



Your First Steps to a  
**Successful Career**

## Puzzled about your future?

**Making choices about your career? We all know career planning can be quite overwhelming. This guide provides university students and fresh graduates plan their career and nail their dream jobs.**

By planning your career development process, you're well on your way to your perfect career. Knowing your strengths and skills, along with having a plan, will give you the confidence and motivation you need to make a positive change.



## Preparation List



- Be successful in all educational levels and especially in college
- Participate in various activities, projects, researches and increase your general knowledge
- Take training courses to enhance and master computer and language skills
- Prepare a professional CV and cover letter
- Improve personal skills (like interview skills, communication skills, negotiation skills, internet navigation skills and branding your presence on social networks)
- Get scholarships and summer internships during the academic years



## Resumes and Cover Letters



### Dos and Don'ts of Writing a Resume

#### Dos

- Do customize. Tailor your resume, detailing your work and extracurricular experiences that are most applicable to the job and industry you are targeting
- Do be concise. Use brief, succinct statements and keep your resume to one page
- Do keep font size to 10, 11, or 12 points and set margins to no less than 0.5 inch on all sides
- Do pay attention to verb tense! Use past tense when describing past positions and present tense for your current positions
- Do be consistent with punctuation
- Do include multiple titles and responsibilities if you had multiple roles at one organization
- Do use the phone number where an employer can reach you to set up an interview. Do make sure your voice mail greeting is professional!

#### Dos

- Do include an e-mail address. Do make sure that the address is professional (for instance, no "partygrrl@hotmail.com")!
- Do include a GPA of "Good" or better (the question of whether to include your GPA is ultimately up to you)
- Do include a relevant subject line in your e-mails to employers, such as "Technical Writer Position #4420"
- Do heed aesthetics - print all documents on high quality resume paper and use a laser printer



## Resumes and Cover Letters



### Dos and Don'ts of Writing a Resume

#### Don'ts

- Don't lie, exaggerate, or include something on your resume that you would not feel comfortable discussing in an interview
- Don't include an "Objective" on your resume, unless you can be specific about the position to which you are applying (ordinarily, you omit it and state your objective in your cover letter)
- Don't use slang and don't use acronyms without explaining what they mean (e.g. GUSA, MSB, etc.)
- Don't rely on spell-check. proofread your resume carefully and have someone else proofread it as well. Remember, spell-check necessarily tell you if you've spelled the company name incorrectly
- Don't use the word "I" or other first-person pronouns
- Don't use dark or speckled paper that can be difficult to read once photocopied or faxed



## Resume Formatting



### Step 1: Header

- Your name should be in bold and in a slightly larger font than the rest of the résumé.
- Below your name, list your current mailing address, phone number, and the email address you most frequently use. You may use your permanent mailing address if you wish.

### Step 2: Education

- Always list your most recent education first. Indicate your university, your school (e.g. Georgetown College), major, minor(s), and graduation year.
- Include your (optional).

### Step 3: Experience

- Put your greatest asset first – whether that is education or experience.
- Include useful skills and abilities that are fit for the job.
- List of academic and extra-curricular achievements.

- On the next line write the title of your position.
- Include three or four sentences describing what your position entailed. Think about what you actually contributed to the job or organization and how your role was significant.

### Step 4: Activities

- This is the place to list your extra-curricular activities, such as sports, on-campus involvement, volunteer experience, etc. You may provide a brief description of accomplishments and responsibilities for each if you wish.

### Step 5: Skills

- Languages (Basic, Intermediate, Advanced or Fluent)
- Technical skills; list specific software with which you are familiar (e.g. MS Word, Excel, PowerPoint, WordPerfect, Adobe Publisher, etc.)
- Any specific training or certification programs you have completed that would be relevant to the job for which you are applying.



- **Chronological:** This is the most popular format. It places information in reverse chronological order (i.e. from most to least recent). Employers tend to prefer this format as it (hopefully) demonstrates a candidate's steady and upward career growth. Thus, the focus is on time, job continuity, growth, and achievements.
- **Functional:** A functional resume focuses on skills, credentials, and accomplishments over the course of all jobs held. Emphasis is on what you did, not when or where you did it. Accomplishments, qualifications and experience are grouped together, to emphasize your experience in specialty areas.
- **Combination (Chronological & Functional):** A combination resume uses a career profile, which is a functional style listing of relevant skills and accomplishments, and then proceeds to describe employment and education histories in reverse chronological order. In other words, it is a combination of the above two concepts. The experience section directly supports the functional section.

### Additional materials that can be required with your resume:

- Writing samples
- Portfolio of completed projects
- Reference from faculty members, former employers, business or community leaders, and people employed in your field of choice
- Listings of published work or formal presentations
- Official transcripts



## Writing a Cover Letter



### A cover letter should answer the following questions

- Why are you interested in the position?
- How are you qualified?
- Why should you be hired?

### Keep these guidelines in mind

- Address the letter to a specific individual if possible.
- Be brief. Use powerful words, concise sentences, and short paragraphs.
- Don't restate your resume; instead, explain how your experiences meet the specific needs of the position.
- Focus on the particular employer's needs and what you can do for them, not what they can do for you.
- Keep it to one page.
- Match the type style and paper with your resume.
- Proofread for spelling and grammatical errors.
- Keep a record of where you have applied, when you've sent each cover letter, and when you plan to follow up with a phone call.

### Credentials and Letters of Recommendations

- Credentials and recommendation letters are provided only upon the request of the employee
- The best letters will come from people who know you well and can provide detailed comments about your academic, professional, or extra-curricular work





## Interviewing Process



### Dos and Don'ts in a Job Interview

#### Dos

- Do research on the company so you will be prepared to answer any questions about its history or business
- Do practice interviewing before the actual interview. Enlist a friend for help
- Do dress appropriately
- Do bring extra copies of your resume
- Do arrive early. Preferably 10 to 15 minutes prior to the interview start time
- Do greet the interviewer by title (Ms., Mr., Dr.) and last name
- Do shake hands firmly
- Do make eye contact with your interviewer
- Do wait until you are offered a chair before sitting
- Do be aware of body language. Maintain good posture and look enthusiastic
- Do give qualitative answers to questions

#### Dos

- Do ask for clarification if you don't understand a question
- Do emphasize your strengths
- Do ask questions. This will display your interest in the position
- Do be honest
- Do listen carefully
- Do let the interviewer know that you look forward to hearing from the company soon
- Do close the interview positively with a handshake and thank the interviewer for his or her time
- Do get business cards from each person you interviewed with
- Do write a thank-you letter to your interviewer(s) promptly

## Interviewing Process



### Dos and Don'ts in a Job Interview

#### Don'ts

- Don't be late
- Don't chew gum or smoke during the interview
- Don't wear heavy perfume or cologne
- Don't dress casual
- Don't have a limp or clammy handshake
- Don't tell jokes during the interview
- Don't be soft-spoken. Confidence is key
- Don't answer questions with a "yes" or "no." Give examples
- Don't rely only on your resume or cover letter to do the selling for you
- Don't bring up or discuss personal issues or family problems
- Don't answer your cell phone. Turn it off or keep it on silent mode
- Don't make negative comments about former colleagues, supervisors, or employers

#### Don'ts

- Don't raise ask about salary, benefits or vacations until an offer has been made
- Don't interrupt the interviewer
- Don't falsify your answers to interview questions
- Don't be discouraged if no definite offer is made at the end of the interview

## Types of Interviews



### Traditional Face-to-Face Interview

- Most interviews are face-to-face. The most traditional is a one-on-one conversation.
- Your focus should be on the person asking questions. Maintain eye contact, listen and respond once a question has been asked.
- Your goal is to establish rapport with the interviewer and show them that your qualifications will benefit their organization.

### Panel/Committee Interview

- More than one interviewer. Typically, three to ten members of a panel may conduct this part of the selection process. This is your chance to put your group management and group presentation skills on display.
- As quickly as possible, try to 'read' the various personality types of each interviewer and adjust to them. Find a way to connect with each interviewer.
- Remember to take your time in responding to questions.

- Maintain primary eye contact with the panel member who asked the question, but also seek eye contact with other members of the panel as you give your response.

### Behavioral Interview

- The basic premise behind this type of interview is that your past behavior is the best predictor of your future actions. These types of questions may be asked in any interview format—telephone, panel or one-on-one.
- If the employer asks behavior-oriented questions, they are no longer asking hypothetical questions but are now asking questions that must be answered based on facts.
- With a behavioral question, the interviewer is looking for results, not just an activity list. They are listening for names, dates, places, the outcome and especially what your role was in achieving that outcome.
- This type of question generally starts with the words "Give me an example when..." or "Tell me about a time when..."

## Types of Interviews



### Case Interview

- The interviewer will outline a situation or provide you with a case study and ask you to formulate a plan that deals with the problem, that is to demonstrate your problem-solving skills.
- You do not have to come up with the ultimate solution. The interviewers are looking for how you apply your knowledge and skills to a real-life situation. Speak and reason aloud so interviewers have a full understanding of your thought process.
- Before answering a case interview question, be prepared to ask the employer numerous questions for clarity and informational purposes. Most employers will provide responses that could result in additional inquiries.
- The more you are able to analyze and dissect the case study, the more you will likely impress your interviewer.
- This is the only interview for which it is acceptable, even encouraged, to bring a pad of paper and pencil. Most interviewers will allow you to take notes and jot down thoughts as you work through the case.

### Telephone Interview

- Many organizations will conduct interviews by telephone to narrow a field of candidates. Telephone interviews may also be used as a preliminary interview for candidates who live far away from the job site.
- It is important to treat this interview as you would a face-to-face connection. Arrange for a quiet space and time to schedule the conversation. Clear a work surface to minimize distractions. Focus on the conversation. Listen to the questions carefully before you answer. Since your voice is key, convey energy with inflection in your voice.
- Have a copy of your resume nearby as a reference.
- Avoid using a phone with call waiting. You do not want to be interrupted during an interview.
- Try to use a landline phone or a cell phone that is not prone to dropping calls.

## Types of Interviews



### Group Interview

- A group interview is usually designed to uncover the leadership potential of prospective managers and employees who will be dealing with customers.
- The front-runner candidates are gathered together in an informal, discussion type interview. A subject is introduced and the interviewer will start off the discussion.
- The goal of the group interview is to see how you interact with others and how you use your knowledge and reasoning to influence others.



### Lunch/Dinner Interview

- The same rules apply at a meal as those in an office. The setting may be more casual, but remember that it is a business meal and you are being watched carefully.
- Use the interview to develop common ground with your interviewer. Follow his/her lead in both selection of food and etiquette.
- Avoid messy foods.

### Stress Interview

- This form of interview was more common in sales positions and is rare today. The stress interview is usually a deliberate attempt to see how you handle yourself under pressure.
- The interviewer may be sarcastic or argumentative, or may keep you waiting. Do not take it personally.
- Calmly answer each question. Ask for clarification if you need it and never rush into an answer.
- The interviewer may also lapse into silence at some point during the questioning. This may be an attempt to unnerve you. Sit silently until the interviewer resumes the questions. If a minute goes by, ask if he/she needs clarification of your last comment.

## Dress Codes of an Interviews



### Women's Interview Attire

- Solid color, conservative suit
- Coordinated blouse
- Moderate shoes
- Limited jewelry
- Neat, professional hairstyle
- Tan or light hosiery
- Sparse make-up & perfume
- Manicured nails
- Portfolio or briefcase



### Men's Interview Attire

- Solid color, conservative suit
- White long sleeve shirt
- Conservative tie
- Dark socks, professional shoes
- No jewelry
- Neat, professional hairstyle
- Go easy on the aftershave
- Neatly trimmed nails
- Portfolio or briefcase



## Follow up on an Interviews

After your interview, be sure to write a thank you note to the employer or interviewer. This is very important because a thank you note gives you one more chance to remind the employer about the special skills that you can bring to the company.

Make a follow-up phone call to the interviewer on the fifth day after the interview. Let her know of your continued interest in the job and ask if there is any further information she needs from you.



## Tips for Thank You Letters



 A close-up photograph of a silver fountain pen writing the words "Thank you." in a cursive script on a white surface. The pen is positioned at the end of the word, with a small shadow cast behind it.
 

*Thank you.*

- Neatly hand-write or type the note
- Address the note to the interviewer or the lead interviewer
- Keep it short. (No longer than one page)
- First paragraph: Thank the employer for the interview. Also, mention that you are interested in the position
- Second paragraph: Briefly state a few of your skills without repeating the information on your resume word for word. Include any important information not mentioned at the interview
- Third paragraph: Provide your contact information, telephone number with area code, and an e-mail address, if available
- Sign the note with your first and last name
- Proofread the note to check for spelling or grammar errors. Ask another person to proofread the note
- Mail the note within two to three days after your interview

## Negotiating Job Offers



### Salary negotiation

- Know the market: It's important to know what a fair salary is for your job, in the kind of company you work for and considering your responsibilities. In order to do so, you must know the market. So make sure you do your homework and you come to the negotiation with a good understanding of the salaries in your niche.

- Show results: The only really efficient way to justify asking for a certain salaries through your results. Your employer can best be persuaded to give you the salary you want if you prove to them that you can add a lot of value. Your previous results are the ones you can use to imply the future results you'll create.
- Ask for more than you really want : By requesting a bigger salary than the one you really want, you leave room for negotiation. Thus, you can make a compromise during the negotiation; you can lower your salary demands and this way only reach the salary you're really aiming for. This is a simple but highly helpful negotiation technique.
- Stand your ground : Many employees compromise a lot during a negotiation because they are afraid that if they don't they'll lose the job. However, this fear is many times unrealistic and exaggerated. Be willing to stand your ground and take some risks in a negotiation. If you truly are a valuable employee, you will get the salary you're asking for.





## Undergraduate Career Preparation Checklist

- Getting good grades
- Doing extra research & projects
- Taking courses
- Developing skills and mastering them
- Do extracurricular activities
- Writing your resume & cover letter
- Getting summer jobs and internships
- Resume & cover letter
- Mastering interviewing skills

## Preparing For a New Job

### 1- Research about your new employer

- Take the time you have off to do some research. Learn all you can about your new employer. Learn about their product lines, their philosophies, and their corporate culture.
- Call around to see if anyone in your network knows any of your future co-workers and ask that person to introduce you prior to your first day.

### 2- Plan your outfit for your first week

- Plan what you're going to wear during the first week of work. Remember, you'll want to wear your most conservative outfits to start off, until you figure out what's appropriate and what isn't



## How to Survive your First Few Days

- Keep your head up and remember to make eye contact
- Be polite and friendly to everyone you encounter, whether it's the receptionist or the mailroom clerk, your colleagues or your new boss
- Introduce yourself to those you meet and remember that it's okay to ask questions

## Next Few Weeks, Months..

- Ask questions. You're new and it's better to do something right the first time around than have to do it over
- Smile a lot and be friendly. Get to know your co-workers and what their interests are
- Use your lunch hours to get together with your current co-workers, although it may be tempting to meet up with your former ones
- Figure out who has the authority to give you work to do and who is just trying to have you do theirs

## Masr Ta3mal



**Worried about finding a job?**  
**Confused about careers?**  
**Want to start your own business?**

Career Guidance  
Live Online Advising  
Learning Careers  
Local Job Listings  
Social Events  
Skills Assessment  
Tools for Entrepreneurs  
CV/Interview Help  
Networking

***For more resources check “Masr Ta3mal” Employability Portal***



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