



VALPARAISO UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE SCHOOL AND CONTINUING EDUCATION

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

FALL 2011

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Valparaiso University

Graduate School and Continuing Education

Professional and Career Development

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

This course strives to encourage students to reflect upon their career goals, strengths, and challenges as they plan their entry into the job market, and to develop successful skills and strategies for a job search. It includes resume and cover letter preparation, networking, interviewing, approaching referees, and other topics that are relevant to preparation for either career advancement or further graduate study.

The following are the primary course objectives:

1. Discuss and evaluate the methods available to assess career options.
2. Discuss and evaluate the methods available to assess continuing education.
3. Successfully complete a cover letter and resume.
4. Instruct, practice and improve interviewing skills.
5. Discuss and elaborate on aspects of personal and professional goals.

SESSION 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 What is professional development?

1.2 What is career management?

1.3 What is career planning, importance of career planning, & tips on effective career planning?

Refer to the course material and introduction of READY OR NOT on a working model of career planning (pg, 5 and 6).

1.4 Career search

Chapter 1 of THE EVERYTHING GET-A-JOB BOOK

- Before you begin your job search

Chapter 3 of Hired!

- The value of doing research (pg. 65-66)

1.1 WHAT IS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT?

It is the advancement of skills or expertise to succeed in a particular profession, especially through continued education.¹

1.2 CAREER MANAGEMENT

To manage means "to control, handle, or cope." Career management is the ability to control your life, handle the demands of work and life, and cope with a dynamic and changing economy that directly affects your work life and career development. Ask yourself:

Who are you?

What interests you?

What do you like to do?

What are you good at doing?

What do you value, what's important to you?

What are your special assets, skills, and abilities?

Who needs the talents, skills, and abilities you can provide?

What work environment and/or arrangements make sense for you?

What skills do you need to acquire to develop and manage your career?

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The career planning process of self-awareness, career exploration, and job search strategies must encompass and embrace these concepts.²

1.3 A WORKING MODEL OF CAREER PLANNING

It incorporates different aspects of the trait-and-factor and developmental theories. It is composed of

- **Self-assessment-** the process of "knowing yourself." It involves taking an inventory of your likes, dislikes, personal characteristics, values, wants, and needs. It is the first part of the career management process. Before you can decide what you want to be, you first have to discover who you are. People are constantly changing, growing, and developing. Therefore, it is necessary for everyone to re-assess themselves periodically in relation to their career goals. This self-knowledge can be evaluated by reflecting on how past experiences and information collected through career-assessments has helped to understand oneself.³
- **Research-** using self-information, begin to research and explore career options that will allow you to express yourself in the work world through your values, skills, interests, and personality.⁴
- **Try it out-** after gathering information about yourself and your educational and vocational options, you must assess the fit between who you are (your profile), and your options. This kind of exposure could be acquired through job shadowing, part-time jobs, volunteering, getting involved in student organizations, or through internships.⁵

² NORTH CAROLINA CAREER RESOURCE NETWORK

³ READY OR NOT: BEGINNING YOUR CAREER JOURNEY

⁴ READY OR NOT: BEGINNING YOUR CAREER JOURNEY

⁵ READY OR NOT: BEGINNING YOUR CAREER JOURNEY

- **Job/internship search:** - once you have gathered self and career information, and tried out a career path, you are ready to begin the process of finding and securing an internship or a full-time position.

This step requires you to learn how to effectively market your skills and experience through your resume, cover letters, and interviews.⁶



⁶ READY OR NOT: BEGINNING YOUR CAREER JOURNEY

1.3.1 IMPORTANCE OF CAREER PLANNING⁷

Having a career path is like having a professional insurance policy. With a career path you will probably

- Have a broader skill base
- Make logical job transitions
- Have increasing responsibility
- Have a broader prospective
- Make decisions easier
- Earn more
- Be more satisfied

1.3.2 TIPS ON EFFECTIVE CAREER PLANNING⁸...

- Continually reevaluate
- Build and nourish a network
- Stay informed, and
- Change your situation.

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⁸ VALPARAISO UNIVERSITY

1.4 CAREER SEARCH

A. BEFORE YOU BEGIN YOUR JOB SEARCH

Before you start looking for a job, ask yourself, “What do I want to do?” and “What am I qualified to do?” Your answers to these questions will help you determine how to conduct your job search, or even whether you are ready to start searching. You may find that the type of job you thought you wanted isn’t the one the best for you, or you may find out that you do not have the right skills.⁹

B. THE VALUE OF DOING RESEARCH¹⁰

- Gain more knowledge so that you can reach an objective or make a decision.
- You will have adequate information on which to base your future career-related decision.
- Researching occupational information is a skill that you will use throughout your lifetime.

⁹ THE EVERYTHING GET-A-JOB BOOK

¹⁰ HIRED! The Job Hunting and Career Planning Guide

SESSION 2

SELF REFLECTION I

Goals:

- Helping students to appreciate the importance of self understanding.
- Helping students in assessing their values.
- Discussing interest patterns with students.
- Helping students in understanding the fundamentals of personality types .

2.1 Values

Chapter 1 of READY OR NOT. (pg. 9)

Chapter 1 of Hired! (pg. 26), Value Assessment exercise.

2.2 Interest

Chapter 1 of READY OR NOT. (pg 11, 12)

2.3 Personality

Chapter 1 of READY OR NOT. (pg 12, 13)

Chapter 2 of Turning Points (pg. 25) Holland's Personality Type/General Description.

Chapter 1 of Hired! (pg 33, 34) Analyzing Holland Personality Type(s?).

SELF REFLECTION I

Look within yourself to discover your interests, skills, personality traits, and values. Also ask friends, family members, teachers, or mentors if they see the same qualities in you as you see in yourself.

Simply ask:¹¹

What do I like to do?

What activities do I find fun, motivating, interesting, and enjoyable?

What skills and abilities do I have or want to develop?

What personal style or characteristics do I have that are important to me in the work place?

What purpose or goal do I want to accomplish in my career?

2.1 VALUE¹²

A value is simply defined as “that which is important to you”.

Your values are aspects of work that are important to you. This could include:

- A flexible schedule,
- Doing work that helps others,
- Upward mobility,
- Lots of vacation time, or
- Working with people you like.

¹¹ NORTH CAROLINA CAREER RESOURCE NETWORK

¹² READY OR NOT: THE ART AND SCIENCE OF THE JOB SEARCH

Knowing your values helps answer the question “Why do I do this work?” It is essential for opening the door to a satisfying career. In fact, people often leave a job or a career because it doesn’t satisfy one or more of their values.

BREIF VALUE ASSESSMENT EXERCISE¹³

1. How important is it for you to do work that is meaningful?
2. What might you choose to do that would give you a sense of meaning and satisfaction?
3. If you were to list your top three to five values that you have to have in a job, what would they be?

2.2 INTERESTS

An interest is something that offers satisfaction and enjoyment. Things you enjoy doing can give you important clues about work or career interests. Fixing things, using computers, cooking, and caring for children are just a few examples of everyday activities and skills that can be transferred into a career. Interests are often a strong predictor of the career choices that people make.¹⁴

2.3 PERSONALITY

Each person's unique combination of emotional and behavioral characteristics makes up their personality. Different careers fit better with different personality traits. For example, an outgoing, friendly person who enjoys meeting with and talking to people would be suited for jobs in sales, customer service, or public relations.¹⁵

¹³ HIRED! The Job Hunting and career Planning Guide

¹⁴ READY OR NOT: THE ART AND SCIENCE OF THE JOB SEARCH

¹⁵ NORTH CAROLINA CAREER RESOURCE NETWORK

2.3.1 HOLLANDS OCCUPATIONAL PERSONALITY TYPES

Career development theorist John Holland, Ph.D., developed a theory of career choice based on personality. Listed below are the six Holland Occupational Personality Types.¹⁶ The descriptions of “pure types” will rarely be an exact fit for any one person. Your personality will more likely combine several types to varying degrees. To get a better picture of how your interests and skills relate to the types and to identify your dominant type, you can highlight the phrases in each description that are true for you.

A. REALISTIC (R)

Realistic individuals are active, stable, and enjoy hands-on or manual activities, such as building, mechanics, machinery operation, and athletics. They prefer to work with things rather than ideas and people. They enjoy engaging in physical activity and often like being outdoors and working with plants and animals. People who fall into this category generally prefer to “learn by doing” in a practical, task-oriented setting, as opposed to spending extended periods of time in a classroom. Realistic types tend to communicate in a frank, direct manner and value material things. They perceive themselves as skilled in mechanical and physical activities but may be uncomfortable or less adept with human relations. The preferred work environment of the realistic type fosters technical competencies and work that allows them to produce tangible results. Typical realistic careers include electrician, engineer, veterinarian and the military.

¹⁶ http://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/bin/s/q/Lisa_Heiser_Faculty_Development_Handout.pdf

B. INVESTIGATIVE (I)

Investigative individuals are analytical, intellectual, and observant people who enjoy research, mathematical or scientific activities. They are drawn to ambiguous challenges and may be stifled in highly structured environments. People who fall into this category enjoy using logic and solving highly complex, abstract problems. Because they are introspective and focused on creative problem solving, investigative types often work autonomously and do not seek leadership roles. They place a high value on science and learning and perceive themselves as scholarly and having scientific or mathematical ability, but lacking leadership and persuasive skills. The preferred work environment of the investigative type encourages scientific competencies, allows independent work, and focuses on solving abstract, complex problems in original ways. Typical investigative careers include medical technologist, biologist, chemist and systems analyst.

C. ARTISTIC (A)

Artistic individuals are original, intuitive, imaginative, and enjoy creative activities such as composing or playing music, writing, drawing or painting, and acting in or directing stage productions. They seek opportunities for self-expression through artistic creation. People who fall into this category prefer flexibility and ambiguity and have an aversion to convention and conformity. Artistic types are generally impulsive and emotional and tend to communicate in a very expressive and open manner. They value aesthetics and view themselves as creative, non-conforming, and as appreciating or possessing musical, dramatic, artistic, or writing abilities while lacking clerical or organizational skills. The preferred work environment of the artistic type fosters creative competencies, and

encourages originality and use of the imagination in a flexible, unstructured setting. Typical artistic careers include musician, reporter, and interior decorator.

D. SOCIAL (S)

Social individuals are humanistic, idealistic, responsible, and concerned with the welfare of others. They enjoy participating in group activities and helping, training, healing, counseling, or developing others. They are generally focused on human relationships and enjoy social activities and solving interpersonal problems. Social types seek opportunities to work as part of a team, solve problems through discussions, and utilize interpersonal skills, but may avoid activities that involve systematic use of equipment or machines. Because they genuinely enjoy working with people, they communicate in a warm and tactful manner and can be persuasive. They view themselves as understanding, helpful, cheerful, and skilled in teaching, but lacking in mechanical ability. The preferred work environment of the social type encourages teamwork and allows for significant interaction with others. Typical social careers include teacher, counselor, and social worker.

E. ENTERPRISING (E)

Enterprising individuals are energetic, ambitious, adventurous, sociable, and self-confident. They enjoy activities that require them to persuade others and seek out leadership roles. They are invigorated by using their interpersonal, leadership, and persuasive abilities to obtain organizational goals or economic gain, but may avoid routine or systematic activities. They are often effective public speakers and are generally sociable but may be viewed as domineering. They view themselves as assertive, self-confident, and skilled in leadership and speaking, but lacking in scientific abilities. The preferred work environment of the enterprising type encourages them to engage in activities, such as

leadership, management and selling, and rewards them through the attainment of money, power and status. Typical enterprising careers include salesperson, business executive, and manager.

F. CONVENTIONAL (C)

Conventional individuals are efficient, careful, conforming, organized, and conscientious. They are comfortable working within an established chain of command and prefer carrying out well-defined instructions over assuming leadership roles. They prefer organized, systematic activities, and have an aversion to ambiguity. They are skilled in and often enjoy maintaining and manipulating data, organizing schedules, and operating office equipment. While they rarely seek leadership or “spotlight” roles, they are thorough, persistent and reliable in carrying out tasks. Conventional types view themselves as responsible, orderly, efficient, and possessing clerical, organizational and numerical abilities. They may also see themselves as unimaginative or lacking in creativity. The preferred work environment of the conventional type fosters organizational competencies, such as record keeping and data management, in a structured operation and places high value on conformity and dependability. Typical conventional careers include secretary, accountant, and banker.

2.3.3 TABLE 2.1 HOLLANDS PERSONALITY TYPE FROM “TURNING POINT” - pg.25¹⁷

¹⁷ TURNING POINTS: Your Career Decision-Making Guide

SESSION 3

SELF REFLECTION II

Goal: -

- Guiding and supporting students in articulating their skills.

Skill

Chapter 1 of READY OR NOT. (pg. 13, 14)

THE EVERYTHING GET-A-JOB BOOK(pg 242, 243)...Talking about Your Skills.

WHAT COLOR IS YOUR PARACHUTE(pg. 51)...A List of 246 "Skills as Verbs."

Personal Descriptors and sub-classification of skills from existing teaching manual:

- People / Practical Skills
- Mind / Applied Skills
- Adaptability Skills

Chapter 1 of Hired! (pg 20-21) - Assessing your skill.

3.1 SKILL¹⁸

Everyone has skills and abilities. Some are unique aptitudes and talents, which may include musical abilities (singing, playing an instrument, composing music), artistic skills (drawing, painting, sculpting), athletic skills (running, jumping, throwing), or any other ability that comes easily and naturally to you. Some skills and abilities are used in your daily life, such as learning a new video game, repairing the lawnmower, listening to a friend's problems, or deciding what car to buy, while others are more specific to a particular work task, such as learning a new software program or interpreting financial statements to manage a company budget.

You will need many skills in the 21st century job market. The important thing to remember is that skills and abilities can be added or improved upon through education, training, and experience.

Continue to develop and enhance your skills, and career opportunities will come your way.

Foundation Skills — skills people bring to a job, also known as transferable skills.

Functional Skills — skills specific to the functions workers perform doing their job.

3.1.1 FOUNDATION SKILLS¹⁹

I. BASIC SKILLS

Reading - The ability to locate, understand, and interpret written information in both prose and documents, such as manuals, graphs, and schedules, in order to perform tasks. This skill also includes the ability to learn from text by determining the main idea or essential message.

¹⁸ NORTH CAROLINA CAREER RESOURCE NETWORK

¹⁹ NORTH CAROLINA CAREER RESOURCE NETWORK

Writing – The ability to communicate thoughts, ideas, information, and messages in writing. A person with this skill is aptly able to compose and create documents such as letters, directions, manuals, reports, proposals, graphs, and flow charts with language, style, organization, and format appropriate to the subject matter, purpose, and audience.

Arithmetic – The ability to perform basic computations using numerical concepts practical situations. A person with this skill will use tables, graphs, diagrams, and charts to obtain or convey quantitative information.

Speaking – The ability to organize ideas and communicate oral messages appropriate to listeners and situations. A person with this skill will speak clearly and participate in conversations, discussions, and group presentations.

Listening – The ability to listen carefully, understand, and respond to listener feedback. A person with this skill will receive, interpret, and respond to both verbal and nonverbal communication.

II. THINKING SKILLS

Creative thinking – The ability to use imagination freely, combine ideas or information in new ways, make connections between seemingly unrelated ideas, and reshape goals in ways that reveal new possibilities.

Decision-making – The ability to specify goals and constraints, generates alternatives, consider risks, and evaluate and choose the best alternative.

Problem solving – The ability to recognize that a problem exists. A person with this skill will identify possible reasons for the differences, and creates and implements a plan of action to resolve them. The progress is evaluated and monitored, and the plan is revised as according to findings.

Knowing how to learn – The ability to adapt and apply new knowledge and skills to both familiar and changing situations, to use ways of learning, such as note taking and organizing information, and to become aware of false assumptions that may lead to false conclusions.

III. PERSONAL QUALITIES

Responsibility – The ability to exert effort and perseverance toward attaining goals. A person with this skill will work to become excellent at doing tasks by setting high standards, paying attention to details, working well even when assigned an unpleasant task, and displaying a high level of concentration.

Social – The ability to demonstrate understanding, friendliness, adaptability, empathy, and politeness in new and ongoing group settings. A person with this skill will assert oneself in familiar and unfamiliar social situations, relates well to others, responds appropriately, and takes an interest in what others say and do.

Self-management – The ability to assess one’s own knowledge, skills, and abilities accurately, set well-defined and realistic personal goals, monitor progress toward goal attainment, motivate self through goal achievement, exhibit self-control, and respond to feedback unemotionally and nondefensively. A person with this skill is a “self-starter.”

Integrity/honesty – A person with this skill can be trusted, recognizes when they are faced with making a decision or acting in ways that may break with commonly held personal or societal values, understands the impact of violating these beliefs and codes with respect to an organization, self, or others, and chooses an ethical course of action.

3.1.2 FUNCTIONAL SKILLS²⁰

I. RESOURCES

Manages time – The ability to select important, goal-related activities and rank them in order of importance. A person with this skill will allocate time to activities, and understands, prepares, and follows schedules.

Manages money – The ability to use or prepare budgets, including making cost and revenue forecasts. A person with this skill will keep detailed records to track budget performance and make appropriate adjustments.

Manages material and facility resources – The ability to acquire, store, and distribute materials, supplies, parts, equipment, space, or final products in order to make the best use of them.

Manages human resources – The ability to assess peoples' knowledge, skills, abilities, and potential. A person with this skill will identify present and future workloads, make effective matches between individual talents and workload, monitor performance, and provide feedback.

II. SYSTEMS & TECHNOLOGY

Understands systems - A person with this skill knows how social, organizational, and technological systems work and operate effectively within them. They will make suggestions to modify systems in order to improve products or services and develop new or alternative systems

²⁰ NORTH CAROLINA CAREER RESOURCE NETWORK

Uses technology – A person with this skill judges which set of procedures, tools, or machines will produce the desired results. They understand the overall intent and the proper procedures for setting up and operating machines, like computers and their programming systems, and prevent, identify, or solve problems in machines, computers, and other technology.

III. INFORMATIONAL SKILLS

Acquires and evaluates information – The ability to identify the need for data. A person with this skill will obtain it from existing sources or create it and evaluates its relevance and accuracy.

Organizes and maintains information – The ability to organize processes and maintain written or computerized records and other forms of information in a systematic fashion.

Interprets and communicates information – The ability to select and analyze information and communicate the results to others using oral, written, graphic, pictorial or multimedia methods.

IV. INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

Participates as a member of a team – The ability to work cooperatively with others and contribute to group efforts with ideas, suggestions, and effort. A person with this skill resolves differences for the benefit of the team and takes personal responsibility for accomplishing goals.

Teaches others – The ability to help others obtain necessary information and skills. A person with this skill identifies training needs and supplies job information to help others see its use and relevance to tasks.

Serves clients, customers – The ability to work and communicate with clients and customers to satisfy their expectations. A person with this skill actively listens to clients and customers to avoid misunderstandings and identify needs. They also communicate in a positive manner, especially when handling complaints or conflicts.

Exercises leadership – The ability to communicate thoughts, feelings, and ideas to justify a position. A person with this skill encourages, persuades, convinces, or otherwise motivates an individual or group, and responsibly challenges existing procedures and policies

Works with cultural diversity – The ability to work well with men and women, from a variety of ethnic, social, or educational backgrounds. A person with this skill bases impressions on individual performances, not on stereotypes.

3.1.4 SAMPLE ACTION VERBS²¹FROM EXISTING TEACHING MANUAL

3.1.5 SKILL ASSESMENT EXERCISE²²

1. What skills do you claim as your strengths?
2. What skill areas do you believe need some improvement?
3. What can you actively do to develop these skill sets? Think about specific activities such as internships, community service, and so forth.

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²² HIRED! The Job Hunting and career Planning Guide

SESSION 4

NETWORKING

Goals:-

- Supporting the effort of students to be successful in their job or internship searches.
- Understanding networking and its importance.

Chapter 3 of THE EVERYTHING GET-A-JOB BOOK(pg 35-39)

- Define networking.
- Why should we network?

Chapter 8 of Hired! (pg 201-203), Building Your Network

“**Good networking**” from existing teaching manual.

Chapter 13 TURNING POINTS (pg, 226-227), Key points in networking

4.1 NETWORKING²³

Networking simply means utilizing your connections to enhance your career and to help others who want to enhance their careers. It is also the most effective job search method, but it will require a lot of effort and approximately 75% of the time you put into your campaign for you to reap any of its benefits.

4.2 NETWORKING OBJECTIVES²⁴

- Let people know you are seeking employment.
- Discover the hidden job market – those jobs that are not advertised.
- Increase your knowledge of the industry, companies, and/or occupations.
- Increase your knowledge about a new or related career field.

4.3 DEVELOPING YOUR NETWORK²⁵

Identify your network — Start by listing as many people as you can. Include friends, family, neighbors, former employers, current and former co-workers, current/former teachers and classmates, religious affiliates, social contacts, etc.

Select the most promising contacts — Select people in your network who can give you the information, resources, and support you need to help with your job search. Plan to call, write, or email them to see if you can arrange a meeting. Specify that you will only need 15–20 minutes of their time. Ask for information about:

²³ NORTH CAROLINA CAREER RESOURCE NETWORK

²⁴ NORTH CAROLINA CAREER RESOURCE NETWORK

²⁵ NORTH CAROLINA CAREER RESOURCE NETWORK

- Companies that employ people with your skills
- Professional organizations
- Alumni associations
- Student clubs
- Online social and professional networking groups

Follow-up — Keep careful records of all the people you contact and always send a thank you note acknowledging any information you receive. Contact every lead you are given and keep in touch with all your contacts periodically to inform them of your progress and keep you on their mind.

Expand your network — Continue to update the list of people you can contact. Use meetings and conferences, professional associations, and social gatherings to add people to your network. You may need to contact people directly without a referral from someone in your existing network. For example, collect names from newspaper articles, company directories, phone books, trade journals, company brochures, and corporate web sites. Use the steps for conducting informational interviews for these contacts.

Building a strong network can be the most effective way to find employment, because your contacts can:

- Introduce you to others in their network.
- Refer you to others for more information.
- Make suggestions of other businesses or agencies that may be of interest to you.
- Give you feedback on your job search strategy, resumé, and correspondence.
- Help you stay motivated by their encouragement and support.

4.4 PEOPLE SKILLS NECESSARY FOR NETWORKING:²⁶

Assertiveness – Take responsibility for getting what you want, and do not apologize for asking for help. Remember, networking is a two-way street of people sharing what they know to meet mutual goals.

Excellent Listening Skills – Most of your networking will require listening for information and answers to questions. Good listeners have good connections.

Ask Good Questions – Good questions indicate good listening skills. They give people a clear understanding of what you want from them and demonstrate good thinking skills.

Present Yourself Attractively – Presenting yourself in a professional and tasteful manner will allow you to communicate self-confidence and show that you are serious about your endeavors.

4.5 A GOOD NETWORK²⁷

Networking isn't about the quantity of contacts you make, it's the quality of the relationships you create and maintain.

Invest in a relationship. Become known entities to your networking contacts. Become members of one another's circle. Rather than calling for help, be interested in your work and stay in touch with yourself. Help your contacts because they are your friends, and not because it will pay off later.

²⁶ NORTH CAROLINA CAREER RESOURCE NETWORK

²⁷ VALPARAISO UNIVERSITY

Belong. Getting to know someone takes patience and integrity. People who have made that investment in you are worthy of your trust. People in your circle are those that you would hire, or those you would go to work for.

4.6 KEY POINTS IN NETWORKING/SUMMARY²⁸

- Career networks are sources of advice, instruction, and vital information. Network members can provide emotional support and honest feedback. They are open to career opportunities.
- Strive to have as many quality links in your network as possible.
- Create a strong and diverse network by including members from every area of your life, including family, friends, fellow students, and work colleagues.
- When meeting someone new, find your common ground. Build relationships over time. Stay in contact with your career network on a regular basis.

²⁸ TURNING POINTS: Your Career Decision-Making Guide

SESSION 5

RESUME / CURRICULUM VITAE & REFERENCE

Goals:

- To teach students how to prepare and what to put in a resume.
- To teach students about the types of resumes and their function.
- To clarify the use of a resume and curriculum vitae.
- To revise the use of reference in resume/ curriculum vitae writing.

Resume / Curriculum Vitae

Curriculum Vitae (C.V.) and its use.

Chapter 1 of *Hired!* (pg 164-174), on what is a resume? The three Cs of resume and preparing a resume

Chapter 4 of *THE EVERYTHING GET-A-JOB BOOK*(pg 50-61) and existing teaching manual on types, structure and samples of resumes and resume technology.

References ... Chapter 6 of *Hired!* (pg 174), Chapter 15 of *THE EVERYTHING GET-A-JOB BOOK* (pg 205, 206) and *Career Center Handbook 2010-2011* (pg.10)

The persuasive resume, resume standards and nontraditional resume from Chapter 4 of *READY OR NOT* (pg 48-52 and 61-62).

Chapter 9 of *TURNING POINTS* (pg, 157), on Common Resume Mistakes and require students to submit their resume for review.

RESUME / C.V. & REFERENCE

5.1 RESUME

A resume is a brief summary of your qualifications, skills, and various background information that represents your education and experiences in terms relevant to the employment market. A resume is one of the most important tools in your job search. Its purpose is to market your experiences, skills, and abilities to entice an employer to contact you for an interview. It is used to get you an interview, not to get you a job. It is usually the first impression you make on the person making hiring decisions, so it is important to make it a good one! ²⁹

WHAT IS A C.V.?

The term “curriculum vitae” comes from the Latin words Curriculum (course) and Vitae (life): The course of one’s life. "It is vitae, not vita, because "life" in the phrase "course of life" ... is in the genitive singular....” - **Eric Daniels**³⁰

A Curriculum Vitae (CV) resembles a resume in many ways, but is more specifically focused on academic achievements. A CV summarizes educational and academic history, and may include details about teaching experience, publications, such as books, articles, research papers, unpublished manuscripts, or book chapters, and academic honors and awards. Use a CV rather than a resume for teaching or research opportunities, applying for fellowships, or for further academic training. Some research positions in industry may also prefer a CV rather than a resume.³¹

²⁹ NORTH CAROLINA CAREER RESOURCE NETWORK

³⁰ www.cvtips.com

³¹ <http://web.mit.edu/career/www/guide/cv.pdf>

CV's are frequently longer than resumes, since the emphasis is on completeness rather than brevity.

While there is no single correct format or style for writing a CV.

5.1.1 CONTENTS OF A GOOD RESUME

A good resume presents:³²

- Who you are,
- What kind of position you want,
- Your skills, abilities, and accomplishments,
- A list of your education and training, and
- A list of previous work experience.

5.1.2 RESUME BASICS³³

Do:	Don't:
• Be clear, concise, and accurate.	• Lie or exaggerate.
• List your most recent job first.	• Include your salary history, Social Security Number, age, race, or gender.
• Stress skills and accomplishments that are most relevant to the job for which you're applying.	• Use pronouns or abbreviations.
• Use action verbs.	• Overuse bold & italics.
• Make the resume attractive to read.	• Use small type or overcrowd the margins.
• Have someone proofread before mailing.	• Include references.

³² NORTH CAROLINA CAREER RESOURCE NETWORK

³³ NORTH CAROLINA CAREER RESOURCE NETWORK

- ❖ *Always include a cover letter with every resume you send.*
- ❖ *After submitting your cover letter and resume, be sure to follow up and schedule an appointment.*

5.1.3 RESUME STANDARDS/ PRINCIPLES³⁴

- Focus on the strongest aspects of your past experience.
- Clearly convey your skills so that the reader can easily connect what you have done to what you will do.
- Concisely describe what you did so the reader learns the most relevant information in the fewest words.

5.1.4 REFERENCES³⁵

- References are usually left off resumes unless you are instructed to include them for a job fair.
- Have references available on a separate, typed sheet of paper and bring it to your interview.
List at least three people to whom you are not related but who recognize your skills, accomplishments, and positive personal qualities.
- "References furnished upon request" is no longer necessary on the bottom of resumes.

5.2 FORMATS/TYPES³⁶

- There are different resume formats, including chronological, functional, and electronic.
- No one resume format or style is appropriate for all job seekers.

³⁴ READY OR NOT: THE ART AND SCIENCE OF THE JOB SEARCH

³⁵ NORTH CAROLINA CAREER RESOURCE NETWORK

³⁶ VALPARAISO UNIVERSITY

- Select the style or format that best markets and sells your skills and qualifications to the most employers.

5.2.1 CHRONOLOGICAL FORMAT³⁷

The chronological resume emphasizes work experience. It is preferred by most employers because it enables them to quickly match your current and previous work experience to their immediate needs. Recent graduates can use it to show their part-time, co-op, and summer employment as relevant work experience.

*WRITING A CHRONOLOGICAL RESUME*³⁸

- Use a career objective to market your strengths and skills without limiting your options.
- Start with your most recent position and work backward. Be sure to provide the name of the company, your job title, your major duties and responsibilities, any accomplishments you achieved during your employment, and the city and state where the place of employment is located.
- Keep your career objective in mind and emphasize the duties and accomplishments that publicize your strengths of which the employer is looking for.
- Use action verbs to start each phrase or sentence.
- Use bulleted lists for easier reading.

³⁷ NORTH CAROLINA CAREER RESOURCE NETWORK

³⁸ NORTH CAROLINA CAREER RESOURCE NETWORK

- If you have completed a relevant course or received a diploma or degree in the last five years, list educational information at the top of the resume; otherwise, education should be listed at the bottom.
- Keep the length of your resume to a minimum. The suggested length is one page, however two pages can be used, at most. If a second page is used, include your name at the top of page 2.

Name - State full name, type in bold and use a large type

Current Address:

Permanent

Address:

STREET ADDRESS

STREET

ADDRESS

CITY, STATE, ZIP CODE

CITY, STATE, ZIP

CODE

TELEPHONE NUMBER

TELEPHONE

NUMBER

EMAIL ADDRESS

Objective - Indicate the position or general type of job you are seeking.

Education - If you are a recent graduate, place your education here. List your diploma, degree, certificate, name of school and location, and relevant courses (may be a separate section). GPA may be appropriate. If you are not a recent graduate, list your education at the bottom of the resume and do not include dates.

Work Experience - List each job separately, starting with your present job or most recent job first. State your position, major responsibilities, duties, and accomplishments.

Skills - List relevant skills. Include the machines you can operate and the computer hardware and software in which you are competent. Examples: Able to efficiently and effectively operate a cash register, copier, and fax machine; a PC and/or Macintosh computer; MS Office Suite (or specific programs, such as Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel, Microsoft Powerpoint, etc).

Activities - Extracurricular activities and community activities are all appropriate if space permits and if they are relevant to your career objective. Do not include irrelevant information about other activities.

5.2.2 A FUNCTIONAL FORMAT³⁹

The functional resume organizes your experience by areas of skills, avoiding a strict reliance on chronology. In other words, it focuses on what you can do, not where and when you did it.

Functional titles or skill clusters are used to organize your skills from various places of employment, volunteer activities, or educational experiences. The functional resume is an excellent tool for career changers, job seekers re-entering the job market after a period of not working, and for students finishing a degree or program area that qualifies them for work differing from their previous employment.

*WRITING A FUNCTIONAL RESUME*⁴⁰

- Determine the functional titles that best describe your skill area(s) and are most closely related to your job target.
- Within each functional area, stress your accomplishments, results, or abilities.
- Include all relevant accomplishments without identifying the place of employment or voluntary situation in which it took place.
- Use bulleted lists for easier reading.
- List your education, relevant courses, and/or degree(s) at the top of the resume if completed within the last five years; otherwise, education and training information should appear at the bottom.
- List work experience at the bottom, giving dates, company name, and job title.

³⁹ NORTH CAROLINA CAREER RESOURCE NETWORK

⁴⁰ NORTH CAROLINA CAREER RESOURCE NETWORK

- Keep the length of your resume to a minimum. The suggested length is one page, however two pages can be used, at most. If a second page is used, include your name at the top of page

***Name** - State full name, type in bold and use a large type*

Current Address:

Permanent

Address:-

STREET ADDRESS

STREET

ADDRESS

CITY, STATE, ZIP CODE

CITY, STATE, ZIP

CODE

TELEPHONE NUMBER

TELEPHONE

NUMBER

EMAIL ADDRESS

OBJECTIVE - Although optional, either an objective or summary statement will communicate your career goals and your focus.

EDUCATION - If you are a recent graduate, place your education here; otherwise, list it after work experience. List your diploma, degree, certificate, name of school and location, relevant courses, and GPA (optional). Do not include dates unless you are a very recent graduate.

FUNCTIONAL TITLE (S) - Select two or three skill areas in which you are interested and that are relevant for the job you are seeking. List them in order of your interest and skill level. State accomplishments or qualifications you have under each title.

Example Titles: Customer Service, Sales & Marketing, Office Technology, Graphics & Design, Medical Services, Food Service, Hospitality, Horticulture, etc.

WORK EXPERIENCE - List dates, job title, company name, city, state for each position.

5.2.3 A COMBINATION RESUME SAMPLE⁴¹.... FROM EXISTING TEACHING MANUAL

5.2.4 ELECTRONIC FORMAT⁴²

The electronic resume is scanned by a computer and placed in a database. The format may be chronological or functional. It must contain keywords and a keyword summary. Keywords are nouns that state your job title, duties, and accomplishments. The keyword summary should contain the targeted job title and alternative labels, as well as previous job titles, skills, software programs, and language known to the particular industry, profession, or occupation. It is important to note that the resume will be read by a computer first and a human second, if at all. If it does not contain the keywords the employer has requested the computer to search for, it will not be seen by a human hiring professional.

WRITING AN ELECTRONIC RESUME:

- Choose the most likely keywords and arrange them in an appropriate order.
- Use a typeface most easily read by a computer, such as Helvetica, Times New Roman, or Arial, and use a font size between 10-14 points.

⁴¹ VALPARAISO UNIVERSITY

⁴² NORTH CAROLINA CAREER RESOURCE NETWORK

- Avoid italics, script, underlining, graphics, shading, boxing, vertical and horizontal lines, and columns; the computer can have difficulty reading these. Bold type and solid bullets are okay.
- If printing, use smooth white paper (8 ½ x 11), black ink with laser quality print. Most electronic resumes, however, are delivered to the employer electronically using an online job board or via email.
- Use abbreviations carefully.
- Avoid stapling or folding a printed resume and cover letter. Words in the fold may not be scanned correctly. Provide sufficient white space.

Name - State full name, type in bold and use a large type

STREET ADDRESS

CITY, STATE, ZIP CODE

AREA CODE TELEPHONE NUMBER - Example: 919 772-5555.

EMAIL ADDRESS:-

OBJECTIVE - Optional, unless applying for a specific job title an employer is seeking.

KEYWORD SUMMARY - Approximately 25 words that best sell you, stated in nouns that are relevant to the job you are seeking. Include job titles, duties, skills, and interpersonal traits. If responding to a job posting, pull keywords directly from the job description.

EDUCATION - If you are a recent graduate, place your education here. List your diploma, degree, certificate, name of school and location, and relevant courses. GPA is optional. Do not include dates unless you are a very recent graduate.

SKILLS - List skills relevant to job objective, but not previously stated in Keyword Summary. May include transferrable, technical, and computer skills. A bulleted, single column list scans the best.

WORK EXPERIENCE - List each job separately, starting with your present job, or most recent job, first. State your position, major responsibilities, duties, and accomplishments.

ACTIVITIES, HONORS, AWARDS - Extracurricular activities, community activities, sports, etc., are appropriate if space permits and they are relevant to your career objective. Do not include irrelevant hobbies and activities.

5.3 WORDING⁴³

When designing your resume, choose your words carefully. Use words employers like to hear and read. This includes *keywords* and *action verbs*.

Keywords are nouns that are common to a particular occupation or industry. They relate to tasks, skills, and abilities required for a specific job. Using them in your cover letter and resume indicates to the reader that you are "in the know" regarding the job for which you are applying. They are necessary for electronic resumes, which are scanned by computer before a person ever sees them. However, you should incorporate them into any resume to convey that you "speak the language" of the job you're seeking. For example, someone seeking employment as an accountant might include

⁴³ NORTH CAROLINA CAREER RESOURCE NETWORK

keywords such as accounts payable, accounts receivable, tax preparation, or CPA (depending on the specific job requirements).

Action verbs convey a sense of energy, which employers seek in their employees. Always begin each statement of work experience with an appropriate action verb.

* THE LISTS OF ACTION VERBS⁴⁴ FROM EXISTING TEACHING MANUAL

⁴⁴ VALPARAISO UNIVERSITY

SESSION 6 & 7

THE JOB / INTERNSHIP SEARCH PROCESS...CHRISTOPHER CENTER

Goals:

- To teach the students where, how, and what to look for when searching for a job /internship.
- To revise the use of job search engines.
- To teach students strategies to access the visible and invisible job market.
- To provide guidelines on how to talk to potential employers at the Valparaiso University Career Fair.

Chapter 1 of THE EVERYTHING GET-A-JOB BOOK (pg 8-11) on for students and graduates

Chapter 8 of Turning Points on conducting a job search, pg 126

Know who you want to work for/ what information should...? From existing teaching manual

Career Center Handbook 2010-2011, Web Links, pg 13

Chapter 3 of Hired on the value of Doing Research, pg 65

Career Search at Christopher Center with Ms. Kim Whalen

- Building a target list of companies, organizations, employers or network.

Chapter 3 of READY OR NOT, pg 34, 35, 39-42 the visible and invisible job market and accessing the invisible job market

Valpo Career Fair Friday, October 7, 2011, 10:00 am to 2:00 pm at Harre Union Ballroom

THE JOB / INTERNSHIP SEARCH PROCESS⁴⁵

A critical concept of job searching is the knowledge of the “invisible or hidden” job market.

The “invisible” job market - positions that are not posted to the public or a position that anyone outside of the organization would not know about.

How to access the invisible job market:

- Volunteer
- Part-time job
- Post-graduate internship
- Employment firms and temporary employment agencies
- State and federal unemployment agencies

The “Visible” Job Market: - positions that are publicly posted could be accessed through

- Online Job Boards
- Employer Directories
- Trade Magazines and Professional Journals
- Chamber of Commerce Directories

⁴⁵ READY OR NOT: THE ART AND SCIENCE OF THE JOB SEARCH

6.1 CONDUCTING A JOB SEARCH - 1 ⁴⁶



KNOW WHO YOU WANT TO WORK FOR/ WHAT INFORMATION YOU SHOULD HAVE⁴⁷

- ✓ What does the company do – what products do they sell?
- ✓ What industry is the company a part of?
- ✓ Who are the company's customers or clients?
- ✓ Does the company have any subsidiaries?
- ✓ Does the company have a parent company?
- ✓ Who are the company's leaders?
- ✓ Where is the company's corporate headquarters?

⁴⁶ TURNING POINTS: Your Career Decision-Making Guide

⁴⁷ VALPARAISO UNIVERSITY

- ✓ Does the company have regional locations? Where are they?
- ✓ Is the company publicly or privately held?
- ✓ Who are the company's competitors?
- ✓ How does the company rank in the industry? Is it considered a big player, a small player, or somewhere in the middle?
- ✓ What are the company's sales and profit trends?
- ✓ What are the company's plans for the future?
- ✓ Has the company been in the news lately? If so, why?
- ✓ What other companies are in the industry?

6.1.2 JOB AND INTERNSHIP RESOURCES AT VALPO.EDU⁴⁸

6.2 STRATEGIES THAT WORK

Finding a job takes planning and persistence. Using a variety of approaches will improve your odds of finding the right job with the right employer. Today's job seekers need the best preparation possible for their job search. The following strategies will help you land the job that's right for you:⁴⁹

- Use the internet to view job search sites, as well as to view job postings on individual corporate web sites. Don't limit yourself to Internet searches only.
- Search job postings in newspapers, professional and trade journals, and other publications.
- Attend job fairs in your area or at your school.

⁴⁸ <https://www.intra.valpo.edu/career/jobsearchtools/passwords.php>

⁴⁹ NORTH CAROLINA CAREER RESOURCE NETWORK

- Contact prospective employers directly. After researching the business, call and ask to speak with the hiring manager or other appropriate contact (such as a specific departmental manager), inquire about possible openings, and ask to set up an appointment with him/her.
- Register for work with your local job link career center or other employment placement agency. Be aware, however, that some private placement agencies may charge a fee for their service.
- Read the business section of your local newspaper to learn about companies that are moving into the area, expanding their operations, or have received patent approvals or other awards; these companies are likely to be hiring new workers.
- Take advantage of state agency resources, particularly if you are a dislocated worker.
- Take a drive through nearby industrial parks, shopping centers, and office complexes to note the companies located there; contact suitable companies at a later date.

Review “The Value of Doing Research”⁵⁰

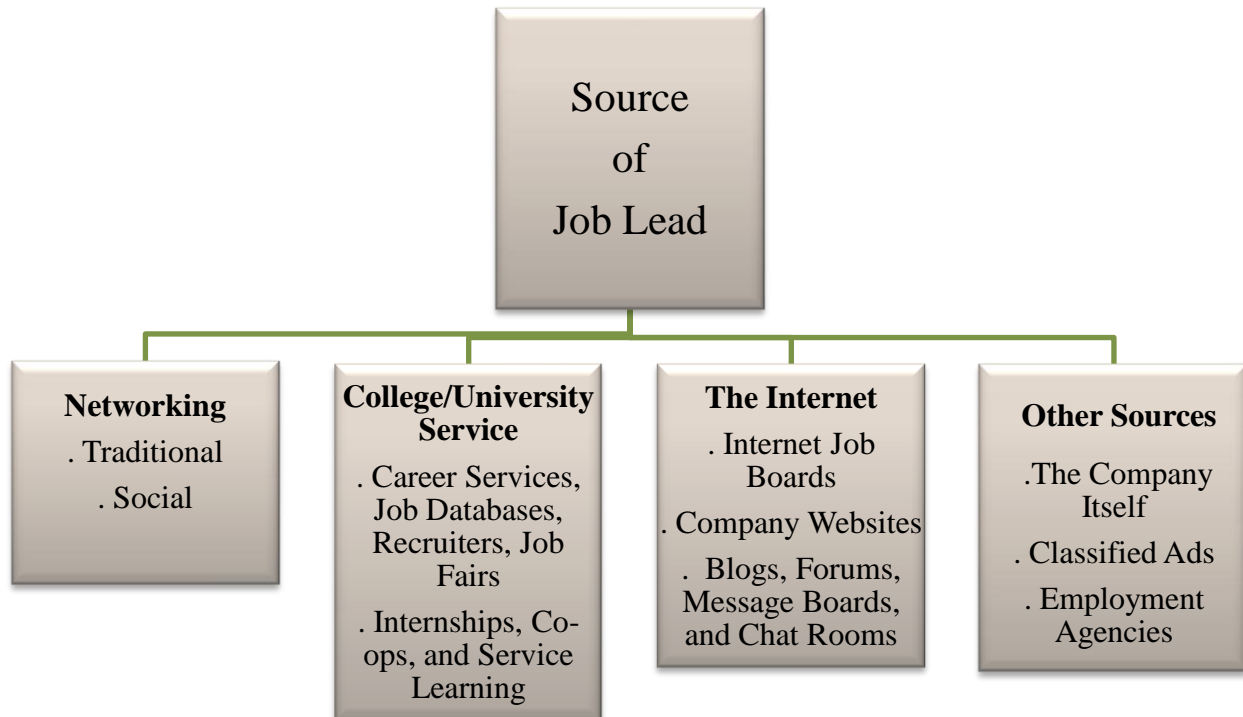
- Gain more knowledge so that you can reach some objective or make some decision.
- You will have adequate information on which to base your future career-related decision.
- Researching occupational information is a skill that you will use throughout your lifetime.

6.2.1 Career Search at Christopher Center with Ms. Kim Whalen

- Build a target list of companies, organizations, employers, or networks.

⁵⁰ HIRED! The Job Hunting and Career Planning Guide

6.3 JOB AND INTERNSHIP LEAD



6.3.1 Valpo Career Fair Friday, October 7, 2011, 10:00 am to 2:00 pm @ Harre Union

Ballroom⁵¹

Using a combination of methods is essential for a successful job search.⁵² Develop a strategy that works best for the occupations you are seeking. To find the best methods for you, consult with people in your field of interest or with a career counselor in your school or community. How did others in the same or similar field find their jobs? Was it through networking, a head hunter, a newspaper advertisement, a posting on a web site, a government agency, or a job fair hosted in your area or at your school/college? It was probably more than one of these methods. One size does not fit all, so develop a job search campaign that targets your specific career goals.

⁵¹ <https://www.intra.valpo.edu/career/jobsearchtools/passwords.php>

⁵² TURNING POINTS: Your Career Decision-Making Guide

*Did you know?*⁵³

- 80% of available jobs are never advertised.
- Over 50% of employees find their jobs through networking (friends, relatives, coworkers, etc.).
- 28.5% of new hires get their jobs through employee referrals. Networking gives an "inside" connection.
- 96% of job seekers apply to job postings on the Internet.
- 2.8% of job seekers find their jobs through the largest Internet job site.
- 96% of Human Resources managers post job openings in newspaper ads.
- 5% of employees find their jobs through the classified ads in newspapers, professional and trade journals, or other publications.
- 24% of employees find their jobs through direct contact/application with employers.
- 13% of employees find their jobs using a combination of networking and direct contact.
- 6% of employees find their jobs through school placement offices or career centers.
- 4% of employees find their jobs through private employment agencies.

⁵³ U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) and Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM)

SESSION 8

COVER LETTER WRITING & PURPOSE

Goals:

- Help students understand what a cover letter is.
- Identifying the purpose and the goal of writing a cover letter.
- Providing students with the basic guidelines in writing a cover letter.

Chapter 9 TURNING POINTS (pg. 158-160) on “Writing an Effective Cover letter”

Chapter 6 of Hired on writing a cover letter (pg 140-142)

Chapter 5 of READY OR NOT guidelines on cover letter writing (pg. 83, 84)

Career Center Handbook 2010-2011, Cover letters (pg 9)

Chapter 7 of THE EVERYTHING GET-A-JOB BOOK (pg. 93-99) on cover letter formatting, sending a cover letter, common mistakes in cover letter writing, and customizing your cover letter.

Chapter 6 of Hired— Write and Evaluate a Cover Letter exercise (pg. 144)

8.1 COVER LETTER WRITING & PURPOSE

Cover letters can sometimes be even more important than a resume. It will actually “sell” the reader on the idea of reading your resume so they will want to contact you for an interview. A cover letter should always accompany a resume and should always be individualized to the employer you are sending it to.

AN EFFECTIVE COVER LETTER⁵⁴

- Is tailored to a specific position in a specific organization (matches your qualifications with the requirements of the job).
- Shows why the employer should read your resume.
- Demonstrates your knowledge of the hiring organization and the job.
- States how you heard about the opening, whether through a person, job listing, ad, etc.
- Is straightforward, businesslike, and positive.
- Is typed neatly; error free; on good, quality paper; and is usually no more than one page.
- Is addressed to a specific person. Avoid using “Dear Sir” or “To Whom It May Concern.” If you are unsure to whom it is addressed, use “Dear Hiring Manager,” “Dear Manager,” “Dear Human Resources Manager,” or “Dear Recruiter.”

Cover letters can be used to inquire about job openings or to apply for known vacancies. They should always be specifically tailored to respond to a particular company and/or job vacancy. This means you will need to create a different cover letter for each job you seek. To personalize your letters, research information about the business and obtain the name of the person to whom you are writing.

⁵⁴ NORTH CAROLINA CAREER RESOURCE NETWORK

8.1.1 COVER LETTER TEMPLATE⁵⁵

YOUR NAME

Your Street Address
Your City, State, Zip Code
Phone

Your Email Address

Your Home Phone
Your Cell

Date of letter
Individual's Name
Title
Employer
Street Address
City, State, Zip

Salutation:

First Paragraph. Indicate the reason for writing, the specific position or type of work for which you are applying, and how you learned of the opening. You may also include a sentence that indicates why you are interested in this position and the organization.

Second Paragraph. Indicate your year in school, course of study, and when you will graduate. Point out one or two key skills that you possess that correspond well to the job you are applying for, and give 1-2 specific examples of an achievement that demonstrates that you have those skills. Avoid repeating the exact information the reader will find in the resume, but refer to them for additional details.

Third Paragraph. Indicate your desire for an interview. You may say that you will call within 5-7 business days to set up a mutually convenient meeting time or phone appointment. Finally, be sure to thank the reader for his/her time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Your signature

Your typed name

Enclosure

⁵⁵ HIRED! The Job hunting and Career Planning Guide

JEAN R. HENRY

1234 E. Denver Street
Valparaiso, IN 46383

jhenry@abc.edu

H: (xxx) 456-7890
C: (xxx) 654-3210

April 1, 2007

Ms. Barbara Moore
Human Resources Director
XYZ Financial Bank
Chicago, IL

Dear Ms. Moore:

I am interested in applying for the Business Analyst Internship position that was advertised in the January 29th edition of the Winston-Salem Post. My resume is enclosed for your review.

Currently, I am pursuing a degree in business at Valparaiso University with a major in Finance. I am in my Senior year and I would like to obtain a high quality internship for the summer to build on my current level of work experience. Your internship looks like an ideal opportunity for me at this time.

My background includes business experience in office and retail settings. Through those experiences I have developed strong customer service, organizational and attention-to-detail skills, which fit the requirements of your position. I have also had a variety of leadership and community involvement experiences of the XYZ Financial Bank's philosophy of helping people. My computer skills include extensive use of Microsoft Excel, Access, and Data.

I would greatly appreciate the opportunity to meet with you to discuss this internship and find out more about this opportunity. Please feel free to contact me by phone or e-mail. Thank you for your consideration of my application.

Sincerely,

Jean R. Henry

Jean R. Henry

Enclosure

MITCH STEVENS

532 City of Oaks Ave.
Raleigh, NC 27602

mstevens@abc.com

H: (xxx) 456-7890
C: (xxx) 555-3456

July 14, 2007

Mr. Ben Stewart
Regional Manager, First In Food, Inc.
222 Peabody Industrial Park
Raleigh, North Carolina 26702

Dear Mr. Stewart:

I was excited to learn that your company plans to open ten new restaurants in this area by the end of next year. Your restaurants have always been a favorite of mine. A mutual acquaintance, Mary Walters, told me you are interested in hiring managers with proven organizational abilities, a willingness to learn, and a high level of commitment to the company's goals. I have these qualifications and have enclosed my resume for your review.

With two years' experience working in restaurant management and a recent Associate Degree in Business Administration, I have obtained the skills and knowledge required to succeed at First In Food, Inc. In my previous position, I led our team in winning "Restaurant of the Year" for two consecutive years. We also maintained the lowest employee turnover rate and increased sales by 25%.

I look forward to meeting you, learning more about your expansion in this area, and discussing my qualifications with you at your earliest convenience. I can be reached at xxx-555-3456.

Sincerely,

Mitch Stevens

Mitch Stevens

Enclosure

8.2 COMMON MISTAKES IN COVER LETTER WRITING⁵⁶

- Even if you use a basic template for all your cover letters, make sure you customize each one you send out.
- Address your letter to a person. If a person's name is not indicated in the job listing, call the company if a phone number is given. If you have tried and you still cannot obtain the actual name of the intended recipient, then address your cover letter to the job title of the recipient.
- State the job you are applying for.
- Remember to ask for an interview. Include a way for the employer to contact you, such as a phone number and e-mail address. State when and how you will follow up with the employer.

8.3 WRITE AND EVALUATE A COVER LETTER⁵⁷

Find a job or internship posting that interests you. Write a sample cover letter for the position, using the suggestions from this session. Before you write the letter, respond to the following questions.

Your responses will help you target your letter and make it more effective.

1. How did you find about the position?
2. What is your interest in the position and organization?
3. What are your qualifications for the position?
4. List your relevant education and work experience.
5. Reiterate your interest in the position.
6. List your contact information and make sure it is easily found on the letter.

⁵⁶ THE EVERYTHING GET-A-JOB BOOK

⁵⁷ HIRED! The Job hunting and Career Planning Guide

SESSION 9

RESUME / CURRICULUM VITAE & COVER LETTER CRITIQUE

Goals:

- Develop a professional profile by measuring the resume and the accompanying cover letter.
- Make sure that students are adhering to the basic guidelines of preparing a resume and writing a cover letter.

Require students to write a cover letter to a company, organization, employer, or network from their target list (Section 7).

Students should email their resume and cover letter attached with a job or internship that they are applying for, to Mr. Tom @ tom.cath@valpo.edu or career.center@valpo.edu or schedule an appointment to meet with Mr. Tom Cath prior to class.

Discuss the feedback from the Career Center.

SESSION 10

THE INTERVIEW PROCESS, PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR, & “MARKETING YOURSELF”

Goals:

- Understand interviewing dynamics.
- Understand the importance of preparation for an interview.
- Prepare for an interview.
- The follow-up stage.

Chapter 7 of THE EVERYTHING GET-A-JOB BOOK, Preparing for the Job Interview and During Interview (pg. 158-168)

Chapter 6 of READY OR NOT on interview settings and communication (pg105-111)

Chapter 9 of Hired on The Ten Principles of Interviewing, (pg. 212-213) and Exercise 9.1 (pg.220)

Chapter 9 of Hired on Questions You Should Ask in the Interview (pg 239, 240)

Conclusion on Interviewing, Career Center Handbook 2010-2011, Interviewing (pg. 14 & 15)

Summary on interviewing, Chapter 10 of TURNING POINTS (pg.167) on Presenting Yourself.

THE INTERVIEW PROCESS, PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR, & MARKETING YOURSELF

10.1 THE JOB INTERVIEW

Once you've landed an interview, you'll need to sell yourself as the best qualified candidate by expanding on information contained in your resume and by demonstrating that you have the experience, skills, and abilities to meet the employer's requirements.

WHAT EMPLOYERS LOOK FOR IN AN INTERVIEW⁵⁸

Employers want to get a sense of who you are as well as what you can do. Often, the applicant who gets the job offer is the one whom the interviewer feels "fits in" best with their organization — not only in terms of skills and abilities, but in personality and temperament.

By practicing your interviewing techniques, you will gain the confidence to present yourself in a friendly, assured manner. Be relaxed and professional, but be yourself.

Go to <http://valpo.interviewstream.com> for online practice interviews.

Also, when researching potential employers, learn as much as you can about their "corporate culture." Use your network to find out what the "atmosphere" is like in companies where you are considering working.

⁵⁸ NORTH CAROLINA CAREER RESOURCE NETWORK

10.2 INTERVIEW SETTING AND COMMUNICATION

- **IN-PERSON INTERVIEWS⁵⁹**

- Use proper English.
- Avoid non-words.
- Avoid phrases.
- Speak clearly and confidently.
- Make eye contact.
- Be yourself and do not present yourself in an intimidating manner.
- Sit up straight, with open body language, and do not act bored.
- Know where your story is going.
- Tell the truth and speak well of others.
- Listen and ask appropriate questions.
- Find out the next step in the process.
- Close with a smile, a handshake, and a thank you!

- **PHONE INTERVIEWS⁶⁰**

- Keep your answers short but not brief (maximum 1or 2 minutes)
- Ensure your environment is conducive to engage in an interview. Anything that is destructive should be shut off, including a computer, television, or a second phone.

⁵⁹ READY OR NOT: THE ART AND SCIENCE OF THE JOB SEARCH

⁶⁰ READY OR NOT: THE ART AND SCIENCE OF THE JOB SEARCH

- Isolate yourself so you can concentrate on the employer and your mission of presenting yourself and your experiences in the best way possible. Minimize background noise.
- You should avoid using a cell phone unless you are certain the reception will be adequate, the call will not be dropped, and your battery will last through the entire conversation. If it is interrupted, it is in your best interest to acknowledge the interruption and apologize for it.
- Make sure you have a copy of your resume in front of you.
- **CAREER FAIR INTERVIEWS / MINI-SCREENING INTERVIEW⁶¹**
 - Dress as you would for a formal job interview.
 - Make sure you have plenty of copies to pass out to potential employers.
 - Shake hand with those you meet, stand tall, and speak clearly.
 - Attend alone, as traveling with a pack of your friends may distract you from making as many new connections as you can.

10.3 QUESTIONS YOU SHOULD ASK IN THE INTERVIEW⁶²

The question and answer portion of the interview is critical and you should continue to connect with the interviewer. The purposes of your question are three fold:

1. To nail down the specificities of the job.
2. To exhibit your knowledge and insight about the company, job, and industry.
3. To obtain information that will help you make a decision on a job offer.

⁶¹ READY OR NOT: THE ART AND SCIENCE OF THE JOB SEARCH

⁶² HIRED! The Job hunting and Career Planning Guide

Here are some sample questions:

JOB

- Why is this job open?
- What is the work environment like?
- Could you break down the typical activities in this job and tell me approximately how much time I would spend on each one?
- What is a typical day like in this job?
- Who would I be working with primarily?
- What other department(s) would I be working with?
- What is your management style? (Ask your potential supervisor)
- What training do you provide to support an employee in this job?
- How will my work performance be measured?
- Given my skills, how do you view my fit with this job?
- What is the career path associated with this job?

COMPANY

- What is the company culture like?
- What challenges will the company face in the next three years?
- How does the company view its employees and their roles?
- What is the overall management style?
- How does the department I would be working in fit within the company?

- What long-term training and education does the company provide for its employees?
- How would you describe your experience with this company?
- What do you think the company’s greatest strengths and weaknesses are?
- What are the major challenges from competitors and how is the company addressing them?
- How is the company addressing major industry trends?

INAPPROPRIATE AND ILLEGAL QUESTIONS⁶³

- “Are you married or single?”
- “Do you plan to have children?”
- “When and where were you born?”
- “Have you been hospitalized in the last five years?”
- “Have you ever been charged with a crime?”
- “What country are you from?”
- “What church do you attend?”
- “What is your ethnic background?”

These questions range from inappropriate to illegal if asked in job interviews. Due to federal equal employment laws, questions relating to marital status, religious preference, ethnic background, age, and race are clearly illegal for employment purposes. Other questions, including health status, financial status, criminal background, and children, border on illegal depending on the job question. Most human resource professionals know which questions are illegal and can’t be asked in an interview.

⁶³ NORTH CAROLINA CAREER RESOURCE NETWORK

If faced with one of these questions, you need to know how to deal with them. The following are some suggestions for addressing these situations:

- Ask, “ How is this relevant to the job?” or “Why do you ask that question?”
- Say, “I don’t think that is relevant to the job requirements.”
- If your instinct tells you it was asked in a nonthreatening manner or not as a basis for hiring, Answering the question may be your best response. Remember, however, that you are under no obligation to answer illegal questions.

10.4 DO'S AND DON'T OF INTERVIEWING⁶⁴

Do:	Do Not:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research the company and the salary range for the job you are seeking. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring anyone with you.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange for transportation. If necessary, make a trial run to the company location so you are certain where to go and how long it takes to get there. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be late. or more than 15 minutes early.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rehearse before the interview. The more experience you have with interviewing, the more relaxed and confident you will be. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smoke or eat strong-flavored foods, such as garlic, prior to the interview.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be well groomed and dress appropriately for the position for which you are applying. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be rude to anyone; you do not know who may have influence over the hiring process.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring extra resumes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chew gum.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a list of references on a separate sheet. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wear heavy perfume or cologne.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sit up straight, but be relaxed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slouch.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring a portfolio or samples of your work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • .Talk about your personal or financial problems.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring a notepad and pen for note-taking. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yawn.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrive a few minutes early. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be more than 15 minutes early.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be friendly and businesslike with everyone you meet; smile and offer a handshake. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act in a cold manner or ignore other workers that you are introduced to. ;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pause and think carefully so you can give considered responses to each question. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give simple yes or no answers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to what the interviewer has to say before asking for more information. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start discussing salary and benefits before the interviewer brings up the topic

⁶⁴ NORTH CAROLINA CAREER RESOURCE NETWORK

- Maintain good eye contact.

- Fidget or avoid eye contact.

- Be prepared to ask and answer questions.
Ask for clarification if you are unsure.

- Ramble when unclear about a question.

- Emphasize your skills.

- Make negative comments about other employers.

10.5 JOB INTERVIEW CHECKLIST⁶⁵

Y/N. I can list five things about myself that make me a good candidate for this job.

Y/N. I can discuss in detail each item on my resume or job application.

Y/N. I can discuss the skill sets and/or experiences that qualify me for this job.

Y/N. I have the training and/or education that qualify me for this job.

Y/N. I have hobbies or activities that help me qualify for this job.

Y/N. I can write down my employment history with accurate names, addresses, and dates for each job (if applicable).

Y/N. If I am asked for personal references, I have the names and telephone numbers of three individuals who have agreed to be my references.

Y/N. I have documents needed for the interview, such as a social security card or driver's license.

Y/N. I am dressed properly for the job I am applying for.

Y/N. I have directions and have made transportation arrangements so I can get to the interview on time.

Y/N. I have prepared some questions to ask the interviewer.

⁶⁵ The Jobseeker, Helping NY Work.

SESSION 11-13

MOCK INTERVIEW

RESUME / CURRICULUM VITAE, COVER LETTER, & MOCK INTERVIEW

EVALUATION & REFLECTION

Goals:

- Measure portfolio and interview preparedness.
- Evaluate strengths and weaknesses.

Discuss the career fair experience.

Set up a schedule with the Career Center for mock interview appointments with **Mr. Tom Cath.**

Self assessment and reflection.

SESSION 14

JOB OFFER AND REJECTION

Goals:-

- Identifying aspects of job offer evaluation and negotiation preparation
- Negotiation strategy
- Understand the basic skill and process of negotiating a job offer

Chapter 9 of Hired on The Typical Job Offer Process and Understanding Job offers, pg 249,250.

Chapter 9 of Hired on Job Offer Negotiations, know the negotiating strategies, Counter offer and the letter of acceptance/rejection, pg. 252-254.

Chapter 17 of THE EVERYTHING GET-A-JOB BOOK on Accepting a Job Offer, pg. 224

JOB OFFER ACCEPTANCE/ REJECTION

14.1 UNDERSTANDING A JOB OFFER⁶⁶

A job offer has these elements:

- A clear statement that says, “We are offering the job of (actual job title).”
- A date, time, and place to begin work.
- A definite starting salary.
- A statement of benefits.
- A description of the working conditions, which should include hours and location of work.

If you don’t receive all of this information, ask the employer about these items before accepting the offer. It’s vitally important to understand all elements of the job before accepting the offer.

14.2 JOB OFFER NEGOTIATION

There are many things to consider when you enter the negotiation stage of a job offer. Take time to consider what you need and what you want in the job and the salary. Here are some points to remember:

- Be honest about your present salary if the employer asks.
- Set an attractive salary goal. A 15-25 % increase in salary is reasonable if you are moving “up” in responsibility level. If you are to an area with a higher cost of living, you may need an even larger increase.

⁶⁶ HIRED! The Job hunting and Career Planning Guide

- If the organization’s “final” offer is below what you want, try to negotiate a review for a raise in three to six months.
- Remember, money is not everything. You may be able to negotiate an extra week of vacation, a higher sales commission, fewer hours, a flexible schedule, a performance incentive, or stock options. Be creative in your bargaining.
- The wages or salary you agree upon when you first begin work is the basis for all future raises. It is much easier to negotiate a higher wage at the beginning than it is to significantly increase your earning capacity later. Shoot for the highest possible wages at the start.
- You have the most negotiating power once the employer has decided to hire you. The employer wants you and does not want to go through the whole hiring process again for someone else.
- Never tell an employer you have another job offer at a higher wage unless it is true. This is not the way to negotiate. You may lose the offer if you are not truthful.

NEGOTIATING STRATEGY⁶⁷

There are many different ways to negotiate salaries. If an employer states a pay range of, for example, \$ 35,000 - \$ 40,000 annually, consider this options:

- Accept \$ 35,000 if it’s appropriate for your skills, experience, education, and prior wages.
- Bridge the employer’s offer by asking for \$ 38,000 - \$ 43,000. This keeps you within the acceptable range and prevents you from being hired at the lowest wage.

⁶⁷ HIRED! The Job hunting and Career Planning Guide

- Ask what qualifies a person for the top rate. Demonstrate how you meet these requirements; then request the higher rate.
- Request a salary higher than \$ 40,000 and provide evidence as to why you are worth more.

14.3 THE TYPICAL JOB OFFER PROCESS⁶⁸

- I. **Get the job offer in writing:** - Don't negotiate without a written offer from the organization.
- II. **Review the offer:** - Make sure it includes all relevant details.
- III. **Request time to think over the offer:** - Tell the employer who has made you the offer that you are flattered, and ask when she needs to know of an acceptance. If they really want to hire you, they may be open to negotiating extension on offer acceptance deadline.

Accepting a Job Offer⁶⁹

After going through the decision-making process and negotiating a salary, before you tell the employer of your decision, make sure you are one hundred percent committed to it. Ask yourself the following questions one last time:

- Do I fully understand the job and am I happy with what it entails?
- Will I be comfortable with the organization's culture?
- Will I be compatible with my future coworkers and boss(es)?
- Is the work environment one in which I will be happy?
- Is the location of the workplace acceptable?
- Will I be able to handle my commute?

⁶⁸ THE EVERYTHING GET-A-JOB BOOK

⁶⁹ THE EVERYTHING GET-A-JOB BOOK

- Do I understand the employer’s expectations and will I be able to meet them?
- Does the employer understand my expectations and will he be able to meet them?
- Does the salary and other compensation seem fair to me? If not, will I be able to live with that?
- Will I have the opportunity for growth in this job?
- Do I believe I will be treated fairly by my new employer?

IV. If you accept the offer, write a letter of acceptance, restating the terms of employment.

Writing a letter of acceptance.⁷⁰

- In the opening paragraph, indicate your formal acceptance of the job offer and express your enthusiasm for joining the firm.
- In the second paragraph, spell out the agreed-upon terms of employment.
- If necessary, include a sentence to correct misunderstanding that may have occurred during the offer or negotiating process.
- In the closing paragraph, restate your excitement about joining the company.

V. If you reject the offer, either do so at this time or when you next contact the employer.

You may want a bit of breathing room before rejecting the offer, so it is often wise to thank the employer and tell him you will get back to him/her in a few days.

Writing a letter to reject a job offer.⁷¹

- The first paragraph should express thanks for the interview.

⁷⁰ HIRED! The Job hunting and Career Planning Guide

⁷¹ HIRED! The Job hunting and Career Planning Guide

- The second paragraph can include your disappointment as well as additional thanks to other individuals at the company who were helpful to you during the employment process.
- In the third and final paragraph, restate your interest in the organization, and leave open future opportunities.

SUMMARY⁷²

BEFORE YOUR INTERVIEW

- Research the organization
- Prepare your interview outfit
- Assemble your interview materials
- Practice interviewing**

DURING YOUR INTERVIEW

- Start off on the right foot with your timely arrival and warm, professional greeting.
- Make the interview a two-way exchange--ask questions!
- Know how to cope with possible illegal questions.
- Avoid discussing salary until you have a job offer.

AFTER YOUR INTERVIEW

- Send a thank-you note.
- Follow-up.
- Negotiate your salary.
- Accept or decline the job offer.

MASTERING OTHER KIND OF INTERVIEWS

- Interview by phone or video connection.
- Know how to handle panel interviews, group interviews, and meeting in unusual places.

** Go to <http://valpo.interviewstream.com> for online practice interviews.

⁷² TURNING POINTS: Your Career Decision-Making Guide

SESSION 15

COMPLETED PORTFOLIO & SURVEY

- A completed resume and evaluated cover letter
- Develop a survey to measure the effectiveness of the course in introducing new approaches to career development and career/internship searches.

GRADUATE SCHOOL

CONTENT

- I. WHAT IS GRADUATE SCHOOL?
- II. IS GRADUATE SCHOOL FOR ME?
- III. HOW DO I CHOOSE A SCHOOL?
- IV. EVALUATE PROGRAMS - FACTORS TO CONSIDER
- V. APPLICATION & TRANSCRIPTS
 - ❖ Graduate School - Testing
 - ❖ Graduate School - Statement
 - ❖ Letters of Recommendation
- VI. CONGRATULATIONS! NOW WHAT?
- VII. THE LITTLE ENVELOPE. NOW WHAT?

I. WHAT IS GRADUATE SCHOOL?⁷³

Graduate school is constituted of advanced programs of study focused on particular academic disciplines or professions. Traditionally, graduate school has been "academic" (centered on generating original research in a particular discipline), but it may be "professional" (centered on developing skills and knowledge for a specific profession), or a combination of both.

How is Graduate School Different from Undergraduate Education?

Compared to undergraduate studies, graduate school is a more concentrated course of study. Expectations regarding the quality and quantity of your academic work are greater. Graduate programs also entail:

- focused studies in a specific discipline with fewer elective possibilities.
- rigorous evaluation of your work by professors and peers.
- smaller classes with increased student interaction.
- work experience via internships, teaching, or research (production of original research is often required).

⁷³ <https://career.berkeley.edu/Grad/GradWhatIs.stm>

What Graduate Degrees are available?

Graduate degrees are available in almost any subject and come in three levels-Master, Specialist, and Doctorate. Depending on the graduate school program and degree level you desire, your program requirements and length will vary.

- **Master's degrees** are offered in many fields of study. Some are designed to lead to a doctoral degree while others are the "terminal" degree for a profession (e.g., Master of Library Science; Master of Business Administration). For full-time students, completing a master's degree typically takes 2 years.
- **Specialist degrees** are usually earned in addition to a master's degree and will require additional coursework, training, or internship experience. This type of degree usually prepares students for professional certification or licensing requirements (e.g., Ed.S. for school principal).
- **Doctoral degrees** are the highest degrees possible. They usually require the creation of new knowledge via independent research - be it basic or applied. Including the time it takes to write and defend a dissertation, this degree may take anywhere from 5-7 years to complete.

II. IS GRADUATE SCHOOL FOR ME?⁷⁴

Before making the decision to go to graduate school, it is a good idea to look at what may be behind your decision. Here is some information to help you evaluate whether graduate school is the right direction for you.

⁷⁴ <https://career.berkeley.edu/Grad/GradWhatIs.stm>

Why do you want to go to graduate school?

Reason	Help Me Decide
I want to go to graduate school, but I don't know what for.	Clarify your goals first by talking to a Career Counselor.
I want a higher salary.	Review salary information to see how a graduate degree would affect your salary.
I am stalling because I'm not ready to make a career decision.	Make an appointment to talk with a Career Counselor.
It seems like all my classmates are applying to graduate school.	The decision to attend graduate school is your's alone; first explore careers that use your undergraduate degree.
I do not feel like I have any career options - graduate school seems to be my only option.	Be sure that your job search and/or career research has been comprehensive.
I do not feel ready to enter the work world.	Explore your options for after you graduate or meet with a Career Counselor.

Are you ready to be a graduate student?

You will need to be prepared to...

- Invest substantial time, energy, and money. Have you thoroughly investigated these costs?
- Spend the majority of the next 2-7 years studying. Will you be able to handle your living expenses during this time?
- Concentrate on a single topic or narrow range of topics for the next 2-7 years. Will you stay interested?
- Remain in school for several more years. Are you sure you don't need a break from school?
- Defer any career-related work experience. Would work experience now help you get into graduate school later?
- Initiate and carry out independent research. Are you comfortable with that?

III. HOW DO I CHOOSE A SCHOOL?⁷⁵

Once you have made the decision to go to graduate school, the next step is to research programs that match your interests and fit your needs. Don't limit yourself at this point, but instead, gather information on a broad range of programs.

- Consult sites for researching graduate and professional schools. Some suggested sites include:
 - gradSchools.com
 - US News

⁷⁵ <https://career.berkeley.edu/Grad/GradWhatIs.stm>

- Best Graduate Schools
- Contact programs directly to get more detailed program information such as courses, professors, costs, financial aid, and application forms.
- Attend Career Center workshops and information sessions about graduate school.
- Don't miss the Career Center graduate school fair where you can meet graduate school representatives and learn more about the programs they offer.

Tips to Get the Most out of Graduate School Fairs

One of the most important aspects of applying to graduate schools is selecting the programs that are best suited to your interests and career goals. Graduate School Fairs provide you with an opportunity to gain in-depth information from school representatives that will help you evaluate programs and find the best fit for you.

1. **Review the directory of attendees** - Before the fair, try to view the directory of who will be attending. Review graduate school websites and other sources to get a sense of the universities and their programs. This will help you identify which programs interest you and which schools to target at the fair. www.gradschools.com has an online graduate fair calendar.
2. **Rank the schools** so you can visit the ones you are most interested in first.
3. **Prepare a list of questions** to help you determine if there is a match between the graduate school programs and your interests and goals. See our list of factors for evaluating programs. Questions may address costs, financial aid, program requirements, course offerings, facilities, location, student life, faculty, and program reputation.
4. **Give yourself plenty of time** - Arrive early, and take a few minutes to review the map and directory of the fair.
5. **Be prepared to answer questions** from the admissions representatives, such as, "Why do you want to attend graduate school?" and, "When?"
6. **Think ahead** - Ask the representative for his/her card so you'll have a direct contact if you want to ask follow-up questions later. Use this opportunity to not only network with the representatives, but to also collect materials for later review.

- Consult catalogs, directories, and guides if available in the Career Center.
- Conduct informational interviews with current graduate students, professionals, and faculty in the graduate programs you are considering to gain insider information.

Informational Interviewing

An **informational interview** is an informal conversation with someone working in an area of interest to you who will give you information and advice. It is an effective research tool in addition to reading books, exploring the Internet, and examining job descriptions. *It is not a job interview, and the objective is not to find job openings.*

You may feel awkward making arrangements to talk with people when you do not know about their work; however, most people actually enjoy taking a few moments out of their day to reflect on their professional life and to give advice to someone with an interest in their field.

Benefits of Informational Interviewing

- Get firsthand, relevant information about the realities of working within a particular field, industry or position. This kind of information is not always available online or in print.
- Find out about career paths you did not know existed.
- Discover what others with your same major are doing in their careers.
- Get tips about how to prepare for and enter a given career.
- Improve your communication skills and confidence speaking with professionals.
- Learn what it is like to work at a specific organization.

- Gain knowledge that can help you in a job search. Resume writing and job interviewing become much easier when you have a good sense of what interests you and how your background and skills match the qualifications of a particular field, industry, or job.
- Initiate a professional relationship and expand your network of contacts in a specific career field; meet people who may forward job leads to you in the future.
- Learn about how others have balanced their work and other priorities.

Six Steps for Informational Interviewing

1. Research Career Fields

- Do some initial research on the career field or employer using internet and print resources.

2. Identify People to Interview

- Pursue your own contacts. People you already know, even if they aren't in fields of interest to you, can lead you to people who are. This includes family, friends, teaching assistants, professors and former employers.
- Call organizations directly, or visit their website, for the name of someone working within a particular area of interest.
- Visit the Career Center to review employer directories, past job listing binders and other resources.
- Read newspaper and magazine articles.
- Contact professional or trade associations.
- Identify names of Valpo alumni. Valparaiso University graduates will often take a special interest in Valpo students. Utilize the <http://valpo.edu/alumni/alumniassociation/index.php> to connect with Valpo alums.

3. Prepare for the Interview

- Develop a short (15-30 second) overview of yourself, including your reasons for contacting this person, as a way to introduce yourself and define the context of the meeting.
- Plan open-ended questions to ask.
 - What are your main responsibilities as a...?
 - What are some common career paths in this field?
 - What kinds of accomplishments tend to be valued and rewarded in this field?
 - What related fields do you think I should consider looking into?
 - How do most people get into this field? What are common entry-level jobs?
 - What steps would you recommend I take to prepare to enter this field?
 - How relevant to your work is your undergraduate major?
 - What kind of education, training, or background does your job require?
 - What skills, abilities, and personal attributes are essential to success in your job/this field?
 - What is the profile of the person most recently hired at my level?
 - What are the most effective strategies for seeking a position in this field?
 - If you could do it all over again, would you choose the same path for yourself? If not, what would you change?

4. Initiate Contact

- Contact the person by phone or email.
- Mention how you got his or her name.

- Ask whether it's a good time to talk for a few minutes.
- Emphasize that you are looking for information, not a job.
- Ask for a convenient time to have a 20-30 minute appointment.
- Be ready to ask questions on the spot if the person says it is a good time for him/her and that s/he will not be readily available otherwise.

Sample Telephone Script Requesting an Informational Interview

Hello. My name is Jane Wilson and I'm a junior majoring in English at Valparaiso University. Is this a good time for you to talk briefly?

I heard you speak at an event sponsored by the Undergraduate Marketing Association last semester. Although I am not currently looking for a job, I have become very interested in public relations and would like to find out as much as I can about the field. Would it be possible to schedule 20 to 30 minutes with you, at your convenience, to ask you a few questions and get your advice on how to best prepare to enter the field?

5. Conduct the informational interview

- Dress neatly and appropriately, as you would for a job interview in the particular industry or field.
- Arrive on time or a few minutes early, especially if you are meeting in an unfamiliar setting.
- Restate that your objective is to get information and advice, not a job.
- Be ready to give a brief overview of yourself, your education, and/or your work background.

- Be prepared to direct the interview, but let the conversation flow naturally and encourage the interviewee to do most of the talking.
- Start with your most pressing questions.
- Listen well and show genuine interest in what the person has to say.
- Take notes if you would like.
- Respect the person's time. Keep the appointment length within the time span that you requested.
- Ask the person if you may contact him or her again in the future with other questions.
- Always ask for names of other people to talk to for additional information or a different perspective.

Note: You can bring a resume, but don't take it out right away or lead with questions about it or your interviewee may think you're actually fishing for a job opportunity. You may wish to ask for input about it at some point in the interview, but first make sure you've established a comfortable rapport with the person.

6. Follow-up

- Keep records. Right after the interview, write down or type up what you learned (including the suggestions or advice given to you), what more you would like to know, and your reactions in terms of how this industry, field, or position would "fit" with your lifestyle, interests, skills and future career plans.

- Send a thank-you note within 1-2 days to express your appreciation for the time and information given. Based on whether the informational interview was relatively informal or more businesslike, this may be a brief handwritten note, an email, or a business letter.
- Keep in touch with the person, especially if you had a particularly nice interaction; let him or her know if you followed up on their advice and how things are going as a result. This relationship could become an important part of your network.

IV. EVALUATE PROGRAMS - FACTORS TO CONSIDER⁷⁶

- **Reputation of the Faculty** - What are their academic degrees, credentials, and research specialties? What is the student/faculty ratio? Look at faculty websites if available.
- **Quality of the Program** - This is measured by many different factors, many of which are mentioned below. You may choose to look at graduate school rankings to help you assess a program's quality; however, the rankings may be based on criteria that are different from your own. What's more, many scholars, deans, and advisors question the validity of such rankings.
- **Financial Costs** - What are the opportunities for fellowships, assistantships, or scholarships? What other sources of financial aid are available?
- **Admission Requirements** - GPA test scores, undergraduate coursework, specific entrance examinations, etc.

⁷⁶ <https://career.berkeley.edu/Grad/GradWhatIs.stm>

- **Available Course Offerings** - Will the course offerings help you meet your professional or educational goals?
- **Facilities and Geographic Location** - Will studying in a particular location help you meet personal or professional goals?
- **Student Life** - Consider the diversity of students, student organizations, housing, and campus support services.

V. APPLICATION & TRANSCRIPTS⁷⁷

Most programs will not review your application until all parts of it are submitted. Start preparing the application components early and send them in as soon as possible. A complete graduate school application usually consists of:

- Application Form⁷⁸
- Application Fee
- Official Transcripts from all institutions attended
 - For transcripts, contact your undergraduate school registrar.
- Test Scores
- Graduate School - Statement
- Letters of Recommendation

⁷⁷ <https://career.berkeley.edu/Grad/GradWhatis.stm>

⁷⁸ <http://www.valpo.edu/grad/forms.php>

❖ Graduate School - Testing

What kinds of admissions tests are there?

Most graduate and professional schools require test scores for admission. The Graduate Record Exam (GRE) General and Subject tests are required by many academic programs (Masters and Doctoral degrees). MBA programs usually require the Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT). Other tests are required in other fields such as the LSAT for law school, the MCAT for medical school, the DAT for dentistry school, the OAT for optometry school, and the TOEFL English proficiency test for international students.

When should I take admissions tests?

It is very important to prepare for and take these tests early. We recommend that you take these tests at the end of your junior year, so that you can submit your application materials early and have ample time to retake the test if necessary. Be sure to consult admissions deadlines and the Graduate School Timeline to determine your optimal test date.

When should I sign up for admissions tests?

Sign up early to ensure that you can take the test on your desired date. There are no registration deadlines for computer based tests (GRE⁷⁹ General and Written Assessment, GMAT⁸⁰), but registration is first come, first serve. The registration deadlines for GRE Subject Tests are approximately six weeks prior to the exam dates. Check with each testing organization to verify their policies.

⁷⁹ [Graduate Record Examinations \(GRE\)](#)

⁸⁰ [Graduate Management Admissions Test \(GMAT\)](#)

Do I have to take a GRE Subject Test?

Check each school's admission requirements to determine which tests you need to take. Currently, GRE Subject Tests are only available for Biochemistry, Cellular and Molecular Biology, Literature in English, Biology, Mathematics, Chemistry, Physics, Computer Science, and Psychology.

Subject Tests are only offered three times a year-in April, November, and December. You must sign up for Subject Tests approximately six weeks in advance. Not all Subject Tests are available on every date, so check the GRE website for test availability well in advance.

Where can I find information about graduate school admissions tests?

The official site for the GRE includes answers to frequently asked questions and information on registration and testing sites. The official site for the GMAT includes information on all aspects of the GMAT, plus online registration.

Are special accommodations available for students with disabilities?

Yes. Here are links to accommodation information for the major admissions tests.

[Graduate Management Admissions Test \(GMAT\)](#)

[Graduate Record Examinations \(GRE\)](#)

[Law School Admissions Test \(LSAT\)](#)

[Medical College Admissions Test \(MCAT\)](#)

❖ Graduate School - Statement

Graduate and professional schools often require some sort of written statement -- often called a "statement of purpose," "personal statement," or "letter of intent"-- as a part of the application. Some statements require rather specific information--for example, the applicant's intended area of study within a graduate field. Still others are quite unstructured, leaving the applicant free to address a wide range of matters. The importance of the statement varies from school to school and from field to field.

- Determine your purpose in writing the statement.
- Determine the content of your statement.
- Determine your approach and style of the statement.
- Words and phrases to avoid without explanation.
- Where to go for help.

Determine your purpose in writing the statement

Usually the purpose is to persuade the admissions committee that you are an applicant who should be chosen. Whatever its purpose, the content must be presented in a manner that will be coherent with whole statement.

- Pay attention to the purpose throughout the statement so that extraneous material is left out.
- Pay attention to the audience (committee) throughout the statement. Remember that your audience is made up of professionals in their field, and you are not going to tell them how they should act or what they should be. You are the amateur.

Determine the content of your statement

Be sure to answer any questions fully. Analyze the questions or guidance statements for the essay completely and answer all parts. Usually graduate and professional schools are interested in the following matters, although the form of the question(s) and the responses may vary:

- **Your purpose in graduate study.** Think this through before you try to answer the question.
- **The area of study in which you wish to specialize.** Learn about the field in detail so that you are able to state your preferences using the language of the field.
- **Your intended future use of your graduate study.** Include your career goals and plans for the future.
- **Your unique preparation and fitness for study in the field.** Correlate your academic background with your extracurricular experiences to show how they unite to make you a special candidate.
- **Any problems or inconsistencies in your records or scores, such as a bad semester.** Explain in a positive manner. Since this is a rebuttal argument, it should be followed by a positive statement of your abilities. In some instances, it may be more appropriate to discuss this outside of the personal statement.
- **Any special conditions that are not revealed elsewhere in the application, such as a significant (35 hour per week) workload outside of school.** This, too, should be followed with a positive statement about yourself and your future.
- **You may be asked, "Why do you wish to attend this school?"** Research the school and describe its special appeal to you.

Determine your approach and style of the statement/ Do's and Do not's

DO:

- Be objective, yet self-revelatory. Write directly and in a straightforward manner that tells about your experience and what it means to you. Do not use academes.
- Form conclusions that explain the value and meaning of your experience, such as what you learned about yourself, your field, and your future goals. Draw your conclusions from the evidence your life provides.
- Be specific. Document your conclusions with specific instances. See below for a list of general words and phrases to avoid using without explanation.
- Get to the point early on and catch the attention of the reader.
- Limit its length to two pages or less. In some instances it may be longer, depending on the school's requirements.

DO NOT:

- Use the "what I did with my life" approach.
- Use the "I've always wanted to be a _____" approach.
- Use a catalog of achievements. This is only a list of what you have done, and tells nothing about you as a person.
- Lecture the reader. For example, you should not write a statement such as "Communication skills are important in this field." Any graduate admissions committee member knows that.

Words and phrases to avoid without explanation

significant	enjoyable/enjoy	meant a lot to me	I like helping people
interesting	feel good	stimulating	remarkable
challenging	appealing to me	incredible	rewarding
satisfying/satisfaction	appealing aspect	gratifying	useful
appreciate	I like it	fascinating	valuable
invaluable	it's important	meaningful	helpful
exciting/excited	I can contribute	helping people	

Where to go for help

- If you need some help figuring out what to write, make an appointment with a Career Center counselor to come up with a plan.
- Once you have done a draft (or 2 or 3), show it to people you trust such as faculty, GSIs, family, friends, advisers, etc. The best people to review your statement are those who know you well and have excellent writing skills.
- If you want to improve your writing, the Writing Center offers programs on writing techniques, as well as individual tutoring.
- www.statementofpurpose.com is an excellent resource that includes essay critiques and writing tips.

❖ Letters of Recommendation

How important are letters of recommendation?

Letters of recommendation are required for almost every graduate school application and are a very important part of the application process. Usually grades and test scores factor in most heavily; however, your letters of recommendation could be the deciding factor in the admission process.

How many letters of recommendation do I need?

Although it can vary, generally, you will be asked for three letters. We recommend that you send only the number of letters requested. Admissions committees do not have enough time to read extra credentials.

Whom should I ask for letters of recommendation?

The best letter writers are those that know you well and can provide an evaluation of your ability to perform and succeed at the graduate level.

Graduate and professional school admissions reviewers tell us the following make the best letter writers:

- Someone who knows you well.
- Someone with the title of "Professor."
- Someone who is a professor at the school granting your baccalaureate degree.
- Someone who has earned the degree which you are seeking in your graduate work.

- Someone with an advanced degree who has supervised you in a job or internship aligned with the graduate program you are pursuing (e.g., Public Health, Social Work, Business Administration, etc.).
- Someone who has academically evaluated you in an upper-division class.
- Note: Letters from family friends, political figures, and the like are discouraged and, in fact, may be detrimental.

How do I approach potential letter writers?

First, make a list of professors and/or supervisors who will be your best advocates. Then, set up an appointment to discuss your request in person. Do not make the request via email. Be prepared to articulate your interests and reasons for attending graduate school.

Letters of recommendation are written strictly on a voluntary basis. The best approach is to ask potential letter writers if they are willing to write you a strong letter. If you sense reluctance or the answer is no, ask someone else.

When should I approach letter writers? What if I plan to take some time off before I go to graduate school?

Professors and supervisors are generally pleased to write on your behalf; however, they are usually involved in many activities. Faculty are especially busy during the months of November and December. Be considerate of your recommenders' time and approach them at least two months before you need the letter.

How can I go about getting good letters of recommendation?

Since your best letters will come from those who know you well, make an effort to get to know your professors and/or supervisors. A few ways you can do this are to speak up in class, select courses with small class sizes, take more than one class from a professor, do research for a professor, take on optional projects, and regularly attend office hours.

The best strategy you can use to get a good letter of recommendation, particularly if a professor hasn't known you long, is to provide your letter writer with ample information about you. This way, you will get a letter that includes concrete details about you, instead of a letter that contains only your grade, which is of limited value.

What information do my recommenders need to write good letters?

You can help your recommenders write enlightening letters by giving each of them a portfolio comprised of:

1. A cover note that includes:
 - Information on how to get in touch with you in case they need to reach you.
 - What you would like emphasized in each letter.
 - A list of schools to which you are applying, and due dates, with the earliest due date at the top.
 - Any other information that is relevant.

- Open and close your note with a thank-you and acknowledgement that the recommender's time is valuable and that this letter is important to your professional future.
2. Recommendation forms - To make it easy for the recommender to complete forms in a timely manner, complete the following:
 - Applicant information typed in.
 - Recommender's name, title, contact info (telephone, fax, address etc) typed in.
 3. Your unofficial transcripts (note courses you took with them).
 4. A draft of your statement of purpose.
 5. A copy of your best work in the course (with instructor comments on it), lab evaluations, projects, etc.
 6. Your resume.
 7. Stamped and addressed envelopes to send letters and forms directly to schools of your choice.

Do graduate schools care if letters are confidential or not?

In general, graduate programs prefer confidential letters. Admissions officials say that it displays more confidence on the part of the applicant if letters are "confidential" (meaning you, the applicant cannot see the letter). Often times, the confidentiality is surrendered by checking a box that says you will waive your right to see the form.

VI. CONGRATULATION! NOW WHAT?⁸¹

Breathe: Remember, if you weren't serious about this in the first place, you wouldn't have applied all those many months ago. Many people, in fact, look at the application process itself as a bit of a weeding-out process; if it was easy to apply, everyone would do it. The very fact that you made it through the application process should set your mind at ease that you really do want to pursue your education further.

Weigh your options: If you've only been accepted to one program, your choice is limited to only whether you do or do not want to go back to school. If you do, start looking for scholarships, housing, etc. If you do not, start putting your resume out to job prospects. If you've been accepted by two or more programs, you will need to weigh the relative merits of each. Is one more prestigious than the other? Is that prestige based on the education it provides, or merely on the reputation of the school? Is the location appealing and convenient? What kind of money is the school willing to provide in the form of financial aid? What is the workload like? Will you have to teach courses? Is the program well-connected in the field in which you would like to work? In short, which is the best program for you, personally?

Get organized: The best thing you can do is create a list of what is important to you and carefully, methodically chart your course. This is a decision that should be based on carefully considered criteria, not emotion. The last thing you want to do, after all, is make the wrong choice because you were hasty and did not think it all through.

⁸¹ <http://www.gradschools.com/article-detail/decision-time-86>

Trust yourself: If you are bright enough to have been accepted to a graduate school in the first place, then you are certainly capable of making the right decision about which one to attend. You can do this.

THE LITTLE ENVELOPE. NOW WHAT?⁸²

What do you do if you did not get in? After all the effort of completing the applications, it is normal to suffer a bit when the little envelopes start pouring in. But it's not the end of the world. It may feel like it, of course, but you will pull through in the end.

Breathe: Your best bet is to not make any decisions just yet. For no matter how calm you think you are, emotions are likely running high. Step back, try not to think about it for a few weeks, and then reconsider your options. Once you're on an even keel again you can decide what to do next.

Try, try again: Consider the first round a practice run, learn from your mistakes, and have another go at it next fall. If you truly want to go to graduate school, and ostensibly you do, you will find a way to get in. Start studying earlier for the standardized tests required by programs in your field. Rewrite your scholarly essay and personal statement. Reevaluate the kind of schools you plan on applying to. Remember, you can only do it better a second time around.

Reconsider: Your other option, of course, is to reconsider the endeavor altogether. After having gone through the process, you may genuinely choose to pursue a different course; sometimes people need to try and fail at something in order to realize that they really did not want to do it in the first place. And graduate school is far from the only means to a desired end.

Whether or not you got in, you still have control of your future. Just believe in yourself, pursue your dreams whether in school or out, and follow your gut and intellect. As Shakespeare said: "This above all: To thine own self be true." Trust yourself and believe in your own abilities to make the right decision. It will all work out in the end.

⁸² <http://www.gradschools.com/article-detail/decision-time-86>