- Avoid a catalog of achievements, this is not a résumé, it is a personal statement.

It’s a challenge to know where to begin writing this type of essay. Consider writing answers to the following questions to get your ideas flowing and then begin to piece together your essay from there.

- What has brought me to this point in my life where this program is the right fit for me for the next several years?
- Why I am a good candidate for this program?
- What kind of student am I?
- What do I plan to do with this degree?
- How do I add diversity to this program? (Remember: diversity goes beyond race and gender)
- How do I expect to further the emphasis/research/work in this program?

**Letters of Recommendation**

Letters of recommendation are an important component of graduate school applications. Start building relationships with your professors, advisors, and employers early. You want to ask for recommendations from people that are familiar with your work, because they can write a strong letter.

Important information to know:

- Approach the letter writers 1-2 months in advance of your deadline; then give them a gentle reminder 1-2 weeks in advance if they haven’t submitted it yet.
- Your letter writers aren’t robots! They don’t remember everything about you. Remind them of your relationship – “I took your PSY 300 class in the spring of 2015, my research project was...” Provide them with an updated resume & a draft of your personal statement.
- Line up at least one extra letter writer in case someone is unable to meet your deadline.
- The best letter writers know you well and can provide an evaluation of your ability to perform and succeed.
- While an undergraduate, take every opportunity to get to know and talk with your professors: go to office hours, ask questions in class, seek advice about your career, do independent research or study with a professor whose recommendation you may want.
Requesting Letters of Recommendation

Identify the people you would like to ask for a letter of recommendation. Then, contact them and discuss your graduate school plans. You may ask if s/he would feel comfortable writing a strong letter of recommendation. Provide her/him with a copy of your résumé or curriculum vitae, transcripts, and list of your accomplishments. Remember to:

- Be clear with the professor about what the graduate program requires for submitting letters of recommendation.
- Once the recommender agrees to write a letter, make the date you would like the letter finished clear. It is often useful to give them a date before the real deadline.
- Depending on the graduate school, they may require submissions of documents online or mailed, if so be ready, have pre-addressed envelopes, forms, stamps, etc.
- Some schools want confidential letters sent directly from the recommender, which you do not have an opportunity to see.
- Let your recommender know if s/he should give you the letter so that you can submit it with your other application materials.
- Some graduate programs want the letter written on a particular form that they provide in the application packet, others will accept a letter on letterhead.
- Your goal is to make submitting the letter as easy and straightforward for your letter writer as possible.
- Write a warm and sincere thank you letter to the letter writer once the letter is done.

Graduate School Checklist

Start preparing for graduate school early in your undergraduate career. Here is a checklist of what you should do to prepare if you are going directly from an undergraduate to a graduate program.

Freshman Year

- Get to know your academic advisor
- Develop and maintain a good GPA
- Attend the major fair in the Fall semester
- Take the FOCUS assessment
- Use websites such as www.onetonline.org and www.mynextmove.org to research occupations and careers

Sophomore Year

- Join major-related student organizations and actively develop your leadership skills
- If you are interested in doing academic research, look into the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Center (UROC)
- Conduct informal interviews
- Apply for a summer internship
**Junior Year**
- Research available programs, review websites and request promotional materials
- Talk to faculty/alumni/current students in the program
- Attend the Graduate & Professional School Fair in the Fall
- Develop relationships with your professors, staff and administrators. Find a faculty mentor!
- Review your unofficial transcript, check for discrepancies and ask the registrar’s office to make any corrections
- Start studying for the GRE or other required test

**Senior Year & Beyond**

**Fall Semester**
- Write the first draft of your statement of purpose and get feedback
- Request your letters of recommendation from faculty, past and/or current employers
- Order official transcripts
- Attend the Graduate Professional School Fair
- Submit your applications. Apply to more than one school!
- Apply for aid available through program; assistantships, fellowships, scholarships etc.

**Spring Semester**
- Visit prospective campuses if possible, and talk to faculty/students to help you make your final decision
- Follow-up with schools to make sure your file is complete
- Admissions notifications go out March-May
- After receiving acceptance from the school of your choice, send in the required deposit, and contact other schools and decline acceptances
- Write thank you notes to people who helped you

The above timeline is a guide to help you complete a thorough and effective graduate school search and application process. It is not intended to be an exact timeline for any and every one.