



**MONTCLAIR STATE**  
UNIVERSITY

Center for Career Services and Cooperative Education

# A GUIDE TO CAREER PLANNING AND JOB HUNTING

*Find Your Place in the World*



# **A Guide to Career Planning and Job Hunting**

The Center for Career Services and Cooperative Education

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## Introduction

Finding one's purpose in life isn't easy for most of us. Unless we have an inborn talent for something, we must all make a conscious decision about the work we will do each day to earn a living. This decision requires thought and planning if we want to be happy in our careers.

The Center for Career Services and Cooperative Education has put this book together to help you with the steps you will need to take to make this important decision. Developing an understanding of yourself, the world of work, and the job hunt will take time, but is well worth the effort.

Begin your reading by learning about our services and the career planning steps you should follow throughout your years at Montclair State University. Follow the "Student Self Development Plan" on the next page. You will learn about

- self assessment
  - researching jobs and industries
  - internships and cooperative education
  - writing resumes
  - preparing for interviews
  - finding the hidden job market
  - using the Internet
- and more.

We hope that the information we provide will stimulate your thinking, encourage further reading and help you develop more questions. Feel free to come to the Center for Career Services and Cooperative Education Center for help. We are located in Morehead Hall, room 337 and can be reached at 973.655.5194. We look forward to working with you.



# Student Self Development Plan/Career Development Plan

## Freshmen Year (College Awareness)

- Consider college as preparation for life.
- Become familiar with campus offices and services.
- Learn the academic system. Read the Student Handbook and Catalog of Courses online.
- Begin to consider possible majors and careers.
- Participate in clubs and other activities to learn more about your interests.
- Get to know faculty, counselors, and academic advisors.
- Register with **Career Directions**, the Center's job board for on and off campus, full and part-time jobs.

## Sophomore Year (Self Assessment and Exploration)

- Take GNED courses in subjects you are considering as possible majors.
- Assess your values, skills, interests, and personality. Attend the Center's workshops for help.
- See a career counselor for individual help in choosing a major and planning a career direction.
- Learn about internships and co-ops.
- Visit our website to learn about careers you are considering.
- Come to the Career Library to read about careers you are considering.
- Learn to use the Internet to explore careers. Join a listserv. Follow a career blog.
- Continue to develop relationships with faculty and counselors.
- Try to become fluent in a foreign language.
- Consider a semester studying abroad if possible.

## Junior Year (Continued Exploration of Possible Careers)

- Meet with your academic advisor to be sure that you are taking the right classes.
- Participate in campus activities that relate to careers you are considering.
- Become a student member of a professional organization related to your intended career.
- Read professional journals in career areas of interest.
- Start gaining related part-time and summer work experience.
- Talk to people in your field.
- Attend the graduate school workshop offered by the Career Center.
- Go to the web to see graduate school admission deadlines.
- Take appropriate graduate school admissions tests.

## Senior Year (Job Search)

- If you are confused about your career direction, see a career counselor.
- Complete courses in your major.
- Continue reading about the career you have selected.
- Get career related experience through a part-time job, co-op, internship or volunteer experience.
- Attend the Center's in-person workshops on Resume Writing and Interviewing or listen to them online.
- Write your resume and have it critiqued in the office.
- Visit **Career Directions** at least once a week to learn of full-time jobs. Put your resume on-line.
- Schedule interviews with employers who come to campus.
- Send out applications for graduate school. Be sure all materials are sent in on time.
- Identify faculty and employers who will act as references in your job hunt.

# Career Planning



"Yes, you are the aggressive sales type we're looking for...no, I don't want to buy your brief case."

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## Knowing Yourself

Finding a job that is right for you begins with knowing enough about yourself so that you can look for work suited to your personality and skills. If you are shy, it is unlikely that you will enjoy a career in sales. If you prefer working alone, teaching may not suit you. People who enjoy their work are those who are involved with something that is so much a part of them that they might do it for free. **In other words, look for work consistent with your own interests, skills, values and overall personality pattern.**

### I. Identify your interests

#### A. Look at the "fun" in your life.

What do you already do for free? What hobbies have you had over the years? What do you do on rainy Saturdays or when you're stuck home with a cold? What activities have given you pleasure over the years? Think about the activities you choose on your own. That information can give you important clues that can help you find a career direction.

#### B. Look at your past and present behavior.

Have you always kept a diary or journal? Have you gotten good feedback about your writing over the years? Did you volunteer to work on your high school newspaper or yearbook? Do you ever write long letters to friends? Have you tried your hand at poetry or a short story at any time? Do you read a lot? Are you particular about the kind of pen you use? Do you have a collection of beautiful stationery in your desk drawer? Did you ever design your own greeting cards for special occasions? A lot of "yesses" to these questions might suggest careers in journalism, public relations, advertising, or any occupation that requires a lot of writing.

Were you the kid on your street who organized all the games? Were you always outside after dinner on summer nights looking for someone to play with? Do you make a lot of lists and get a kick out of checking things off as you accomplish them? Do you organize your books or records alphabetically? Do you like board games because it's fun to compete? Did you like baby sitting and being in charge? Did you get some of the girls in your class to form a club and were you the first president? These interests may suggest careers in some form of management.

These are typical questions you should begin asking yourself as you examine your interests and behaviors. **Pay special attention to those activities you are attracted to and participate in on your own, rather than those someone else requires you to do.**

## **II. Identify your skills**

In addition to thinking about your interests, you also need to look at your skills. What do you do well and enjoy? Are you a particularly good listener? Do all your friends come to you with their problems? Are you able to help without being critical? Maybe a career in something related to counseling is right for you. **Make a list of the things that you know you do really well.**

## **III. Identify your values**

You must also know something about your values — what is important to you — to determine a reasonable career choice. If making the world a better place sounds appealing, some occupations like diplomacy or environmental protection or social work may suit you, while advertising or banking may not — or at least not as easily or obviously. **Start to identify those four or five values that really matter to you.**

## **IV. Identify other personal variables**

In addition to your interests, skills, and values you also should consider other factors. How much education do you want? How ambitious are you? What kind of lifestyle do you want to lead? Is promotion important? What do you need in order to feel worthwhile? How assertive are you? Do you prefer the realm of ideas or the world of action? Start thinking.

## **V. Combine self-knowledge with information about jobs**

The next step is to combine all the information you have gained about yourself and identify occupations that suit you. Research occupations so that you understand what is required. The exercises and information that follow will help you to learn more about yourself and the world of work. In addition, be sure to visit our website at

**<http://www.montclair.edu/CareerServices>**

to learn more about yourself and occupations.

**Remember, if you need help with either self assessment or career exploration, you should make an appointment with a career counselor in the office or your school by calling x5194.**

# Self Assessment Exercises

## I. Interests

**To help identify your interests, make a list of all the things you do for fun.** Include activities you might do to distract yourself if you have a cold and don't feel well. Consider things you have enjoyed for a number of years. List anything that makes you feel most "yourself."

Example:

1. Reading science fiction
2. Surfing the web
3. Decorating
4. Watching the Science Channel
5. Learning something new
6. Sitting on the beach
7. Writing in a journal
8. Going to the movies
9. Planting flowers

Once you have created your list, **rank the items in order** from most interesting to least interesting.

Then, **try to find a *pattern* underlying most of your interests.** In the example above, the *pattern* might be a love of science and independent work. Continue the exercises that follow and see if the pattern continues. If you need help, feel free to make a counseling appointment.

## II. Skills

**One of the best ways to discover what you are good at is to think about things you have already accomplished that made you feel good.** List at least five activities where you did something you were proud of. The activities need only have been meaningful to you, not anyone else. Then, try to determine what skills you used.

**Example:**

Fixed vacuum cleaner——acted independently, analyzed problem, determined solution

Directed variety show——wrote skits, interacted with many people, coordinated large group

**Use this skills list to stimulate your thinking:**

advise	analyze	budget	coach
cooperate	coordinate	create	counsel
design	edit	evaluate	install
instruct	interpret	lead	listen
manage	motivate	negotiate	organize
originate	persuade	provide	prove
research	supervise	teach	write

### III. Values

**Pretend that you have \$500.00 to spend to make some of the values that follow a part of your daily, working life.** Others also are competing for the values they want and have the same amount of money or more. **“Spend” your money according to the values you feel you must have in your working life:**

_____ Autonomy	_____ Security
_____ Respect for your ideas	_____ Creativity
_____ Predictable work schedule	_____ Excellent income
_____ Opportunity to supervise others	_____ Honor
_____ Opportunity to help others	_____ Prestige
_____ Make the world a better place	_____ Travel

You may add values you prefer:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### IV. Summary

**People are happiest in work that involves their skills, interests and values.**

Brainstorm possible careers from what you have learned about your skills, interests and values in the previous exercises. Remember that there is no one right job for anyone and no job will meet all of your values, interests and skills. Be creative. If you need help, make an appointment with a career counselor.

#### **Example:**

**Skills:** writing, computing, teaching

**Interests:** science fiction, the Internet, astronomy, health food, art

**Values:** autonomy, creativity, use my ideas

**Possible careers:** technical writing, web design, public relations for a scientific firm

# Understanding The Job You Want

Just as it is important to know yourself, it is equally important to understand the job you think you want to see if it suits you.

## I. What you need to know

### A. The characteristics of the job you want

1. Daily tasks
2. Required education and training
3. Needed skills
4. Earning potential
5. Career paths

### B. The characteristics of the industry or field you are interested in

In addition to researching the characteristics of the job you want, you must also check out various environments and make yourself aware of what is currently happening in your industry of choice. How has that industry been effected by the economy? What are the current trends and issues? How is being a paralegal in a law firm different from being a paralegal in a corporation? How is counseling on a college campus different from agency work?

## II. How to research jobs and industries

**A. Use the Career Development Library** — yellow section — to get information about any of the above questions for thousands of job titles.

**B. Use the Internet & the Career Center's web site at <http://www.montclair.edu/CareerServices>.**

1. Identify appropriate **professional associations** from our website and visit their *career* or *student* sections for information. Directories of associations are also available in Sprague Library.
2. Join an **on-line discussion group** from your professional association or ask your faculty for recommendations.
3. Join **LinkedIn** and find a group related to your industry. (Go to our online workshops at <http://www.montclair.edu/CareerServices/studentservices/onlineworkshops.html> to learn how to use LinkedIn.)
4. Visit the **web sites** of individual organizations and learn about professional positions.
5. Read **professional journals and trade magazines** either online or in hard copy in Sprague Library.
6. Do an **information interview** by talking to someone in your profession. Visit our website at <http://www.montclair.edu/CareerServices/studentservices/infointer.html> to see typical questions.
7. Use **Vault's Career Insider**, (available from our website in the drop-down menu on the first page) to learn the inside story on organizations.

**C. See Appendix A** for more specific instructions and useful websites.

# Job Hunting

Once you know the kind of work you want and have researched job titles and industries, you are ready to prepare for the job hunt.

## I. Getting Ready

**A. Join several online discussion groups in your profession via LinkedIn or a professional association.** Professionals typically tell each other about available positions before they tell the public, so participation in these groups assures that you will know about jobs before others.

### B. Prepare your Resume

1. Read the section of this book that explains how to write a resume.
2. Come to a “Traditional Resume Writing” workshop offered throughout fall and spring semesters. The workshop schedule is available at [www.montclair.edu/CareerServices](http://www.montclair.edu/CareerServices). If you would prefer to learn online, you can listen to our online workshop on resume writing 24/7 from the same website.
3. Visit the blue section of the Career Center Library to see samples in our resume books.
4. Wordprocess a rough draft. Study it. Correct it. Redo it.
5. Have your resume critiqued by a counselor in the office.
  - a. Bring a good copy of your resume to the office and leave it for a critique. You may pick it up three days later.
  - b. Bring your resume to the office during counseling drop-in hours for an in-person critique.
6. Print the final copy of your resume using the computers in the Career Library.

### C. Learn about Interviewing

1. Read the section of this book that explains how to interview effectively.
2. Attend the Interviewing Workshop offered throughout the fall and spring semesters. The workshop schedule is available on the web at [www.montclair.edu/CareerServices](http://www.montclair.edu/CareerServices). If you would prefer to learn online, you can listen to our online workshop on interviewing 24/7 from the same website.
3. **Use Interview Prep**, our online practice program, to listen to yourself answering questions you select. (This is available from the drop-down menu on our website.)
4. Practice interviewing with a friend or record yourself to hear how you sound.
5. Make an appointment with a counselor for a practice interview if you think you need more help.

### D. Learn about our employment programs by visiting our website to get dates and times of:

1. Employer Workshop Series: Employers come to campus to teach how to write a resume and how to interview effectively.
2. Annual Career Fairs and On-campus Recruitment: Representatives from the hiring departments of organizations schedule visits on campus to interview graduating seniors.

**E. Use Career Directions**, our online job-listing service, with full and part-time positions.

**Career Directions** also lists on-campus positions for currently enrolled students. **Register as a freshman!**

## II. Identifying Advertised Openings

- A. Interview with on-campus recruiters** as noted above. Be sure to read your e-mail as on-campus visits are announced on the campus e-mail lists.
- B. Use the job and internship books** in the Career Center library.  
Familiarize yourself with the job notebooks in the office. While we ask all employers to list positions on Career Directions, some still mail job listings to the office.
- C. Identify and use journals** (both in print and online) in your field of interest that post job listings.
- D. Use the classified ads of several newspapers.**
- E. Use employment agencies.**
- F. Attend job fairs** advertised in newspapers and through our website.
- G. Use the Internet.**
  - 1. Go to the Career Center's home page at [www.montclair.edu/CareerServices](http://www.montclair.edu/CareerServices) for many resources. (Remember that web addresses change frequently, and new sites are created daily.)
  - 2. **Use Career Directions** for job listings.
  - 3. **Use search engines:** [www.hound.com](http://www.hound.com); [www.google.com](http://www.google.com); [www.yahoo.com](http://www.yahoo.com).
  - 4. **Use large job banks:** [www.monster.com](http://www.monster.com); [www.careerbuilder.com](http://www.careerbuilder.com).
  - 5. **Use search agents:** Agents will e-mail positions to you that fit your specifications: [www.monster.com](http://www.monster.com); [www.careerbuilder.com](http://www.careerbuilder.com).
  - 6. **Use government sites:** America's Job Bank at <http://www.jobbankinfo.org/> or the Office of Personnel Management at [www.usajobs.gov](http://www.usajobs.gov).
  - 7. **Use metaguides to the Internet:** The Riley Guide is one of the best at [www.rileyguide.com](http://www.rileyguide.com).
  - 8. **Go directly to the web sites of companies and organizations** that interest you.  
Many list available positions on-line.

## III. Identifying Potential Employers

You need not wait for a position to be advertised in order to send your resume and a great cover letter to companies and organizations. To locate potential employers in your field of interest, use the following resources and ideas:

- A. Through the Center**
  - 1. **Use the annual directories** of the **National Association of Colleges and Employers** which lists employers who expect to be hiring in different fields.
  - 2. **Use our web site:** <http://www.montclair.edu/CareerServices>
    - a. to see where other people in your major are working
    - b. to learn how to research employers more effectively
  - 3. **Attend our annual fall and spring Career Fairs.**
- B. Work with a counselor** in the Center or your career advisor in your school or college.  
Call the office at x5194 for an appointment.



**C. On your own**

1. **Network, network, network.** Create a list of everyone you know. Ask each contact if they know anyone you might talk to. Do this! It works - often better than formal ways of job hunting, since people like to hire people they know.
2. **Listen to all our online workshops** on networking, interviewing, the e-resume, LinkedIn and more, available from [www.montclair.edu/CareerServices](http://www.montclair.edu/CareerServices).
3. **Use social networking.** Join LinkedIn, Twitter and other social networking sites. **(Be certain that your Facebook site is “employer appropriate” as you will be googled by any employer thinking of hiring you.)**
4. **Use in-house postings.** (Work as a temp so that you can see available positions or get your employed friends to look at listings of available jobs within their organizations.)
5. **Take a part-time job or available “other” job** in the environment you want so that you can make contacts and learn first-hand of available positions. (Example: while looking for a teaching job, try to become an aide or assistant in the school system while you are looking, so that you can become a known quantity and can network with teachers and administrators.)
6. **Read professional journals and newspapers in your field.**
  - a. Determine trends. Find out who’s leaving, who’s been promoted, and which organizations are growing. Send your resume to those organizations where you believe new people will be hired.
  - b. Write letters asking for advice and information to people who have written articles you like in the industry you want to join.
7. **Subscribe** to appropriate on-line discussion groups, job banks and professional journals in your field that list positions. Use [www.rileyguide.com](http://www.rileyguide.com) to identify these.

**If you need help with any of the job hunting suggestions above, come to the Career Center during drop-in hours or make an appointment to see a counselor. Call x5194.**

# The Resume



"I must say, I'm particularly impressed with the coffee rings and eraser crumbs on your resume."

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Your resume is the primary tool of your job hunt. Because no one knows you as well as you know yourself — your goals, your accomplishments, your strengths — **no one can write an effective resume for you, but you**. You must be comfortable with every word in your resume and be able to speak easily about whatever you write. If you are willing to spend time creating this "personal ad" and take advantage of the services provided by the Career Center, you will create an effective resume.

Most of us will need a variety of resumes, each written to support a particular career goal, printed in a variety of formats:

- The **Regular Resume** - This is sent through the mail or given to a potential employer in a face-to-face meeting and can use italics, bullets and other design elements.
- The **Electronic Resume** - This is faxed to an employer or screened by resume scanning software before it reaches a human reader. This resume has no bullets and only very simple design elements.
- The **Internet Resume** - This is sent via e-mail or cut and pasted into online forms.

## Regular Resume

### I. A resume is...

**A.** A one page summary of your skills, accomplishments, experience, and education designed to

- support a particular career goal and
- capture a prospective employer's interest, resulting in an interview.

**B.** A document that pinpoints qualifications relevant to a particular career. No single resume will suit all occupational areas you are considering. Several resumes highlighting different aspects of your background may be needed if you plan to apply for positions requiring different skills.

- C. A representation of you which must look professional to create the best impression. All copies should look like originals. Reproduce your resume using a good printer with "fresh" toner. Use good quality paper with a watermark and a high rag content.

## II. Resume Language

The average resume gets between 5 and 10 seconds of the reader's time. The "reader" is a prospective employer who needs to know quickly what you can do for his/her organization.

**Every word on a resume must be there for a reason.** Thus,

- A. Avoid narration. Use short, concrete, skill-oriented, results-oriented phrases, such as "Initiated membership drive which increased pledge class by 75%." rather than "One of my responsibilities was to recruit new members. I devised a new system of recruitment which brought a lot of new pledges to our fraternity."

- B. Do not use the words "responsibilities" or "duties" before each description of a particular job or experience.

- C. Use action verbs such as these to clearly identify your skills:

adapt	administer	analyze
approve	arrange	compile
coordinate	conceive	conduct
control	create	develop
demonstrate	design	determine
direct	earn	edit
establish	expand	expedite
generate	increase	initiate
increase	innovate	improve
instruct	maintain	motivate
negotiate	originate	promote
produce	recognize	reduce
revamp	research	revise
simplify	solve	support

(Past tense forms of the above verbs are to be used for actions that you have already completed).

- D. Employers are likely to reduce the thousands of resumes they must read each year by eliminating resumes with over-crowded margins, incorrect spelling, grammar or punctuation. **Be sure to have your resume critiqued by a counselor, available during office drop-in hours.** Call x5194 to check on hours.

### III. Typical Resume Categories

The following categories are to be used only as guidelines for organizing a resume. Omit any categories that are not appropriate and create others that better fit your situation.

#### A. Name

Type your name in normal order: first name first.

#### B. Current Address & Phone

Indicate your current address and phone number first. Get an answering machine or an answering service if you are not likely to be home during business hours.

#### C. Home Address & Phone Number

Include your permanent address and phone number. If you live some distance away, an out of town number might be listed as “collect” out of courtesy.

#### D. E-mail Address and Web page (Be certain that both are professional and appropriate for the job hunt.)

List your e-mail address. You may choose to have a separate e-mail account used just for the job hunt. Note, however, that an employer is still more likely to call you than to e-mail you.

#### E. Objective

1. It is very important that you state a career goal. Employers will not take the time to figure out what you can do for them.
2. Be as specific as possible. State your current career objective rather than long range goals.
3. Types of objectives (These are listed from the most preferred to the least preferred.)
  - a. Name the position: accountant, high school English teacher, translator.
  - b. Name 2 or 3 skills you wish to use: position involving counseling, research and writing.
  - c. Name the setting: position in insurance.
4. **If you are interested in more than one kind of position, you will need separate resumes with different objectives, each designed to suit the position you are seeking.**
5. If you do not know your objective, make an appointment to see a counselor in Career Services, research careers on the web, visit the career library, and speak to professionals in the fields you are considering.

#### F. Education

1. List your degrees and graduation dates in reverse chronological order starting with the most recent. If you attended various colleges, include only those from which you earned degrees.
2. Omit high school.
3. Include majors, minors, and concentrations. If you took courses outside your major that support your objective better than those within your major, list those instead.
4. Include your GPA if it's over 3.0. You may note your GPA from your major, minor, or concentration — do whatever works best for you. Be aware, however, that employers will send for your transcript at some point, so always be honest.

## **G. Experience**

1. This category can include paid or volunteer work, internships, co-ops, summer and part-time jobs. **If your experience is extensive, include only that information that supports your objective.**
2. List your most recent position first and your first position last. Work backwards in time from the present to the past.
3. You may prefer to group experiences that support your objective in a "Related Experience" category. These experiences should be described in detail. Experiences that do not support your objective may be grouped in an "Other Experience" category and should not be described in detail.
4. For each experience that you list, be sure to note: your job title, name of employer, city, state, and months and years of the experience.

## **H. Military**

If you've served in the military, treat it as a continuation of your employment or experience category.

## **I. Special Projects**

Research projects and independent studies that relate to your objective may be described in this category.

## **J. Activities**

Some activities may relate to your career objective (reporter, treasurer) and may be better described in the "Related Experience" section. Other non-related activities can be noted in this category.

## **K. References**

At the bottom of the resume, write only "References are available on request." Do not list names. (See Appendix F for a sample Reference List.)

1. Undergraduates need 3 people to serve as references. They can be employers and/or faculty/staff.
2. Ask permission of these people before identifying them as references to a prospective employer.
3. Provide your references with a copy of your resume so that they know what it is you want to do.
4. Reference letters should be written on the writer's business letterhead and should discuss your skills and achievements as they relate to your career goal.
5. Keep the originals of all letters.
6. Inform letter writers that it is likely that they will also be called by employers.
7. **Give your reference list to an employer only when it has been requested. Do not include it with your resume as part of your first contact.**

## **IV. Additional Categories (Feel free to make up others that highlight your skills.)**

### **A. Software**

List all software you know by name and version number, no matter what your objective.

### **B. Hardware**

List all hardware you know by name and version.

### **C. Languages**

1. Note all **computer languages** in which you have ability if you are a programmer.
2. If you are noting **foreign languages** in this section, be honest, but positive about your skill level. Indicate your degree of fluency by stating "reading knowledge of Italian" if you do not speak it well.

#### D. Published Work

If you've published anything in a legitimate publication, list it regardless of your objective.

#### E. Qualifications

Concrete statements of skills you possess, which support your objective, may be used instead of an experience or employment category if you lack directly related experience.

### V. The Process of Writing A Resume

As indicated previously, the best resumes are written to support a particular career objective. In order to accomplish this **you will need to emphasize those experiences (paid or unpaid, full or part-time, work or school related) that best support your objective.** Give less attention — and less space — to those experiences which do not support your objective. If you do not know what to emphasize, you need to do more research in the career library in the Center or online.

To get started - either on paper or in your word processing program - do the following:

- A. Title separate sheets of paper with the names of all volunteer experiences, activities, clubs, internships, full-time jobs, summer and part-time work.
- B. For each experience brainstorm a list of all tasks you performed. **Focus on your accomplishments.** Consider how the job was done differently because it was you who did it, rather than someone else. What was unique about what you brought to the experience?
- C. Review each sheet and check off those activities which most clearly relate to your career objective in order to include them on your resume. If you don't know your objective, see a career counselor.
- D. Organize your information in either the reverse chronological or functional format.

### VI. Resume Organization

#### A. Styles

1. **Reverse Chronological** — Lists experience from the present to the past. This works well for those with no gaps in employment whose past experience is closely related to the desired position. This style is generally preferred by employers as it shows where and when skills and experiences were gained.
2. **Functional** — Those experiences which closely relate to the objective are described under skill or functional categories. This type of resume works well for career changers and those with gaps in employment.
3. **Combined Reverse Chronological/Functional** — Focuses on skill categories relevant to the objective while also listing past employment in reverse chronological order.

#### B. Order of information

Remember that the information you present should be organized so that **the most important information is near the top of the page** and the least important is placed near the bottom. The same arrangement should exist within each category — from most important to least important. **(Most important means most related to your objective.)**

# The Electronic Resume

Once you create a traditional resume, you may find that you need to send it to an employer who uses an electronic scanning system for an initial screening (call to find out) or you may need to send the resume via fax. The content of your resume need not change, but the format will.

**If so, here are some general rules for resumes that will be faxed or scanned electronically:**

- 1. Use fonts without serifs.** (Serifs are the lines above and below letters. Optima, the font you are reading, has no serifs. Helvetica, the font you are now reading, also has no serifs. Book Antigua, which you are now reading, does have serifs, as does Times New Roman)
- 2. Use fonts size 10 - 14.** (Smaller, and the scanner may blur your letters. Larger is too big.)
- 3. Avoid italics, script, underlining, graphics, shading, horizontal and vertical lines, parentheses, and boldface.** If you choose to use any of these, make certain to have white space around the print.
- 4. Do use industry jargon and abbreviations. Scanning systems used by large companies are programmed to look for keywords.**

**Create a summary section** at the top of the resume using as many keywords (NOUNS) as possible as shown in the example that follows from the resume of someone seeking a human resources position:

“Familiar with contract negotiation, benefit management, career counseling and succession planning, issues related to downsizing, and grievances. Two year member of the Society for Human Resources and ASTD.”

Don't worry about being redundant. The computerized scanning program won't care.

**5. Avoid complex layouts** with lots of columns.

**6. Be certain that your name appears as the first line of text in your resume.** Do **not** do what follows. If you do, the scanner will read “34 Green St.” as your name.

John Gray	34 Green Street West Orange, NJ 07052 December 12, 1999
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**7. Do not staple your resume or fold it.** (Folds can create extra lines when scanned or faxed.)

**8. Your resume may be longer than one page** if it is being scanned by a computerized system. Remember that eventually, this document will be seen by a person, so do not write any more than is absolutely necessary.

# The Internet Resume

On the Internet, you will either be e-mailing your resume or copying and pasting it into an employer's on-line form. Keep the following in mind:

- 1. Always send your text within the body of the e-mail.** Do not send your resume as an attachment. You have no way of knowing what kind of system your recipient has and some people simply will not open attachments from strangers for fear of viruses.
- 2. Always include a cover letter** with your resume, just as you would if you were mailing the resume. Send the resume and cover letter in one e-mail message. If responding to an ad or job posting, use the job title and/or position number as the subject of your message.

## How to prepare your resume for the Internet

Your resume should be saved in your word processing program as plain text, sometimes called ASCII, Text Only, or DOS text. Any one of these will work.

- 1. Make a copy of your resume file and save it as text only** <Mac> or .txt <PC>
- 2. Using any text editor**, edit the resume.txt file to resemble your printed resume. (Use Notepad for Windows and Simpletext for Macintosh to edit your document.)
  - a. Align everything to the left** as other formatting can be lost.
  - b. Be certain to use no more than 65 spaces and characters** across the top. Count this out with the space bar.
  - c. You cannot use bullets, underlines, or boldfaced font** in a plain text document, so consider using the following characters as substitutes:
    - **bullets**—use asterisks (\*) or plus signs (+) at the beginning of lines
    - **underlines**—use a series of dashes to separate sections. Don't try to underline text.
    - **bold text**—consider capital letters or use asterisks to surround the text.
- 3. E-mail the resume in this text form to yourself and to a friend** on a different mail system to see how it looks after it is mailed. This will help you identify other formatting problems before you start sending it out to potential employers.

## Points to consider in posting your resume

Control and confidentiality might be a concern for you, so here are some things to think about.

### **1. Do you want your resume public?**

Once you have posted your resume, it is a public document which is out of your control. Anyone can look at it. You may hire a post office box and use that rather than your home address on your resume.

### **2. Will your resume be deleted from the databank if you don't update it?**

Once you find employment, be certain that your resume is no longer floating around in cyberspace. A good database will delete your resume after 3 months.

Many of the ideas in this section of the Guide came from *The Riley Guide* at [www.rileyguide.com](http://www.rileyguide.com)



## Reverse Chronological

New graduate/ related degree/ related work experience

**Related Experience:** Marie examined her past work experience and decided that her bookkeeping job was somewhat related to her career goal. As a result, she placed it in a related experience section to give it emphasis.

### MARIE A. PUCCI

256 East Eighth Street  
Clarkson, New Jersey 08905  
(973) 345-6789  
Puccim@mail.montclair.edu

- OBJECTIVE:** Career in Accounting
- EDUCATION:** B.S., **Cum Laude**, May 200x  
Montclair State University, Upper Montclair, NJ  
Major: Business Administration  
Concentration: Accounting - GPA 3.50  
Overall GPA - 3.1
- HONORS:** Dean's List
- RELATED EXPERIENCE:** Bookkeeper, Financial Benefits Research Group, Roseland, NJ (10/02 - Present)
- Use Lotus 1-2-3 to prepare clients' balance sheets and income statements.
  - Use a computerized ledger system to record receipts and disbursements.
  - Print computer form checks, run reports and account summaries.
  - Verify financial transactions.
- OTHER EXPERIENCE:** Customer Service Representative, Community Savings Bank, Nutley, NJ (10/01 - 10/02)
- Opened new accounts; informed customers about bank products.
  - Sold bonds and certificates of deposit.
  - Prepared monthly reports.
  - Handled correspondence and discrepancies in accounts.
- Salesperson, Allwood Pharmacy, Clifton, NJ (9/99-10/01)
- Handled cash and credit transactions; maintained inventory.
- ACTIVITIES:** Montclair State University Accounting Club Member  
Vice President, Delta Sigma Chi  
College Life Union Board Member  
Special Olympics Volunteer
- REFERENCES:** Furnished upon request

## Reverse Chronological

New graduate/ related degree/ related work and volunteer experience

PETER RICHARDSON

45 Fairview Drive  
Montclair, New Jersey 07042  
(973) 744-1958

**Objective:** Position in a social service agency

**Education:** B.A., Psychology, May 200x  
Montclair State University, Upper Montclair, NJ

**Related Courses:**

- Group Dynamics
- Child Psychology
- Psychology of Adjustment
- Advanced Community Psychology
- Sociology of the Helping Professions

**Related Courses:**

Courses taken which support the objective are named.

**Related Experience:**

Those work and volunteer experiences which relate to the objective are identified. Accomplishments, as well as typical tasks, are noted.

**Related Experience:** 9/01-Present **Counselor**, Drop-in Center, Montclair State University. Organized new training program for volunteers to sensitize them to multicultural issues. Counsel college students. Make referrals to campus services and community support agencies.

1/99-5/01 **Aide**, Nathan's Nursing Home, Bloomfield, NJ. Acted as companion for one individual: motivated him to participate in recreational activities for the first time in a year. Helped family with medical forms.

9/99-12/99 **Freshman Seminar Leader**, Montclair State University. Chosen through competitive interview process. Facilitated an ongoing, semester-long group. Organized weekly meetings. Led participants through self-identity and values clarification exercises.

**Other Experience:** Earned 75% of college expenses

Summers 1999-200x Assistant Shift Manager, Boardwalk Amusements, Asbury Park, NJ. Received 2 promotions. Trained personnel.

1999-200x Various part-time jobs while attending college. (Details upon request)

**References:** Available on request

**Other Experience:**

"Earned 75%....." indicates a number of valued personal traits.

Jobs unrelated to objective are summed up or noted briefly.

## Functional

This teacher, who wanted to change careers, highlighted skills developed from her work experience which promoted her as a candidate.

### Related Work Experience:

The three categories, which Alice chose in order to highlight her related work experience, were selected after she analyzed the responsibilities and tasks of educational materials development.

These categories identify skills developed while teaching without overemphasizing her teaching background.

### Education:

This section moves to the bottom of the resume when it is not clearly related to the objective or when work experience has followed formal education.

Alice Morgan  
20 Tudor Place  
Livingston, New Jersey 07039  
(973) 994-2638  
Morgana@yahoo.com

### Objective:

Position developing educational materials

### Related Experience:

#### Program Development

- Developed curriculum for enrichment program designed for gifted students. Preparation involved extensive research into learning styles theory.
- Working closely with associates, integrated theories into an experimental instructional format which was implemented system-wide.

#### Communication

- Wrote articles about the 'gifted' program for the Board of Education community newsletter and the New Jersey Education Association magazine.
- Designed and conducted summer-long workshop on methods of teaching the gifted child. Instructional material used in workshop subsequently distributed throughout system.

#### Material Design

- Developed creative instructional aids.
- Designed innovative calculator games for slow learners. *Materials accepted for publication by Simon and Ross, Inc.*

### Employment:

Fourth Grade Teacher, Milltown School  
Milltown, NJ. (1999-present)

### Education:

M.A., 1999, Montclair State College  
Upper Montclair, New Jersey  
Major: Mathematics  
Additional courses in media

B.A., cum laude, 1997, Hunter College  
New York, New York  
Major: Mathematics  
Minor: Early Childhood Education  
NJ Certifications: Teacher of Elementary Education  
Teacher of Mathematics

### References and

Sample Materials: Available on request.

## Reverse Chronological

New graduate/ related degree/ related work experience

### Address:

Both addresses are listed only if you are on-campus during the week and at home on the weekends. After May 23, this resume must be redone.

### Languages, Operating Systems, Software, Hardware:

These draw attention to relevant skill areas.

### Related

**Experience:** Two positions held with the same employer are indented so that the employer's name need be provided only once.

### James Casey

james.casey@montclair.edu

(Until May 23, 200x)  
65 Clove Rd., Apt. 106-C  
Little Falls, NJ 07424  
(973) 783-4024

(Home)  
31 Adam Circle  
Neptune, NJ 07753  
(973) 922-8691

*Objective:* Position as a Computer Programmer/Systems Analyst

*Education:* B.S., May 200x, Montclair State University  
Upper Montclair, NJ 07043  
Major: Computer Science GPA 3.76  
Minor: Mathematics GPA 3.15

*Languages:* Assembler, C, ORACLE, COBOL, FOCUS, FORTRAN,  
SQL, Pascal

*Operating Systems:* UNIX, VAX/VMS, DOS, PRIMOS

*Software:* SAS, Lotus 1-2-3, Windows, Office

*Hardware:* VAX, IBM, Macintosh

*Related Experience:* Montclair State University  
**Lab Assistant**, Career Development (9/03 - present)  
Operate Macintosh and IBM computers. Install software. Write programs for job matching system. Provide trouble shooting expertise.

**Teaching Aid/Lab Assistant**, Gifted and Talented Program (10/01 - 5/03)  
Tutored students in programming and logic skills.

*Other Experience:* Public Service Electric and Gas Company, Newark, NJ  
Utility Operator (6/95 - present)  
Operate and maintain gas and oil burners.

*Activities:*

- As president of MSU Computer Science Club, organized a programming contest for Montclair High School students, December 2001.
- As chapter representative of Association for Computing Machinery, co-chaired AMC's annual conference, Nov. 4-6, 2001.

## Combined Functional/Chronological

Related degree/ no related work experience

**Qualifications:** This listing of skills developed through course work supports the objective.

**Employment:** Unrelated work history is listed to show responsibility and reliability. No description of tasks is needed.

**References:** There is no need to waste space and list names. Saying references are available is sufficient.

### Linda WOOLFSON

WoolfsonL@mail.montclair.edu  
27 High Street  
Parsippany, NJ 07054  
(973) 227-1994

<b>Objective:</b>	Laboratory Assistant
<b>Education:</b>	B.S., January 200x, Montclair State University Upper Montclair, New Jersey Major: Biology Concentration: Chemistry Overall GPA: 3.23
<b>Honors:</b>	Science Honor Society (College) National Honor Society (High School)
<b>Qualifications:</b>	Performed separations by chromatography, purification, extractions, distillations, syntheses and polymerizations.  Knowledge of staining procedures, embedding medium techniques, preparing and sectioning tissues and preparing slides. Expertise in dissection.  Operated instruments such as the Infrared Spectrum, NMR, Microtone, Centrifuge, Ultracentrifuge, Spectrophotometer.  Planned, organized, developed and conducted research experiments.  Chosen by faculty to do laboratory assisting and tutoring.
<b>Employment:</b>	Earned 100% of college expenses.
6/96 to present	Johnson Brothers, Parsippany, New Jersey Secretary
1/95 to 5/96	Pathmark, West Caldwell, New Jersey Cashier
<b>References:</b>	Available upon request



## Reverse Chronological with Focus on Relevant Qualifications and Experiences

### Diane V. Collins

132 Bloomfield Avenue  
Newark, NJ 07104  
(973) 484-2286

OBJECTIVE: Editorial Assistant

EDUCATION: M.A., Environmental Studies, May 200x  
Montclair State University, Upper Montclair, NJ  
Overall GPA: 4.0

B.A., Religion and Philosophy, May 1999  
Kean College, Union, NJ  
Overall GPA: 3.86

QUALIFICATIONS:

- Software: Office 2000, Pagemaker, Quark
- Hardware: Macintosh G3 and 4, PCs
- Ability to detect errors in punctuation, spelling and syntax
- Knowledge of proofreading symbols
- Research experience
- Ability to plan layout of printed material and photography
- Typing skills: 75 words per minute

RELATED EXPERIENCE: Administrative Assistant, Career Development,  
Montclair State University (7/02-5/03)

- Assisted in layout and proofreading of 60 page *Resume Writing* and *Interviewing* booklets, monthly office newsletter, and the Metropolitan New York Placement Officers Association newsletter.
- Communicated with authors regarding changes in articles and deadlines.
- Worked with local printers to produce newsletters under budget.

OTHER EXPERIENCE: Field Executive, Morris Area Girl Scout Council,  
Mendham, NJ (4/99-5/02)

- Wrote annual community reports.
- Designed recruitment fliers.
- Trained volunteers in two-county district to work effectively with scouts, parents, school and community.

REFERENCES: Available on request.

#### **Related**

#### **Experience:**

Diane's description of her duties focused on her "editorial" experience in order to support her objective, despite the fact that she spent no more than 10% of her time with those activities.

## Resume Section with School Activities Highlighted

### Finance

**Experience:** Rather than merely noting accomplishments as S.G.A President in an activities section, this student wisely chose to highlight this experience by placing it in his Finance Experience Section.

**OBJECTIVE** To obtain a position in Financial Management

**EDUCATION** B.S., Business Administration, August 2002  
Montclair State University  
Upper Montclair, New Jersey 07043  
Concentration: Finance GPA: 3.60

### FINANCE EXPERIENCE

6/01-6/02

**President**, Student Government Association, Inc., a student controlled, not-for-profit organization, incorporated under the laws of New Jersey.

- Supervised a staff of 20 including executive board, cabinet members, special events coordinators and salaried secretary and bookkeeper.
- Managed \$450,000-\$500,000 budget, reducing costs and wasteful spending by 8% over previous year.
- Negotiated contracts for the services of attorney, college ring companies, an independent auditor and a pharmacy program.

5/97-5/01

**Senior Unit Teller**, First Fidelity Bank, Totowa, New Jersey.

- Promoted to Senior Unit Teller in less than a year.
- Processed 3,000 transactions monthly.
- Earned a \$500 bonus for recruiting new full-time employees.
- Implemented new systems for more efficient drive-up window.

## Teaching Resume

### **Dakara Daine**

dained@mail.montclair.edu  
<http://www.teachingisgreat.org>  
102 Maple Drive  
Green Briar, NJ 08902  
(973) 933-2106

Relevant items  
such as teaching  
certification and  
teaching experience  
are included. Field  
work might also be  
included.

**OBJECTIVE:** Position teaching business education

**EDUCATION:** B.S., January 200x  
Montclair State University, Upper Montclair, NJ  
Major: Business Education GPA - 3.7

**CERTIFICATION:** Teacher of Business Education - Certificate of Eligibility with  
Advanced Standing

**COMPUTER SKILLS:** Hardware: IBM PC, Macintosh G4, Powerbook  
Operating Systems: Windows 98 and 2000, Systems 9-10  
Software: Office 2000, Lotus 123, PageMaker, Quark

**TEACHING EXPERIENCE:** Permanent Substitute Teacher, Milton South  
High School, Wallington, NJ (12/01 - present)  
• Teach three 9th grade word processing classes, two 11th  
grade accounting classes. Assist with yearbook.

Student Teacher, Lynd High School, Lyndhurst, NJ  
(9/01 - 12/01)  
• Taught 10th and 11th grade "Beginning Technology" classes.  
• Helped cooperating teacher with senior play and fund-raising  
activities.

**OTHER EXPERIENCE:** Recruitment Assistant, Career Services, Kean University,  
Union, NJ (12/98 - 2/01)  
• Contact employers to schedule recruitment dates and assist  
in all phases of on-campus recruitment for graduating seniors.

**ACTIVITIES:** • Pi Omega Pi Honor Society  
• New Jersey Business Education Association

**CREDENTIALS:** Available on request from the Center for Pedagogy, Montclair  
State University, Upper Montclair, NJ.



## Alternative Styles and Supplementary Information

If resume is over one page, name appears on additional pages.

Education outside formal degree programs, when relevant, should be listed on a second page.

The varied duties of this position were organized in descending order of importance and were grouped into sections to highlight 5 skill areas:

- Counseling
- Seminar presentation
- Research
- Outreach
- Computer knowledge - all skills essential to career counseling.

Peter C. Asten

page 2 of 2

### Continuing Education and Training

"Career Development For Technical Personnel," Professional Management Association, August 2002.

"Effective Supervisory Methods for Training Directors," National Training Associates, June 2002.

"Training the Trainer," American Society for Training and Development, February 2001.

"Time Management," U.S. Department of Labor, March 2000.

### EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

**Career Specialist**, Career Services, Broward College, Miami, Florida, (9/98 to 5/02)

#### Counseling/Testing Experience

Counseled alumni, graduate, and non-traditional aged students with personal and career concerns. Utilized *Self-directed Search* and *Strong-Campbell Interest Inventory*.

#### Seminar Presentation

Introduced, designed and implemented *Choosing a Major* seminar to increase undergraduate use of office. Led interviewing, resume writing and job hunt seminars. Presented program about career planning for women to residence hall students. Increased number of seminars offered in the evening to better reach alumni.

#### Research Activity

Initiated research into computerized career information systems. Surveyed faculty at Broward to determine "picture" of those likely to be involved with a Career Services office. Results presented at national conference of ACPA.

#### Outreach to College Community

Served on program planning committee of "Changing Life-styles" conference with members of Alumni Association, Black Alumni Committee, and Women's Center. Addressed faculty, classes, and campus organizations on career-related issues. Consulted with academic advisors for undeclared majors to coordinate efforts of both offices.

#### Computer Use

Utilized both **Discover** and **Sigi Plus** to help students with career decision making. Thorough knowledge of Office 2000, PageMaker, and Printshop for the Macintosh. Designed office web site: <http://www.broward.edu/career>.

## Critique your own Resume

1. **Overall appearance:** Do you want to read it?
2. **Layout:** Does the resume look professional, attractively printed, with good margins, etc.? Do key points stand out?
3. **Length:** Could the resume tell the same story if it were shortened?
4. **Relevance:** Does the material included support your stated career objective?
5. **Writing Style:** Are grammar, spelling, punctuation, and verb tenses correct and consistent?
6. **Objective:** Does it clearly identify the job you want now?
7. **Action Orientation:** Do phrases begin with action verbs?
8. **Qualifications:** Have you added a skill section of nouns?
9. **Specificity:** Does the resume avoid generalities and focus on specific information about experiences, projects, products, etc.?
10. **Accomplishments:** Are your accomplishments emphasized?
11. **Effectiveness:** Do you believe the resume can accomplish its ultimate purpose of getting you an interview?
12. **Usability:** Are you able to discuss everything on your resume with confidence. Can you provide examples to support what you are saying?

## Section of Resume that will be Scanned

If you are sending your resume to a large organization, call ahead to see if it will be scanned by a program such as Resumix. If so, use a lot of keywords throughout the resume and don't worry about being redundant.

Keywords: Reporter, Staff Writer, Features Writer, Weekly Paper  
Columbia Journalism competition  
Blog: My Life and Proud of it!

BA: English, Concentration: Journalism  
Cum Laude  
Macintosh, Quark, Pagemaker, MS Office  
VFW Scholarship.

Objective: Entry level reporting

Education: BA, May 201x, Montclair State University, Montclair, NJ  
Major: English, GPA: 3.6  
Minor: Journalism, GPA: 3.8

Experience: Features writer, Montclarion, Montclair State University , 1/10 - 5/1x

# Cover Letters

Whenever you mail a resume to an employer, it must be accompanied by a cover (explanatory) letter.

## I. The Purpose

- A. Resumes accompanied by well-written cover letters tell employers of your sincere interest. Resumes sent without cover letters suggest that you are randomly sending copies to everyone without much thought or effort. (This is true for e-mailed resumes as well.)
- B. A cover letter should be written to communicate what you can do for an employer and why you would be a good employee. In contrast to a resume, which notes your skills as they relate to your stated objective, **the cover letter serves to highlight skills and accomplishments which match the requirements of the desired position.**

## II. The Form

- A. **Each letter is individually prepared** and typed or word processed on good quality paper with a high rag content, preferably the same paper as that used for the resume. Buy matching envelopes, as well.
- B. **Your letter must be addressed to a specific person.** If you don't know the name of the appropriate individual, call the receptionist at the organization or go to the organization's web site.
- C. State your reason for writing in the first paragraph.
- D. In the second paragraph explain the contributions you can make to the organization by directing attention to specific skills mentioned in your resume.
- E. In the third paragraph **indicate why the organization is of interest to you.**
  - 1. You should research the places you are contacting because cover letters that stand out are those that demonstrate knowledge of the employer. A sentence or two revealing your knowledge of a firm's training program, a new product, or a current situation can carry a lot of weight.
  - 2. Use the Internet to research employers. Most organizations have a web site. If they do not, go to Sprague library and use their data bases.
- F. Take the initiative and say that you will call to set up an interview.
- G. Use simple, direct language and correct grammar.
- H. Let the letter reflect your individuality, but avoid appearing aggressive, overbearing, apologetic, and cute. This is a business letter.

## III. Samples follow showing different kinds of letters you may need in the course of your job hunt:

- A. The letter of application in response to a newspaper ad
- B. The letter of application in response to a job notice
- C. The letter of application in response to a box number
- D. The letter of application as a result of a personal contact
- E. The letter of inquiry
- F. The thank you letter after an interview
- G. The thank you letter even though you didn't get the job
- H. The thank you letter rejecting the offer of a position
- I. Letter requesting company information and an annual report

## Letter in Response to a Newspaper Advertisement

(Ad is shown to help you understand the letter. Do not attach the ad to your letter.)

or fax resume to Rosemary on 973-565-5029.

### Personnel Assistant

Manufacturer of lucite products has several entry-level positions available in its human resources department. Responsibilities in training, hiring, benefits, wage and salary administration.

Applicant must hold MS/MA in human resources, business, industrial relations, or a related area.

Please send resume and letter of application to:  
Richard Tomczyk, Manager of Personnel, Bates Products, Incorporated, 895 Granada Street, New York, NY 10003

*Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer  
Women and minorities are encouraged to apply.*

### Personnel Manager

Wanted: one hard working go getter to join our dedicated team of professionals. We are a consul-

1234 Alice Street  
Toms River, NJ 07391  
May 13, 200x

### Paragraph 1

Identify position desired and how you learned of its availability.

### Paragraph 2

Express interest in this particular company and your desire to work in this specific career field.

### Paragraph 3

Refer to enclosed resume and pinpoint those specific elements of your background which have prepared you for this position.

### Paragraph 4

Indicate the follow-up action you plan to take in order to set up an interview.

Richard Tomczyk  
Manager of Personnel  
Bates Products, Incorporated  
895 Granada Street  
New York, NY 10003

Dear Mr. Tomczyk:

I am applying for the position of personnel assistant advertised in the Sunday, May 11, *New York Times*.

A recent issue of *Training* focuses on your company's use of the quality circles concept of increasing worker productivity. I would like to begin my career in labor relations with a company that recognizes the value of involving employees in problem solving.

As you can see from my resume, my education, skills and employment experience work together to qualify me for this position. While completing my major at Montclair State University in industrial relations, I studied human resource development, wage and salary administration, and personnel research and measurement. These courses gave me an understanding of the concerns facing the human resources specialist. This knowledge is complemented by practical experience of employer-employee relations, gained while working first as a clerk and then as an evening manager in a retail store.

I will be calling your office on Wednesday, May 20, to inquire about the possibility of interviewing with you. Please don't hesitate to call me at (973) 123-4567 if you want any additional information.

Sincerely,

Mary Jones

Enclosure

## Letter in Response to a Job Notice

Bohn Hall 914  
Montclair State University  
Montclair, NJ 07043  
May 3, 200x

Ms. Marie Berger  
Paralegal Manager  
Daley, Daley, and Rogers  
200 Park Avenue  
New York, NY 10166

Dear Ms. Berger:

I am writing to apply for the paralegal position that was posted in the Montclair State University Career Development office. The position described in your posting matches my career goals and qualifications closely.

As noted on the enclosed resume, I would like to use my research and writing skills while working for a law firm as a paralegal. My academic courses have required many research projects and papers. I have enclosed a few abstracts of my efforts. I hope they demonstrate my capacity to undertake research and report my findings in a clear and concise fashion.

I can work well under the pressure of deadlines and have been involved in many group projects. My work experiences have taught me that one must be prepared to work beyond the typical forty-hour week to achieve success. I am willing and able to do so for Daley, Daley, and Rogers.

Your consideration of my credentials would be greatly appreciated. I will call you next Friday to confirm receipt of this letter and to discuss appropriate next steps. Please feel free to contact me at (973) 893-5541 if you require additional information to support my candidacy.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Joseph E. Byrne

Enclosures

**Paragraph 2**  
Note that Joseph has chosen to include material which provides proof of the research skills that he has identified in his resume. If you do choose to include work samples, understand that they will not be returned to you.

## Letter in Response to a Box Number

'To Whom it May Concern' is appropriate when replying to a box number because no company name is provided in the ad and the correct individual cannot be identified.

### Paragraph 1

Make reference to the advertisement and note the position for which you are applying.

### Paragraph 2

Emphasize the particular skills and experiences which qualify you for the position.

### Paragraph 3

Refer to your resume and request an interview. List an email address and phone numbers where you can be reached easily. Do not list a work number if your current employers are unaware of your job hunt.

Room 206, Blanton Hall  
Montclair State University  
Upper Montclair, NJ 07043  
April 3, 200x

Box 1234  
West Jay Street  
Times Square  
New York, NY 10036

To whom it may concern:

Your advertisement in yesterday's **New York Times** for an assistant industrial engineer in the production department of your electronics firm is of special interest to me.

As a college senior majoring in physics, I believe I have the right combination of theoretical and practical experience for this position. My summer work for XYZ labs as an electronics technician, combined with both my college lab work and knowledge of management principles, make me particularly aware of the special concerns of a company involved in electronics production.

My resume details the specifics of my education and business background including relevant course work, and I would be happy to provide you with further information. I am very enthusiastic about the possibility of working for an electronics firm as an assistant industrial engineer and would like to meet you personally. I can be reached at (973) 575-1234 between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. or at (973) 655-4321 any evening after 6 p.m. Additionally, my e-mail address is GreerE1@montclair.edu should you prefer to contact me that way.

Yours truly,

Elaine Greer

Enclosure

## Letter of Application, Personal Contact

This type of letter is sent to an employer about an opening you've learned about through a personal contact.

### Paragraph 1

State purpose of letter and identify contact person who informed you of the position.

### Paragraph 2

Refer to resume to point out experiences and skills which match the available position.

### Paragraph 3

Indicate your wish for an interview. It is appropriate to say you will call only if you actually plan to do so.

### Enclosure

Reminds reader that other papers (resume) are enclosed, should they be separated.

108 Lawrence Street  
Livingston, NJ 07039  
July 1, 200x

Mr. Paul Smith  
Director of Training  
General Mills Corporation  
7381 Westside Avenue  
North Bergen, NJ 08932

Dear Mr. Smith:

It was suggested by Alice Jones of Merck and Company that I write to you about the opening on your training staff.

As my resume indicates, I have the research, planning and program experience to bring imaginative solutions to training problems. Moreover, I understand you are currently investigating the purchase of a new media system for your training program. My extensive media background could be very helpful at this early stage of your project.

When we meet personally, I would be happy to tell you more about my experience and qualifications. I will call in a week's time to arrange an interview.

Yours truly,

Janet Hobson

Enclosure



## Letter of Inquiry

This type of letter should be sent to employers to determine whether or not there are openings in your field.

495 Tilton Avenue  
Morristown, NJ 07960  
July 1, 200x

Mr. Andrew White  
District Sales Manager  
Oakite Products  
509 Mason Drive  
New Brunswick, NJ 08816

Dear Mr. White:

### Paragraph 1

State why you are interested in a position with a particular company as a way of inquiring about possible openings in your field.

Several weeks ago I had the opportunity to hear you speak at Montclair State University about a sales career. From your talk and my subsequent research, I am convinced that I could become an effective sales representative. Your training program, as described on your web site, sounds very innovative and I am eager to become a part of it.

### Paragraph 2

Refer to your resume and highlight those skills that qualify you for the desired position.

As the attached resume indicates, I am a marketing major and was chairperson of the Special Events Committee for the Marketing Association of Montclair State University. In that capacity I brought alumni and area business people to campus to address students interested in the field of marketing. This experience, coupled with the many part-time jobs I held to defray my college expenses, developed initiative and an ability to develop rapport with many kinds of people.

### Paragraph 3

Request an interview and note your follow-up actions.

I look forward to discussing my potential usefulness to your organization. I will call in a week's time to arrange a mutually convenient interview.

Yours truly,

Matthew Eaton

Enclosure

## Thank You Letter after an Interview

### Paragraph 1

Thank those you met during the interview process for their time and help in increasing your understanding of the available position.

### Paragraph 2

Emphasize what you learned as a result of the interview and restate your continued interest in working for the company.

### Paragraph 3

Restate the match between your personality, skills and the available position.

### Paragraph 4

Describe any new developments, relevant to the position, that have occurred since the interview.

### Paragraph 5

Reiterate both your thanks for the interview and your enthusiasm for the company.

1421 West Fifth Street  
Paterson, NJ 07041  
June 15, 200x

Ms. Peggy Todd  
Personnel Manager  
Myatt & Moore Advertising, Inc.  
180 Lafayette Terrace  
Millburn, NJ 07082

Dear Ms. Todd:

I appreciated the time you spent with me last Wednesday to discuss the position of copywriter with Myatt & Moore Advertising, Inc. Please also pass along my thanks to your secretary and staff for their warmth and helpfulness.

I was very excited to learn about the innovative approaches M&M is applying to the image problems of Sioux City Steel. That, combined with your personal enthusiasm for the company, confirms my strong interest in working for M&M.

Your explanation of the special conditions of this position was appreciated. I believe that my work as features editor for the Montclairion has prepared me to work in a high pressure, creative environment. I believe, in fact, that I thrive in such an atmosphere.

Since we met, I have been honored to be the recipient of the Gould Award, a state-wide creative writing competition, and feel very encouraged by this approval of my work. Additionally, I have just completed my web site ([www.Peggytodd.com](http://www.Peggytodd.com)) which includes relevant writing samples. If you have the time, I would appreciate your taking a look.

As you, no doubt, were able to tell from our meeting, I am very enthusiastic about joining your firm and believe I have the skills to become a valued employee. Thank you for considering me for the copywriter position. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours truly,

Lisa Martin

## Thank You Letter for an Interview after a Rejection

92 Linden Road  
Morganville, NJ 07751  
September 14, 200x

Joan L. Grant  
Vice President for Sales  
Greeley Enterprises  
725 Bank Street  
Durham, NC 27704

Dear Ms. Grant:

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to interview for the Customer Services Representative position. I appreciate your consideration and interest in me.

Although I was disappointed not to be selected for your current vacancy, I want you to know that I appreciated the courtesy and professionalism shown to me during the entire selection process. I enjoyed meeting you, Jim Logan, and the other members of your sales staff. My meetings confirmed that Greeley Enterprises would be an exciting place to work and build a career.

I want to reiterate my strong interest in working for you. Please keep me in mind if another position becomes available in the near future.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to interview and best wishes to you and your staff.

Yours truly,

Julie Stevenson

Although Julie was *not hired* for the position, she knew that the interview went well because of the employer's positive comments. Her thank-you letter is appropriate in this situation, particularly since Julie is still interested in working for Greeley Enterprises.

## Rejecting a Job Offer

27 Decamp Street  
Upper Montclair, NJ 07043  
February 4, 200x

Ms. Tanya Peterson  
Human Resources  
A & P Productions  
77 Union Place  
Newark, NJ 07105

Dear Ms. Peterson:

After serious consideration, I have decided not to accept the product development position offered in your letter of February 1, 200x.

Although I am interested in your company, I have received another offer which will give me a more immediate opportunity to use my knowledge of the energy industry.

I would like to thank you once again for your interest in me, and particularly for the time you spent with me on the plant tour.

Sincerely,

Anna Martinez

## Letter Requesting Company Information and Annual Report

(Send this letter only if the same information is not more easily available on the Internet.)

135 Green Street  
East Orange, NJ 04321  
May 10, 1999

Ms. Elaine O'Malley  
College Relations Department  
H & R Corporation  
1764 Route 10  
Whippany, NJ 04326

Dear Ms. O'Malley:

I am currently researching career opportunities in public relations and have been impressed by your organization.

I would appreciate being sent information you may have about career opportunities with H & R in public relations, brochures that can help me to learn more about your organization and a copy of your latest annual report.

Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

Joseph D. Longacre

It is appropriate to request information from a company you are sincerely interested in to increase your understanding of the history, structure, and policies of the company. **Check the company website to see if you can download this information first, however.**

## Get Organized

Keep accurate records of all resumes and cover letters mailed or given out. Your record keeping system should include these items for each position for which you apply.

Position Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

### 1. Resume and cover letter:

To whom: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Date sent: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: ☐

Postal: ☐

Hand delivered: ☐

### 2. Follow up contact (letter, e-mail, phone call):

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Results \_\_\_\_\_

### 3. Interview:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Contact phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Results: \_\_\_\_\_

### 4. Thank you letter for interview:

Date sent: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Job Offer: Yes: ☐

No: ☐

# The Interview



"Didn't you read the ad? They're looking for a specific type."

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Whether or not you get a job depends on how well you interview. Read the following material carefully, attend our interviewing workshop, role-play with a friend, think about answers to the typical questions provided, and watch our online workshop available at [www.montclair.edu/careerservices](http://www.montclair.edu/careerservices): **Be prepared.**

## I. The Purpose of an Interview

According to the dictionary, "to interview" literally means "to see each other mutually." **Thus, the objective of the interviewer and interviewee is the same: to see if a good match exists.**

### A. Your goals as an interviewee

1. To present your skills in a positive light and to convince the employer to hire you.
2. To decide whether the organization and the position are suitable for you.

### B. The goals of the interviewer

1. To determine whether you have the specific work skills required for the job, such as writing ability or knowledge of accounting.
2. To determine whether you have the appropriate combination of experience and personality traits such as
  - a. ability to communicate
  - b. intelligence
  - c. self-confidence

- d. initiative
  - e. leadership
  - f. high energy level
  - g. imagination
  - h. flexibility
  - i. self-knowledge
  - j. high grades
  - k. accomplishments
3. To determine whether you will get along with the existing team and can become a part of the organizational culture.

## **II. Prepare for the Interview**

### **A. Know Yourself**

1. You are the focal point of the entire interview.
2. You are marketing yourself to the employer. You, the salesperson, must thoroughly know your product (yourself) and be prepared to talk about what you have to offer.

#### **a. Skills and Abilities**

What do you do well? What skills have you developed that you can describe that will help the employer see that you can do the job?

#### **b. Interests**

What do you really want? What type of work inspires and stimulates you?

#### **c. Values**

What attitudes do you have toward the world of work and yourself? What do you seek in order to find fulfillment on the job?

#### **d. Education**

Which degrees and certificates have you earned? What schools have you attended? What courses have you taken that are relevant to your career goals?

#### **e. Experience**

What are your previous work experiences and what do these jobs say about you? Include all full-time, part-time, summer, internship, volunteer, and cooperative education experiences. How do these experiences relate to the position for which you are interviewing?

#### **f. Goals**

What are your short and long-range career goals? How do you plan to achieve these goals?



## **B. Research the Career/Industry (Marketing) and the Specific Job (Product Development.)**

1. You must know
  - a. The skills required by the particular job
  - b. The necessary educational background
  - c. Typical tasks
  - d. Usual salary range offered for beginners and more experienced workers
  - e. Usual career paths - will you be where you want to be in 5 years?
2. You can find the information by using
  - a. the many sites on the Internet to do the research. Start with our home page:  
<http://www.montclair.edu/careerservices>
  - b. the **yellow section** of the Career Library which contains material describing thousands of jobs

## **C. Research the Employer**

1. Learn as much as possible about the organization before the interview in order to decide whether you “fit” with a particular employer and to convince the employer of the sincerity of your interest in the organization.
2. You should know the following about the employer:
  - a. In the corporate sector
    - (1) history
    - (2) products and services
    - (3) types of clients and customers
    - (4) attitudes toward employees
    - (5) standing in the industry
    - (6) prospects for growth and for change
    - (7) divisions and locations
    - (8) corporate culture
  - b. In the non-profit area
    - (1) all of the above
    - (2) sources of funding
    - (3) mission or purpose of the organization
3. You can research employers by using the Career Library or using the Internet.  
(See Appendix A for research instructions.)

## **D. Know How to Dress**

“You never get a second chance to make a good first impression.”

1. Many hiring decisions are made within the first 3-5 minutes when your physical appearance makes the strongest impact.

2. Dress in a manner that suits the organization to which you are applying.



*"You said the initial interview would be 'casual.'"*

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3. Play safe by dressing conservatively. Aim for the "Classic Look" of elegance, quality, and simplicity. If the employer has a website, look for their color scheme or "brand." Try to incorporate their look, for example tie color for men, scarf color for women.

## **E. Tips about Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication**

### **1. Non-Verbal Communication**

#### **a. Punctuality and Courtesy**

- (1) You send messages to receptionists and secretaries who observe your arrival and how you behave toward them. Their appraisals of you matter.
- (2) Arriving early allows you to send the proper message of confidence and provides you with time to observe and evaluate the atmosphere of the department.

#### **b. Body Language**

- (1) Because you will be judged from the moment you enter the doors of an organization, long before the actual interview, you must be sure to sit properly and look alert.
- (2) When meeting the interviewer, be sure to start with a firm handshake and maintain good eye contact.
- (3) If you are not sure where to sit, follow the interviewer's lead.
- (4) Never smoke or chew gum during an interview, no matter what the interviewer does.

#### **c. Observe and Listen**

- (1) Try to hear the meaning behind the literal content of the question. For example, "What are your plans for the future?" could mean "Are you going to leave me after I train you?" or "Are you familiar with career paths in this industry?" These unspoken questions require very different responses.
- (2) Adjust your responses to suit the interviewer's needs. You cannot provide "standard" answers.

## 2. Verbal Communication

### a. When Answering Questions

- (1) All your answers should communicate positive information about yourself. "Patting yourself on the back," if done in a professional manner, communicates confidence, not conceit. If you don't let employers know why they should hire you, you've wasted your time and theirs.
- (2) If an employer should spot a weakness in your resume such as a low GPA, lack of related experience, or an employment gap, turn it around to the positive by pointing out the fact that you've worked 30 hours a week through college or were promoted twice.
- (3) Don't make negative statements about past employers, professors, classes, or other experiences that were not successful or positive.
- (4) Relate your skills to the specific position and always support your skills with examples. This not only clarifies and substantiates your claims but also makes the interview more interesting.
- (5) Don't always preface your responses with "I think," "I guess," "I feel." This makes you appear indecisive, unassertive, and lacking in confidence and competence.
- (6) Role play your answers to likely questions with a friend, or make an appointment with a career counselor for a mock interview.
- (7) Study Appendix C to learn the questions that are typically asked of candidates.

### b. When Asking Questions

- (1) Be aware of the messages your questions can convey. If you ask solely about salary and benefits, employers will get the impression that you are only interested in what the organization can do for you and care little about what you can do for them.
- (2) Ask specific questions that will let the employer know that you have researched the organization.
- (3) Phrase your questions in the first person. This indirectly expresses your confidence and psychologically encourages the employer to imagine you doing the job. For example, rather than saying "What are the duties and responsibilities of the job?" say "If chosen for this position, what will my duties and responsibilities be?"
- (4) After the interviewer has answered your questions, respond by relating your abilities to do the job.
- (5) Refer to Appendix D, for a list of suggested questions you may want to ask.

## **F. Know What to Bring to the Interview**

1. Extra resumes to be used to
  - a. fill out applications, if required;
  - b. give to interviewers who may not have a copy.
2. Sharpened pencils in case testing is a part of the interview.
3. Samples of your work/portfolio when appropriate.



"It happens...just take a few moments, relax, collect your thoughts and I'm sure your name will come to you."

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### III. During the Interview

#### A. Interview Stages

There is no way of knowing how long the initial interview will last. The traditional time frame is thirty minutes, but this varies greatly depending on the applicant's experience, the interviewer's schedule, and what happens in the interview itself.

1. Phase 1: **Ice-Breaker/Warm Up.** Some interviewers like to make prospective employees comfortable before asking questions. Conversation might focus on weather, traffic, or on an item that was presented on your resume. Other interviewers, however, will dispense with the small talk and jump right into the formal interview, so be ready for either kind of opening.
2. Phase 2: **Information Exchange.** This phase is the major part of the interview. The interviewer will be asking various questions in an attempt to determine whether he/she is interested in you.
  - a. Be sure that you clearly communicate the skills, education and experience you have which make you a qualified candidate. Elaborate with specific examples to leave no doubt about your qualifications in the interviewer's mind. (See Appendix C for typical questions asked by interviewers.)
  - b. It is more than likely that after the interviewer has finished questioning you, he or she will ask whether you have any questions. Have them prepared. (See Appendix D for appropriate questions.)

3. Phase 3: **Interview Close.** The close of an interview can be a very important part of the entire process. This is particularly true if the interviewer is still undecided about whether to ask you back.
- a. Take the time to summarize your strong points.
  - b. Express your interest in the position by stating it clearly and by asking the questions you have prepared. Be enthusiastic!
  - c. Bring up strengths that you have not yet had the opportunity to describe.
  - d. Ask what happens next, in what time frame a decision will be made.



"Then I began the second grade...my teacher was a Miss Penningale, very strict, and in the days that followed..."

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4. Phase 4: **Interview Follow-up**
- a. After you have concluded an interview, you should analyze your performance.
    - (1) How effective were you in presenting your skills?
    - (2) What were your strong points? Weak points?
    - (3) What questions could you have handled better?
  - b. Send a follow-up thank you letter within 48 hours. It should be word processed and free of all spelling and grammatical errors. In your letter, summarize the key points of your interview, provide any additional information to support your case, and restate your interest in the job. If you've communicated with the employer via e-mail, it's acceptable to send the thank you via e-mail.

## B. Different Interview Styles

Interviews are as different as the varied people who conduct them. They are difficult to categorize, but there seem to be five discernible patterns:

### 1. Directed Interview

This type is used by most personnel departments as they go through their screening process. The interviewer will work from an outline and will ask specific questions within a certain time.

### 2. Non-Directed Interview

Questions here are broad and general and allow you to talk about what you want. This type of interview is generally used by non-professionals and has a loosely structured format.

### **3. Stress Interview**

The interviewer is often unfriendly, silent for long periods, and challenges your ideas.

Generally, you can expect to encounter stress interviews only when you are being considered for jobs in a very stressful environment.

### **4. Group Interview**

Group interviews consist of one or more interviewees and many interviewers. The difference between interviewing with a group as opposed to an individual is that the opportunity to establish rapport with one person does not exist; one must instead try to be responsive to everyone on the interviewing team.

### **5. Behavioral Interview**

Many interviews now have a behavioral aspect, as interviewers try to really assess a candidate's skills and personality in a brief time. Be prepared to show that you can do the job you are applying for. If you are interviewing for a teaching job, for instance, you may be asked to teach a brief lesson on the spot. If you are applying for a sales position, you may be asked to "sell" an object in the room to the interviewer.

Additionally, the questions you are asked will be more likely to have a "problem-solving" aspect to them. For instance, "Tell me about a time when you dealt with a difficult professor. Describe the problem and the steps you took to resolve it." Be prepared to "tell stories" that illustrate your accomplishments.

## **C. Sample Questions and Responses**

The success of your interview is directly related to the effectiveness of your responses. The following questions and answers illustrate appropriate communication.

### **1. Tell me about yourself.**

This common opener unnerves many unprepared interviewees. You should

- a. express your interest in and desire to work for the organization;
- b. present three or four of your top selling points relating to the position;
- c. present a short history of yourself relating to the position.

### **2. Why should I hire you?**

Throughout the interview this question is uppermost in the interviewer's mind. You should

- a. relate your past experiences, educational background, and skills to the job and/or department;
- b. support your skills with evidence.

### **3. What is your greatest weakness?**

This qualifies as the suicide question for even the most qualified candidate.

Your response can

- a. point to a non-job related area that needs some improvement. State what you are presently doing to improve in this area;
- b. use a past weakness and show how you have improved upon it;
- c. identify a behavior as a weakness which could be perceived as a strength by the interviewer, such as an accountant who says he's a perfectionist.

**4. Where do you expect to be in one year, three years, and ten years? What is your plan of action for achieving those goals?**

As you research the career field, determine which positions you can realistically reach in three years and ten years. Read about and talk to people who have successfully advanced within your career field, and if possible, within the particular company. In your answer state that you possess the desire and the ability to acquire the necessary skills for growth within the organization.

**5. Describe a past failure of yours and how you handled it.**

Remember, always turn anything negative around to the positive. Think about what you learned from the experience and what you would do differently given similar circumstances. As you present a past failure, focus on the problem solving skills you developed and the knowledge gained from the experience.

**6. Tell me a story!**

Have fun! Allow your creative juices to flow. This is an opportunity to demonstrate your creativity and ability to think on your feet. Be sure to remain professional.

**7. What are your financial requirements for this position?**

Prior to your interviews, you should read about salaries and talk to people in the field to determine a realistic salary range. If asked for a dollar value, present a salary range. When asked for a specific figure, state the top of the range and the fact that you are qualified and capable of producing quality work.

**8. What do you know about this organization and its services or products?**

Emphasize that you are very interested in working for the organization and have been for a while. As you talk about the organization and its products or services, cite the various resources you used to obtain the facts.

**D. Illegal Questions**

The questions which follow are discriminatory when asked in a pre-employment interview. Should they be asked, however, we suggest that you answer them by continually referring to your ability to do the job as illustrated in these examples:

**1. Asked of women**

**a. Do you have plans for having children/family?**

Suggested response: "I don't know at present. I plan on a career and believe my career will be successful with or without a family."

**b. What are your marriage plans?**

Suggested response: "If what you are interested in is my ability to travel or my commitment to my employer, I can assure you that I am quite aware of the job's responsibilities and the personal commitments involved."

**c. What does your husband do?**

Suggested response: "I am interested in working because.... What my husband does is not relevant to my performance for your company."

**d. What happens if you or your husband get transferred or need to relocate?**

Suggested response: "My husband's career will not interfere with my career." Or "My husband and I would discuss relocation should the need arise. At present both of our jobs are where we wish to live."

## **2. Asked of men**

### **How would you feel working for a woman?**

Suggested response: "This would be no problem. I have worked effectively with men and women while in school."

## **3. Age**

### **a. How old are you?**

Suggested response: "I wish to be evaluated on my skills, competence, and experience. Age is irrelevant."

### **b. What is your date of birth?**

Suggested response: "I feel my age is an asset at work in terms of the broad-based experiences it has afforded me."

### **c. How would you feel working for a person younger than you?**

Suggested response: "Age does not interfere with my ability to get along with others. I am adaptable and respect supervisors who are knowledgeable and competent."

## **E. Second Interview**

1. The selection process usually involves more than one interview. If you have favorably impressed the employer during your screening interview, you will be invited to the organization for lengthier interviews. At that time you will meet several people individually or in a group. The questions will usually be more in depth than those asked in the preliminary interview. You will also be expected to ask more questions. Even though you may be on your ninth interview of the day, act as if it is your first.
2. Having you speak to many people gives the employer a chance to observe how other members of the department respond to you and how well you fit into the organization. This also allows you to "size up" the organization, its employees, and the facilities. Being a keen observer will assist in your decision to accept or decline an offer.

## **IV. Handling the Job Offer**

- A. Before you accept any position, you should carefully evaluate it in terms of:
  1. Responsibilities
  2. Working hours and conditions
  3. Advancement opportunities
  4. Salary range
  5. Benefits
  6. Geographic location
- B. If you accept, take the time to write a confirmation letter, even though you've accepted verbally.
- C. If you decline the offer, it is courteous to write a letter saying so and thanking everyone for the time given to you. (See p. 36)



## Appendix A

### Identifying and Researching an Employer

To be perceived as a serious candidate for a potential position you must research employers before contacting them, before interviewing, before accepting a position...in greater and greater depth throughout a job hunt. Ignorance of an employer's mission, products, competitors is not acceptable, especially now when the Internet has made the information so easily accessible.

1. Begin your research in our Career Library. Our library is divided into 4 color-coded areas:

- yellow: books describing what it is like to work in a particular industry
- orange: information about government agencies
- red: graduate school information
- blue: a directory section with books on resume writing and interviewing

2. Use the Internet. The links below will help you to learn about employers--what they do, how well they do it, what their goals are, who they compete with and more.

•Visit our website for employer information:

<http://www.montclair.edu/CareerServices/student-services/internetresources.html> and be sure to check out:

- The Riley Guide (<http://www.rileyguide.com>)- a great resource
- Quintessential Careers (<http://www.quintcareers.com/>)
- Researching Companies on-line (<http://www.learnwebskills.com/company/>)
- Vault (<http://www.montclair.edu/CareerServices/vault/index.html>)

•Don't miss:

- Hoovers Online (<http://www.hoovers.com>)
- WetFeet (<http://wetfeet.com/>)
- Idealist (<http://idealist.org>)

3. In the beginning stages of your research, doing an **"information interview"** is an excellent way of checking out not only a particular employer, but also an industry and an occupation within that industry. You can find people to talk to through on-line discussion groups and professional associations:

- Visit Topica (<http://lists.topica.com/dir/?cid=0>) to identify those groups and Yahoo ([http://dir.yahoo.com/Business\\_and\\_Economy/Organizations/Professional/?skw=organizations+business+economy](http://dir.yahoo.com/Business_and_Economy/Organizations/Professional/?skw=organizations+business+economy)) for professional associations.

## Appendix B

### Information Interviewing

#### What is an information interview?

- a conversation with someone in the field you are interested in working in, intended to help you learn what it is really like to work in that field.
- an opportunity to identify organizations you might ultimately like to work for.
- an opportunity to better prepare for a subsequent job interview by helping you to gather “on the spot” information.

#### How can I prepare?

- Read everything you can find about the organization BEFORE the information interview, so that you can ask really useful questions. Use the Internet.

#### What should I ask?

Please describe...

- a typical day?
- the kinds of people who succeed/fail in this kind of job?
- the kinds of credentials or degrees required to start in this work?
- the skills that are needed in this work?
- the skills that one develops?
- the kind of training that is available?
- typical entry and mid-level earnings?
- what surprised/pleased you about this work?
- what disappointed you about this work?
- the kind of advancement in this work? typical career path?
- how long people tend to stay in this position? with this organization?
- the atmosphere in this office/organization?
- how you got started?
- would you choose this field again? if not, why not?
- what do you think about the future of this work? this industry? this organization?
- the value system of this organization? the culture?
- how have current economic conditions impacted your industry?
- whether you feel this work has made you more or less marketable outside this organization?

## Appendix B continued

### Information Interviewing

- how has this position effected your personal life? is there much overtime?
- what do you wish someone had told you before you entered this field?
- what prior experiences prepared you for this work?
- what do you like/dislike about this organization?
- what support exists for family life?
- what supports exist for a balanced personal life?

For more info and more questions, visit Quintessential Careers at [http://www.quintcareers.com/informational\\_interviewing.html](http://www.quintcareers.com/informational_interviewing.html) and About.com at <http://jobsearch.about.com/od/infointerviews/a/infointervquest.htm>.

Use the blank spaces below to create a list of questions about a career that you really would like to ask someone in the field:

---

1

---

2

---

3

---

4

## Appendix C

### General Questions Interviewers Ask

#### A. About You

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. What do you consider to be your greatest strengths and weaknesses?
3. How would a friend or professor who knows you well describe you?
4. Why should I hire you?
5. Are you willing to travel?



"Are you sure you don't want to change your story about your previous experience?"

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#### B. About Education and Work History

1. Why did you choose your particular field of work?
2. What courses did you like most? Least?
3. How did you spend your summers during college?
4. What activities have you participated in? Have you held any offices?
5. Do you feel that you have received a good general education?
6. What sports are you interested in? As a participant? As an observer?
7. Tell me about your grades - overall, and in your major.
8. Why did you decide to go to Montclair State?
9. How did you finance your education?
10. What is the most satisfying paper you wrote during college?

11. Do you feel that you did the best scholastic work you could have?
12. Have you ever had difficulty getting along with faculty or other students?
13. Do you plan to do graduate work?
14. Tell me about the most (the least) satisfying job you ever held.
15. Why did you drop out of school?
16. Tell me about the best (the worst) boss you ever had.
17. What would recommendations from former employers say about you?
18. What have you learned from some of the jobs you have held?
19. Have you ever been fired?

### **C. About Your Ambitions and Plans**

1. What are your long-range and short-range career goals? How are you planning to achieve them?
2. What motivates you to put forth your greatest effort?
3. Are you a joiner or a loner? A leader or a follower?
4. Will you fight to get ahead?
5. What does success mean to you? How do you judge it?
6. What personal characteristics are necessary for success in your field?

### **D. About the Company or Organization**

1. What do you know about our company, our customers/clients, and our plans for the future?
2. What criteria are you using to evaluate the company for which you hope to work?
3. In what kind of a work environment are you most comfortable?

## **Behavioral Questions Interviewers Ask**

Remember that these questions are being asked to assess skills, problem solving ability, personal traits - all on the spot. Prepare for this kind of questioning by being ready to describe events that show your skills, be able to provide details and the outcomes of activities.

For example:

1. Tell me about a time when you had a problem with one of your professors and how you handled it.
2. Tell me about a class project you did and describe all the steps that were involved.
3. You may be asked to demonstrate a skill relevant to the position you are seeking, such as, "Sell me this (pencil, brochure...whatever is at hand)" or "Teach me how to solve a quadratic equation."

Be sure each story has a beginning, middle and an end and shows a result. Be prepared to show examples and answer probing questions, "What did you think? What was your role? How did you react?"

The traditional interviewer is asking what you might do in a given situation, but the behavioral interviewer wants to know what you did in the past as a way of assessing how you may act in the future.

## **Appendix D**

### **Questions Candidates Ask**

#### **A. About the Job Description/Job History**

1. What are the qualifications for this position?
2. How long has this position been vacant?
3. Is this one of a number of similar positions, or is there only one?
4. What is the usual career path?
5. Who makes the final hiring decision for this position?
6. What happened to the person who used to be in this position?

#### **B. About the Department/Organization**

1. With whom would I be working? Who would be my immediate superior? Please describe that individual's management style.
2. Could you describe the atmosphere (feeling, tone) of the department? How do the people relate to one another?
3. What new projects or ventures are contemplated in the near future?
4. Does the department have its own budget? Who controls it?
5. How long has this department existed?
6. Has it been successful?
7. What is its reputation in the organization?
8. In your opinion is the staff adequate for the work load?
9. Is there anyone on the staff who was bypassed for this position?
10. Is there more than one boss?
11. How easy or difficult is it to make things happen? How many layers of management will I deal with?
12. Does the organization have periodic employee performance reviews?

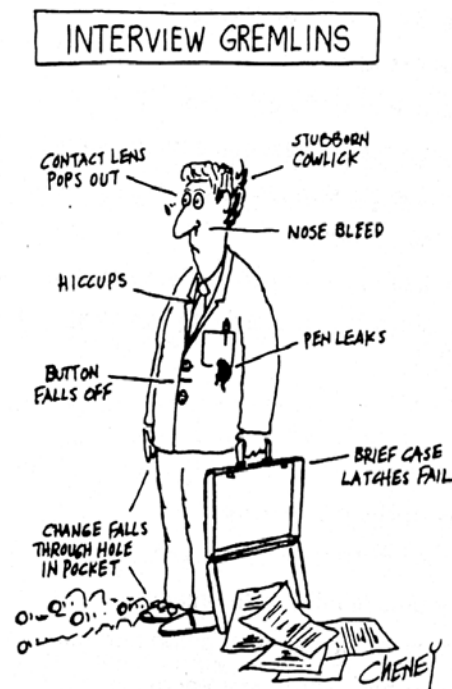
#### **C. About Orientation and/or Training**

1. Is there a training program or orientation program for new employees?
2. How can I become familiar with organization policies?
3. Is graduate study encouraged? Is tuition reimbursed?
4. What kinds of in-house programs encourage professional development?
5. Is professional association activity supported?

## Appendix E

### Reasons Candidates are Rejected

1. Poor personal appearance.
2. Late for interview.
3. Overbearing and conceited; a “know-it-all” attitude.
4. Failure to look at interviewer when conversing.
5. Inability to express oneself clearly; poor diction and grammar.
6. Lack of planning for career; no purpose and goals.
7. Lack of interest and enthusiasm; passive and indifferent.
8. Lack of confidence and poise; nervous, ill at ease.
9. Overemphasis on money; interested only in best-dollar offer.
10. Expects too much too soon.
11. Makes excuses, evasive; hedges on unfavorable factors in record.
12. Provided vague responses to questions and asked no questions about the job.
13. Lack of courtesy; ill-mannered.
14. Condemnation of past employer.
15. No interest in organization or field.
16. Intolerant; strong prejudices.



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## Sample Reference Sheet

Remember to distribute this only after it has been requested.

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**Name**

Title

Employer

Address 1

Address 2

City, State Zip

phone

email



## Appendix G

### Interview Evaluation Form

This review is to assist us in the evaluation of the prospective candidate. The candidate's qualifications should be appraised solely as they relate to the requirements of the position.

Applicant \_\_\_\_\_

Position \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Department \_\_\_\_\_

Your rating should represent a comparison of this individual to the job requirements.

Rate only those characteristics NECESSARY for the job.

A=Outstanding B=Above Average C=Average D=Poor E=Not job related F=No opinion	A	B	C	D	E	F	Comments
<b>Experience</b> Relationship between background and job							
<b>Education</b> Relationship between education and job							
<b>Communication Skills</b> Expresses self clearly							
<b>Maturity</b> Self confidence, self control							
<b>Ambition</b> Desire to grow							
<b>Judgment</b> Soundness of reasoning							
<b>Work History</b> Accomplishments							
<b>Appearance</b> Neatness of dress							

**Recommendation: Employ**\_\_\_\_\_ **Do not employ**\_\_\_\_\_

If not, state reason: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix H

### Becoming a New Professional\*

**pro-fes-sion-al** (pr-fsh-nl)

*adj.* Conforming to the standards of a profession: *professional behavior*.

*n.* A skilled practitioner; an expert.

Source: *The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition*

#### ***How do you become a professional?***

- Observe – understand the working culture and take initiative
- Fulfill your job description ...then exceed it
- Adhere to policies/procedures - refrain from using employer time/resources for phone calls, emails (have a professional email address) and any other personal business
- Don't put ANYTHING in writing, professional or personal, that you wouldn't want read aloud by anyone in the company.
- Learn co-workers' names and titles
- Join a professional association

#### ***What does it mean to act as a professional?***

- Anticipate employer needs.
- Ask questions and keep your boss informed.
- Learn the norms and politics of your employer's culture
- Begin to develop a feeling of confidence and competence.
- Request business cards from your employer or create them yourself (resume highlights can be included on the back); carry business cards with you at all times.
- Always update your resume – track your accomplishments.
- Create/update a portfolio.
- Identify and work on weaknesses.
- Effectively deal with negativity - pick your battles carefully.
- Dress appropriately – dress for the job you want, not the job you have.
- Take responsibility for your mistakes.
- Avoid workplace romance.
- Present yourself as a serious and committed employee. Co-workers and supervisors will take you as seriously as you seem to take yourself.

#### ***Behaviors to Avoid!***

- Trying to act like a seasoned professional too soon
- Expecting promotion too soon
- Making premature judgments about people

\*Adapted from an article by Adam Mayer

## Appendix I

### Dining Etiquette on an Interview\*

#### Summary

- Some interviews may include going out to eat.
- Proper etiquette is required before, during and after the meal.
- Relax and be yourself.

No matter where an interview takes place, it is still an interview. If a potential employer decides to interview you over a meal at a restaurant, your table manners must be up to par. The following etiquette guidelines will help get you through your next dining interview.

#### Before the Meal

**Turn off your cell phone or beeper.** The candidate who receives a call during the meal doesn't receive a call after the meal.

**Be sure to actively listen to the interviewer.** Paraphrase the content of what an interviewer is saying. Be sure to stay away from sensitive subjects such as religion and politics. Look for and seize any opportunity to sell yourself.

#### During the Meal

**Watch your body language.** Although you may be nervous, do your best to relax. Maintain an assured posture throughout the meal and, yes, elbows off the table.

**Browse the menu for *harmless* foods** such as moderately priced chicken or fish. Stay away from potentially troublesome spaghetti, peas, and expensive items. When ordering, be courteous to the wait staff. Throughout the meal, be sure to say "please" and "thank you." Your polite attitude will foster an overall positive impression.

#### After the Meal

Indicate that you are finished with your meal by placing the knife and fork, on your plate, at 4 o'clock. Be sure to place the napkin on the right-hand side of your table setting.

**You were invited to the meal so offering payment would not be appropriate.** Whoever invited you will pay the bill. Be sure to thank the interviewer(s) and request business card(s).

**Send a thank-you letter as soon as possible.** This contact is still a part of the interview.

**Dining 101:** Knowing the basics of table setup is essential and your key to comfort:

- Drink from glasses on your right.
- Your bread plate is on the left.
- The old silverware maxim holds true: Start on the outside and work your way in.
- When eating a roll or bread, make sure to break it into bite-size pieces.
- If your beverage is served in a stemmed glass, pick it up by the stem.
- Situate used utensils on the side of your plate. Placing a used utensil on the table is considered unsanitary and poor manners. Keep the elbows close to your body while cutting food.
- Only reach for items that are in front of you. Politely ask others to pass items out of reasonable reach. When passing items, be sure to offer to your left. Keep in mind, however, if a passing pattern has already developed, go with the flow.
- Eat your entire meal if possible. It may seem disrespectful if you leave a large amount of food behind, and this isn't the time to request a doggy bag.

\*adapted from an article by Adam Mayer

## Appendix J

### Portfolios\*

Chances are you've heard of something called "a professional portfolio." This tool is widely defined as a record of one's growth, achievement and professional attributes. But how do you show all that and why should you have a professional portfolio?

**A portfolio is a mixture of different elements designed to showcase skills relevant to the desired position.** Prospective employers need to be able to see what a candidate is capable of doing before hiring him or her. Art students have created portfolios with samples of their work for years. Those portfolios may consist of a series of slides of work or a huge folder with work samples. Today portfolios may even be presented as links to carefully designed web sites full of samples but it is not only artists, but teachers, accountants – all professionals — who are now creating physical records of accomplishments. Whether your work is shown on the web or in a 3 ring notebook with colored, plastic dividers, your aim is to show your skills. A relevant and well-organized portfolio will not only prove that you have the abilities you say you have, but will also help define you as a knowledgeable professional.

A portfolio's use and value is readily understandable, **but how do you create one?** Begin creating a portfolio by gathering skill oriented documentation. It may help to create a file folder specific to each portfolio resource. Examples of resources include the following:

- your resume
- training documentation
- evaluations by past supervisors
- letters of recommendation
- test scores
- honors and awards
- certificates of attendance from workshops
- references
- membership letters from professional associations
- writing/research samples, publications, etc
- certifications
- transcripts

Include any material which will support your marketing campaign. Once you have gathered your materials, separate the information into categories. Begin with general categories such as academic experience, work experience, extracurricular, etc. Over a period of time you can develop more specific categories. For example, try to include evidence of generating and achieving goals and evidence of work and academic skill integration. Your categories should in some way address what employers are looking for. For example, try to include representations of your communication skills, motivation/initiative, teamwork, leadership, technical and interpersonal skills. Your categories will begin to form a table of contents, which should be included in your portfolio introduction.

#### Portfolio Sites

OptimalResume: <http://www.montclair.edu/CareerServices/student services/resume.html>

Florida State University: <http://www.career.fsu.edu/portfolio/>

Margison, Jennifer, Portfolio Contents: [www.stec.uvic.ca/tutorials/careerportfolio.html#contents](http://www.stec.uvic.ca/tutorials/careerportfolio.html#contents)

\*adapted from an article by Adam Mayer

## Appendix K

### Career Planning Workshops

These workshops are provided every semester. Please check locations, dates and times at our website: <http://www.montclair.edu/CareerServices/>

#### How to Get an Internship

- Learn about what an internship is, why one is important and how to identify and obtain one.

#### Traditional Resume Preparation

- This workshop will teach you how to create an effective marketing tool that sells the skills you have which relate to the job you want. Learn about typical categories and how to make your resume as individual as you are.

#### Effective Interviewing Skills

- This workshop prepares you for interviewing by describing the interviewing process and discussing typical questions. Learn how to answer and ask questions.

#### Graduate School

- Learn all about the graduate school admissions process. See if grad school is the choice for you.

#### Career Fair Preparation

- Learn how to conduct yourself at a Career Fair and how to get the most from this event. Learn what to wear, what to bring, and how to get ready.

### Online Workshops

Because not everyone can attend our in-person workshops we have created a variety of online workshops available 24/7 at:

<http://www.montclair.edu/CareerServices/student services/online workshops.html>

#### Traditional Resume Preparation

#### Writing an E-Resume

#### Effective Interviewing Skills

#### Finding a Job in a Tough Market

#### Networking

#### LinkedIn

#### Twitter

## Appendix L

### The Value of an Internship or a Co-op: "test-it-out" work experiences

Internships exist in a variety of forms: some are paid, some are not; some are supervised and give college credit and some do not. The difference between an internship and other forms of employment is that all internships--no matter what kind--provide career-beginners with a temporary, "test-it-out" career-related experience. Finding out early in one's career that a particular kind of work is unsuitable can save a great deal of time, money and energy. On the other hand, how encouraging it is to learn early on, that one is moving in the right career direction!

Employers love interns because the time-limited nature of an internship allows an employer to "check out" a possible employee with no obligation to offer permanent employment.

The Center offers all kinds of internships to meet your needs whether you just want some related experience to test a career interest or you want a structured, credit-bearing, departmentally supervised experience through Cooperative Education.

**Internship: A temporary position with an emphasis on education and reflection**

Visit our web site at [www.montclair.edu/careerservices](http://www.montclair.edu/careerservices) or click the headings in the chart below to learn more about different kinds of internship experiences:

<a href="#">Cooperative Education</a>	<a href="#">Volunteer Experience</a>	<a href="#">Employer-offered, career related internships</a>
A credit bearing, faculty and counselor supervised work experience which allows students to see the connection between their studies and the world of work.	Generated by employers for neither \$ nor credit; volunteer opportunities offer a chance to explore careers	A paid, short term work experience providing the employer with skilled workers and giving students a taste of a potential career direction.

#### Reasons Students Gave for Participating in Cooperative Education

1. To obtain credit
2. To enhance classroom learning
3. To obtain work experience in my field
4. To build my resume
5. To assist in my career goals
6. To assist in choosing a major/career
7. To prepare for my career
8. To gain exposure to the job possibilities in my major/career
9. To learn
10. To network with individuals in their career

## Appendix M

# Social Networking

A few words about networking...

- Networking, whether conducted online or at the supermarket, is based on building alliances.
- We're not asking for jobs, we're looking for advice, tips, and generally raising awareness of our job search.
- Networking is a mutual relationship, so we're likely to be called upon to help others in the future.

### *The Big Three*

**Facebook:** <http://www.facebook.com/>

- Launched in 2004 from a Harvard dorm room, Facebook boasts over 500 million active users. This free site is primarily used for catching up with friends, and its format allows for photos, videos and text updates. Understandably, this format can reveal information about our private lives, which leads to a very real job search concern: some employers use Facebook as a pre-screening mechanism. Be sure to monitor your content (e.g., removing photo tags) with a job seeker's mindset—do I want a potential employer to see this? Approach your account as if it were an online portfolio and utilize the privacy controls to limit what others can view.

**LinkedIn:** <http://www.linkedin.com>

- LinkedIn is a network of professionals whose profiles mirror resumes. Creating a full profile (employment history, profile pic, recommendations, etc.) is essential to getting the most from this site. Customize your profile URL by including your name. Be sure to join industry specific Groups, where you can comment on postings, interact with others in your field, and ultimately expand your contacts. Joining is free, however fee-based accounts are available which offer a variety of services. Employers post jobs through LinkedIn too.

**Twitter:** <http://twitter.com/>

- You have 140 characters—what do you want to say? That's the nature of this real-time information source, alternately referred to as a microblog. Creating an account is free. Use your name as your screen/page name and choose a professional photo. You can link your account to an online resume, LinkedIn profile or other web resource. The "search" function allows you to find employers and employees of companies you're interested in. You can then "follow" these pages and remain up to date.

The Center has Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn accounts. Consider joining to stay abreast of what's happening. Visit our homepage for more information:

- <http://www.montclair.edu/CareerServices/>

## **Notes**





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**UNIVERSITY**

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