



ANDREW
YOUNG
SCHOOL
OF POLICY
STUDIES

Career Services Handbook



OFFICE OF
CAREER SERVICES
& STUDENT LIFE



Career Services and Student Life Handbook

Andrew Young School of Policy Studies

Successful career planning is strategic planning – you need to look ahead, see what you envision for your end point (career), and then work backwards to determine the right skills, leadership opportunities, and paths you must take to accomplish that goal. Just like Mapquest/Google Maps/GPS, you need a starting point and an ending point – and then step by step directions to make calculated moves to ensure you reach your destination.

The Career Services & Student Life office provides resources to help Andrew Young students successfully integrate into the Georgia State community and to develop opportunities to gain career and leadership skills. Students and alumni from all Andrew Young departments/schools are welcome to benefit from our services.

Services provided by the office and staff include:

- **Career Services** – individualized career counseling, resume & cover letter reviews, internship guidance, career resource library, job search resources, networking opportunities, career fairs, graduate school application support, etc.
- **Student Organization Involvement** – we serve as a point of contact to all Andrew Young student organizations, many of whom have won top university honors for their service and work.
- **Study Abroad** – our office provides information on all of the Study Abroad options offered by the Andrew Young School and partners with the [GSU Study Abroad office](#) for programs offered outside of our school.
- **Alumni Services** – we help connect and track our alumni and offer opportunities to engage our alumni in working with our current students.

Contact Us

We are located in downtown Atlanta on the ground floor of the Andrew Young Building, which is at the corner of Peachtree Street and Marietta. Our office number is G47, which is the second door on the right, just before the elevators.

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Career Planning

As an Andrew Young student, you need to approach your future career plans much like a business or organization uses their strategic plan – you need a systematic process to envision your desired future, and build active steps to accomplish defined goals and objectives.

CAREER PLANNING = STRATEGIC PLANNING

Each of you have already committed to pursuing a degree in either criminal justice, economics, public management, nonprofit management, or social work. Now the real question is – what job titles or career paths are you hoping to pursue with that degree? What were your thoughts before you picked this major or chose to come back to school to get your advanced degree? There must have been a job title, a person you knew who was doing something you wanted to do, or a cool TV show that highlighted a career field you were drawn to. Whatever the reasons were for picking your degree, it is time to build a career plan (strategic plan) that will best align you to become the top candidate for that future position.

“Chance favors the prepared mind.”

– LOUIS PASTEUR

We suggest that you follow a four-step process for exploring your career options.

1. Complete numerous self-assessment tools that can help you identify your strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.
2. Research job titles, career fields, industries, and sectors based on your interests/strengths/opportunities, and gather profiles of skills and experience that are needed of top candidates in those fields/jobs.
3. Conduct a gap analysis on yourself to determine which of those skills you currently have, which ones you will gain as a result of your coursework, and what skills/certifications/experience you will need on your resume to gain entrance into that profession upon graduation.
4. Map out a career plan, semester by semester, of the experiences, internships, trainings, networking, etc. that you need to do in the time you have left in school to maximize your ability to not only fill in your skill gaps, but to excel in those skills prior to graduation.



Figure 1. Four (4) Critical Steps to Successful Career Planning

Step 1: Self-Assessment Tools

Self-assessment is a process by which you learn more about yourself – what you like, what you don't like, and how you tend to react to certain situations. Knowing these things can help you determine which occupations and work situations could be a better fit for you.

As an enrolled student at Georgia State University, you have access to numerous self-assessment tools. These assessments will not only look at your values, your personality type, and your interests, but they can also help you identify your skills, which are the things you need to market in your resume.

- **Jung Typology Assessment (Myers-Briggs)** – you may access this free, on-line tool at: <http://www.humanmetrics.com/cgi-win/JTypes2.asp>. You may schedule an individualized appointment with a career counselor in either the Andrew Young or University Career Services offices to interpret your results.

- ▶ **SIG³** – SIG³ integrates self-assessment with in-depth and up-to-date career information that is easy to use and provides students with a realistic view of the best educational and career options for their future success. It will examine your values, interests, skills, and personality. To use SIG³, log in to Panther Career Net (<https://gsu-csm.symplicity.com/students/index.php>). You will use your campus ID and password to log on. Scroll down the front page, down to “Online Career Resources” – and you will see SIG³ – click hyperlink.
- ▶ **SWOT Analysis** – A SWOT Analysis is a strategic planning tool used to evaluate the *Strengths*, *Weaknesses*, *Opportunities*, and *Threats* involved in a project or in a business venture or in any other situation of an organization or individual requiring a decision in pursuit of an objective.

The aim of conducting your own personal SWOT analysis is to identify the key internal and external factors that are important to you achieving your career objective. Internal factors, as they relate to you and your ability to perform a job function, include looking at your “strengths” and “weaknesses” (abilities or traits inherent to you). External factors, however, are ways of looking at “opportunities” and “threats” presented by the external environment (the economy, aging population, policies, crime rates, etc.) and their potential impact on your career plans.

AYS students are encouraged to work on the SWOT Analysis worksheet (shown on page 5) to map out both the internal and external factors affecting their career path and goals.



SWOT Analysis Worksheet

Strengths

- What do you do well?
- What unique resources can you draw on?
- What do others see as your strengths?

Weaknesses

- What could you improve?
- Where do you have fewer resources than others?
- What are others likely to see as weaknesses?

Opportunities

- What opportunities are open to you?
- What trends could you take advantage of?
- How can you turn your strengths into opportunities?

Threats

- What threats could harm you?
- What is your competition doing?
- What threats do your weaknesses expose you to?

WHAT SKILLS DO I HAVE AND WHICH ONES DO I NEED TO DEVELOP?

Below is a list of commonly requested skills. This is not an exhaustive list, and does not include specialized skills needed for some jobs. It may, however, be helpful for an initial assessment of skills that you already have, and skills that you wish to develop. The list may also help you think about how to describe your strengths on your resume.

Interpersonal Skills

- Knows how to express feelings warmly and sensitively
- Gives and receives feedback in a constructive manner
- Knows how to interpret and use body language
- Recognizes and values the uniqueness of individuals; works well with a wide variety of diverse people

Oral communication Skills

- Presents information and ideas clearly and concisely, with content and style appropriate for the audience
- Presents opinions and ideas in an open, objective way

Public Speaking Skills

- Makes formal presentations
- Presents ideas and positions in an interesting way
- Maintains poise in public situations

Counseling Skills

- Responds to others in a non-judgmental way
- Builds trust and openness with others
- Helps others understand themselves better and builds self-esteem

Coaching/Mentoring Skills

- Gives appropriate advice in a persuasive way
- Gives feedback in a constructive way
- Helps others increase their knowledge or skills
- Works and communicates with others to satisfy their needs and expectations

Teaching/Training Skills

- Motivates people to learn new things and to perform well
- Adjusts content and teaching style to the audience

Client Service Skills

- Builds a relationship of mutual trust with clients
- Understands or perceives clients' needs
- Acts as an advocate for clients
- Handles complaints and concerns in a sensitive way
- Tailors services to meet the needs of an individual's goals

Analytical/Logical Thinking Skills

- Draws specific conclusions from a set of general observations (deductive reasoning)
- Draws general conclusions from a set of specific facts (inductive reasoning)
- Examines data to understand inter-relationships and correlations
- Synthesizes information and ideas
- Clarifies the nature of a problem, evaluates alternatives, proposes viable solutions, and determines the outcome of the various options

Critical Thinking Skills

- Reviews different points of view or ideas and makes objective judgments
- Examines underlying assumptions
- Formulates a question, analyzes a problem, or defines a situation with clarity, accuracy, and fair-mindedness
- Reviews or develops policy and programs
- Identifies all possible options, weighs the pros and cons, assesses feasibility, and chooses the most viable option

Creative Thinking Skills

- Ability to generate new ideas, invent new things, create new images or designs
- Designs new approaches to solve problems
- Able to make connections between seemingly unrelated things
- Able to reshape goals to reveal new possibilities
- Uses wit and humor effectively

Financial Skills

- Keeps accurate financial records
- Manages a budget effectively
- Establishes and maintains accounting and auditing procedures
- Prepares and interprets financial statements and reports
- Able to monitor inventory flow

Language Skills

- Fluent in language(s) other than the one dominant in the organization

Perceptual Skills

- Visualizes new formats and shapes
- Estimates physical space

Advanced Computer Skills

- Able to learn new software quickly
- Able to manipulate data in a computer system

Technological Skills

- Understands technical specifications; reads technical manuals with ease
- Able to maintain computer or other systems; able to analyze potential dysfunctions and troubleshoot for potential problems
- Able to suggest modifications to an existing system or design a new system to improve performance

Supervising Skills

- Motivates individuals to perform well
- Identifies and uses human resources in an effective way
- Delegates responsibilities and establishes an appropriate system of accountability
- Monitors progress and assesses the quality of job performance of others

Leadership Skills

- Motivates and empowers others to act
- Inspires trust and respect in others
- Builds effective teams
- Involves others without coercing or cajoling
- Promotes open discussion and involvement of all participants while not dominating
- Facilitates and manages group interactions
- Delegates effectively

Persuading Skills

- Communicates effectively to justify a position or influence a decision
- Able to sell products and promote ideas
- Effective in lobbying for change

Mediation Skills

- Helps those with opposite viewpoints reach mutual agreements, either through consensus or compromise
- Deals with conflict in an open, honest, and positive way

Interviewing Skills

- Asks and responds to questions effectively, able to make others feel relaxed and create a feeling of trust

Care Giving Skills

- Identifies and responds appropriately to the need for care, counseling, treatment, or therapy
- Patient and empathizes with others
- Gives sensitive care to people who are sick or elderly or who have severe disabilities

Planning Skills

- Lays out a step-by-step process for achieving a goal
- Establishes objectives and needs, evaluates options, and chooses the best option
- Able to analyze all the requirements (i.e., human, financial, and material resources) to accomplish specific goals
- Establishes realistic timetables and schedules

Organizational Skills

- Organizes information, people, or things in a systematic way
- Establishes priorities and meets deadlines
- Develops or streamlines procedures
- Monitors progress and effectiveness

Step 2: Research Career Paths

Now that you have explored your values, interests, and skills, it is time to explore ideas for possible career paths. Take the time to research your career options now; there are more options out there than you think!

Keep a running list of careers that you have considered. Brainstorm, write ideas down, and fill in details when appropriate. You should continually evaluate and re-evaluate this list, removing options as you complete research about each career to see how well it matches your needs, values, interests, and skills, and adding new ideas as they occur to you.

Websites we encourage you to visit when mapping out career paths and job titles:

- **Bureau of Labor Statistics' Occupational Outlook Handbook** – The profiles featured here cover hundreds of occupations and describe What They Do, Work Environment, How to Become One, Pay, and more. Each profile also includes BLS employment projections for the 2010–20 decade. <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/>.
- **Making The Difference** – This student friendly website outlines career opportunities, internships, fellowships, and overall career exploration tips for jobs in federal government (all areas). It is a great resource to search for career fields based on your academic major. www.makingthedifference.org.
- **What Can I Do With A Degree In ... worksheets** – A comprehensive list of occupations and industries that employ students who have degrees in criminal justice, economics, public management/nonprofit, and social work. <http://aysps.gsu.edu/career/degree-career-paths>.

In addition to these on-line resources, we also encourage you to visit these offices in person to help with your career research:

- **AYSPS Career Services Office** (Andrew Young Building, 14 Marietta Street, Ground Floor, room G47)
The AYSPS Career Services and Student Life Office offers individualized career counseling, resume and cover letter reviews, internship guidance, career resource library, job search resources, networking opportunities, and graduate school application support to AYSPS students. Please visit our website for more information: <http://aysps.gsu.edu/career/>.
- **University Career Services** (260 University Center)
The University Career Services Office offers career resources to all Georgia State University students and recent graduates. They offer an array of services, including Panther Career Net (GSU's online job board), Virtual Interviewing, and Job Search Tools. University Career Services also offers opportunities to explore various academic majors. If you are still undecided about which major you want to pursue during your time at GSU, we recommend that you utilize University Career Services for assistance. For a list of services, please see <http://www.gsu.edu/career/services.html>.
- **GSU Counseling and Testing Center** (Citizen's Trust Building, 75 Piedmont Ave, Suite 200A)
The GSU Counseling and Testing Center offers individual, group and couples counseling services as well as consultation, teaching and educational programming to the GSU community. The testing staff provides a wide range of testing services including standardized tests like the GRE and LSAT and professional certification exams. They also offer workshops to help improve some of your more challenging skill areas, such as time management, conflict resolution, diversity awareness, etc. Information about the Counseling and Testing Center can be found at <http://www.gsu.edu/counseling/>.

And finally, but probably most importantly, you need to reach out and start talking to people who are in the jobs and professions you hope to be a part of.

It is imperative to build and maintain a strong social network. We recommend that you begin to make connections with alumni and community members working in your field of interest. By meeting current employees in your field, you will be able to learn more detail about the actual day-to-day activities that are required, skills that may be helpful (or necessary) to develop, and get tips on how to secure a job in the field. Who knows, you might even land an internship just by talking to people in the field!

Only 15% of the jobs currently available are advertised (posted on the web/ internet) – 85% of the remaining jobs are communicated and recruited through people we know.

NETWORKING

Networking is based upon the exchange of information, ideas, and support. You should build your network based upon the question, “How can I help?” rather than “What can I get?” To begin networking, you should join your department’s LinkedIn and Facebook pages. (See the Job Search section of this book.) Be sure to fill out your entire profile on LinkedIn. If you already have identities on these networks, be sure that all public content is updated and appropriate for the professional setting. Once you have joined these networks, begin by connecting to old college friends, alumni groups, former co-workers, industries, professional organizations, etc. Watch for job postings and blog entries that may contain helpful information. LinkedIn is also a great place to network within your friends’ networks. Use your network to “meet” new professionals.

Note: Remember that any information uploaded to the web is there permanently. Employers have the right to deny you a job/ fire you for inappropriate content on your social media pages!

Besides online networking, face-to-face networking is also an effective way to make connections. There are many opportunities to meet new people through face-to-face contact if you are willing to make the effort. By participating in events or joining social or professional organizations, you often have easy opportunities to network. Some examples of places you may be able to network are: career fairs, public talks/seminars/mixers, religious organizations, PTA, sports teams, Elk’s Club, Rotary Club, Knights of Columbus, Chamber of Commerce meetings, nonprofit board of directors, volunteer events, alumni functions, and professional organizations.

Generally, you should plan to:

- Use a multi-pronged approach – live and on-line
- Send thank you cards (yes, the old-fashioned kind!) and emails
- Spend the money to join as a student member of professional organizations
- Ask your faculty for their contacts

“A good networker has two ears and one mouth and uses each proportionally.”

And NOT:

- Be negative!
- Give up!
- Be obnoxious or wordy
- Forget to respond quickly to referral partners
- Abuse relationships
- Put things on your Facebook or LinkedIn pages that will hurt you!

Remember, only around **15%** of jobs are advertised. Not only is networking a great way to learn about the sector in which you are interested, but growing and maintaining your network may turn out to be key in your job search!

INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS

An informational interview is an excellent tool to receive career and industry advice. Use the interview to gather information on the respective field, and to find employment leads and expand your professional network. This differs from a job interview because you, as the job seeker, are the one asking the questions.

Benefits of Informational Interviewing:

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

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

Remember, the person you are interviewing is doing you a favor, so be sure to be flexible in terms of format (phone or in-person), timing, and length of meeting (typically 20-30 minutes). You may offer to buy the person a cup of coffee or lunch while you talk. Be aware that informational interviews offer you a chance to learn about a career path; the purpose is not to ask for a job. Use this opportunity to build a relationship and expand your network.

Note: This is a chance to make a great connection within your community. Be sure to dress to impress, bringing your padfolio, business cards, and a resume. Don't be afraid to take notes when appropriate!

Some questions that you may consider asking:

- What do you like most about what you do, and what would you change if you could?
- What are some of the biggest challenges facing your company and your industry today?
- Are there any professional or trade associations I should connect with?
- What do you read — in print and online — to keep up with developments in your field?
- How do you see your industry changing in the next 10 years?
- If you were just getting involved now, where would you put yourself?
- What's a typical day like for you?
- What's unique or differentiating about your company?
- How has (fill in the blank – writing a book, starting a blog, running a company, etc.) differed from your expectations?
- What have been your greatest moments and biggest challenges? What part of this job do you find the most challenging or satisfying?
- What training is required for this type of work?
- What personal qualities or abilities are important to being successful in this field/position/company?
- How did you end up in this position? What has been your career path?
- What advice would you give a person entering this field?

Note: Follow-up within 24 hours after your informational interview with a Thank You note!

CONFERENCES AND PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

Professional associations and industry conferences are valuable resources for networking, learning more about an industry, professional development opportunities, industry speakers, and finding out about job opportunities. Many associations and conferences have student membership rates and/or scholarships available. For a list of professional associations in your academic area, please see <http://aysps.gsu.edu/career/professional-associations>.



Step 3: Conduct Gap Analysis – An Exercise

So now that you have researched possible career fields and job titles, the goal now is to determine what skills and strengths you have to compete for those positions. What gaps or weaknesses does your candidacy have that you can work on and improve upon while you are in school? Sometimes the best way to explore career options is to work backwards. This exercise is great for people who are looking for a bit of focus.

1. Begin by searching job postings. **Identify five (5) job descriptions** that you see yourself applying for upon graduation from your degree program. You may want to begin by searching the archives of your department's career listserv (see *page 17 to sign up*) or specialty online job boards such as Opportunity Knocks, DEVEX, USAJOBS, etc. Additionally, there are job description reference books available for check-out in the AYS Career Services Office.
2. Once you have identified your job descriptions, **print them out**. Do not, however, compare apples and oranges. Compare similar job titles with similar job titles – print 5 budget analyst positions but do not compare two budget analyst positions with three substance abuse counselor positions. The goal of the exercise is to get a pulse of what skills/requirements are needed in each career path you are considering. So you will most likely conduct one gap analysis for each career title/path you are considering.
3. **Highlight all of the minimum qualifications** and the "desired" qualifications in each posting. Also, make note of the job responsibilities.
4. **Create a list** of the required/desired qualifications for that career field and match each qualification with example(s) of how you can fulfill it. These examples should demonstrate your skillset based on your educational/volunteer/work experience. It may also be helpful to build a skills matrix that outlines each task, how you accomplished the task, the purpose of the task, and the results. If you cannot identify an example, leave the space blank (thus showing you a gap you need to work on!).
5. **Examine your list** for "holes" in your skillset/resume. The blank spots in your example list are areas which you should develop during your time in school in order to be a viable candidate in your job search initiatives. Also, if the skill area only has one or two examples that you can think of to illustrate your skills in that area, that particular skill may be a "weakness" in your candidacy, which also warrants developing new skills in.

Gap Analysis Example (List)

Required/Desired Qualifications	My Matching Experiences/Skills
Demonstrated experience working on a team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Completed a semester long research project with a team of fellow students, and presented our findings to the NASPAA organization. ➤ Currently work as part of a customer service team in the retail industry, with annual goals
Sales, Marketing, Advertising, Public Relations, Corporate Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 5 years experience working as a sales representative for Starbucks ➤ Worked with local chambers of commerce and newspapers to develop ad opportunities within the local community while at Starbucks ➤ As a volunteer at Hands Across America, worked on the public relations committee responsible for promoting and hosting their annual fundraiser
Proficiency in all MS Office applications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Use MS Office products to build presentations, write reports, and to manage business contacts. ➤ Built tables, queries and reports in MS Access to manage employer database/prospect management.

Gap Analysis Worksheet

Required/Desired Qualifications	My Matching Experiences/Skills

Step 4: Create/Map Career Development Plan

FALL SEMESTER – Junior Year Bachelor’s Degree / 1st Year Master’s Degree

August/September

- Join department Internship/Job Listserv and LinkedIn network group
- Join professional organizations in your area of study. For a list of options visit: <http://aysps.gsu.edu/career/professional-associations>
- Attend “AYS Career Services & Student Life Overview Workshop”
- Join the student organization in your area of interest. For a list of options visit: <http://aysps.gsu.edu/oaal/student-organizations>
- Attend University Career Services orientation and sign up with Panther Career Net (PCN)
- Attend “Finding & Making the Most of Your Internship(s)” workshop
- Sign up for “A Road to Somewhere: Mapping Your Career Success” workshops
- If you want to work for the Federal Government, attend the “Federal Employment 101” workshop, and if you are a graduate student, the “Presidential Management Fellows” workshop
- Attend “Resume & Cover Letter” workshops

October/November

- Consider searching for and securing your first internship (it does not necessarily need to be for course credit)
- Attend “Social and Professional Networking Workshop”
- Complete resume and upload to Panther Career Net
- Attend career fairs in your local communities to begin networking and searching for internship opportunities.
- Conduct at least 3-4 informational interviews with professionals in your career field of interest
- Attend alumni networking events
- Attend student and professional organization meetings
- If you are an international student, attend “Job Searching for International Students” for tips on finding internships and jobs

SPRING SEMESTER – Junior Year Bachelor’s Degree / 1st Year Master’s Degree

January/February

- Update your resume with everything you accomplished in the Fall semester.
- If you have not done so, join your department Internship/Job Listserv and LinkedIn network
- Develop your internship search plan
- Conduct at least 3-4 informational interviews with professionals in your career field of interest
- Evaluate and adapt (as required) your internship search plan
- Read through the internship requirements for your degree: <http://aysps.gsu.edu/career/internship/courses>
- Finalize your summer or Fall Internship

March/April

- Attend “Interviewing – Putting Your Best Foot Forward” presentation
- Schedule a time to use VIPS – Virtual Interview Practice System for a mock interview (University Career Services Center)
- Participate in “Resumix” – an event where alumni/professionals volunteer to review your resume and offer suggestions regarding their industry of employment
- Conduct at least 3-4 informational interviews with professionals in your career field of interest
- Attend alumni networking events
- Attend student and professional organization meetings
- Finalize your summer internship (if applicable)

FALL SEMESTER – Senior Year Bachelor’s Degree / 2nd Year Master’s Degree

August/September

- Update your resume with everything you accomplished in the Spring and summer
- If you have not done so already, APPLY FOR MAY GRADUATION! Deadline is usually first week of September!
- If you have not done so, sign up with Panther Career Net
- Join professional organizations in your area of study. For a list of options visit: <http://aysps.gsu.edu/career/professional-associations>
- Revisit your portfolio in Panther Career Net – make sure your profile and resumes are up to date
- Attend “Resume & Cover Letter” workshop if you have not done so
- Conduct at least 2-3 informational interviews with AYS alumni
- Schedule a time to use VIPS – Virtual Interview Practice System for a mock interview
- Conduct at least 3-4 informational interviews with professionals in your career field of interest
- Develop your job search plan and meet with a career counselor to review it
- Join the student organization in your area of interest. For a list of options visit: <http://aysps.gsu.edu/oaal/student-organizations>
- Attend alumni networking events

October/November

- Visit with academic advisor in the Office of Academic Assistance to make sure you are on track to graduate as planned
- Evaluate and adapt (as required) your job search plan
- Conduct at least 3-4 informational interviews with professionals in your career field of interest
- Attend career fairs in your local communities to begin networking/searching for internship opportunities.
- Attend alumni networking events
- Register for and begin interviewing with employers through University Career Services/Panther Career Net

Alternative:

- Attend “Applying to a Ph.D. Program” or “Applying to Graduate School” – for students who are interested in pursuing graduate or Ph.D. studies.

SPRING SEMESTER – Senior Year Bachelor’s Degree / 2nd Year Master’s Degree

January/February

- Update your resume with everything you accomplished in the Fall
- Conduct at least 3-4 informational interviews with professionals in your career field of interest
- If you have not done so, join your department Internship/Job Listserv and LinkedIn network:
- Continue interviewing with potential employers
- Attend alumni networking events

March/April

- Participate in “Resumix” – an event where alumni/professionals volunteer to review your resume and offer suggestions regarding their industry of employment
- Attend alumni networking events

May

- Complete the AYS Alumni Survey when it is emailed to you
- Make sure you join your department Students & Alumni LinkedIn networks
- Sign up as a member of the [GSU Alumni Association](#)

AS SCHEDULED

- Attend Career Services & Student Life Workshops
- Attend AYS Career Fairs
- Attend Networking Events and Conferences

Mark your calendars early to include all AYS career events!

Building Your Skillset

Earning a college degree is an important step towards your career goals. Future employers, however, will also be looking for additional skills and abilities that job candidates have developed in experiences such as campus and community involvement, part-time work, study abroad, and internships. These skills reach beyond classroom knowledge and may include teamwork, communication skills, and organizational skills.

According to research conducted in 2012 by the National Association of Colleges and Employers, the most important skills for job candidates are:

- Team Work/Interpersonal Skills
- Communication Skills – Written and Verbal
- Problem Solving and Decision Making
- Information Processing
- Planning, Organizing, and Prioritizing Workflow
- Analytical Skills – Quantitative Data Processing
- Technical Knowledge and Computer Proficiency
- Ability to Influence Others

AYSPS STUDENT CLUBS & LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

There are many opportunities to become involved in student organizations, leadership roles, and research. Involvement in these organizations and programs will help you develop skills and gain experience in your chosen field of study. Many AYSPS student organizations host speakers from the Atlanta community, giving members an opportunity to network and learn important practical information. Taking on a leadership position within an organization can provide you the opportunity to facilitate meetings, organize events, mediate conflict, and oversee a budget. These opportunities will give you many examples to demonstrate your mastery of these skills. For a list of Andrew Young student organizations, please see <http://aysps.gsu.edu/career/student-organizations>. For a comprehensive listing of student clubs throughout Georgia State University, visit <http://gsu.orgsync.com/>.

VOLUNTEERING

Volunteering with an organization can provide valuable experiences and networking opportunities, as well as establish connections with your community. Even if your volunteering experiences are only a few hours per week or a one-time event, these are great experiences to add to your resume because they demonstrate your dedication to social issues and/or an area of interest. They are also great opportunities to network!

To begin looking for volunteer opportunities, you can consult the Georgia State University Office of Civic Engagement, Hands On Atlanta, or websites such as idealists.org.

STUDY ABROAD

Participating in a Study Abroad program is a great way to learn about global perspectives, different cultures, and new languages. AYSPS sponsors a variety of study abroad and student exchange programs. Our goal is to foster global perspectives and understanding within the academic community. The AYSPS is proud to offer the following exchange opportunities:

Maymester Programs

Maymester study abroad programs typically run for three (3) weeks in early May each academic year. Students are registered for one course which is tied to the program.

- Europe from a Policy Perspective: Government, Economics, and Leadership
- South Africa
- Costa Rica

Semester/Year-Long Programs

Semester and year-long exchange/study abroad programs are longer in scope and allow for stronger immersion in the culture and language (if applicable) of the host community.

- Newcastle upon Tyne, England (Exchange Program)
- Economic Studies in Lausanne (Exchange Program)

For more information and resources, please see the AYSPS Study Abroad website: <http://aysps.gsu.edu/study-abroad.html>. Students are also encouraged to visit the GSU Study Abroad office to learn about additional study abroad opportunities, scholarships, and discounted travel services: <http://www.studyabroad.gsu.edu/>.

Internships



An internship can be helpful to all types of students, whether they are beginning their first career or making a transition to a new field. Academic credentials are important, but never underestimate the importance of real world experience! Work experience helps you to build a track record of success and accomplishment. This will give you a foundation for future success and increase your appeal to employers. Most employers want to fill top positions with employees who they can count on to get the job done.

An internship can also lead directly to a job. A study done at one university revealed that 80 percent of students in internships were offered permanent employment by the agencies where they interned (Stateman 1997). An internship is valuable because it will give you experience in the field specifically related to your area of study. Through an internship, you have the opportunity to gain new skills, make new professional contacts and experience a different work environment. Finally, internships give you the chance to find out more about specific professions. Although you may have an idea of what you can do with your degree, there may be possibilities that you have not considered. By working in an organization in your field, you will learn to understand the different options that are available.

For helpful resources about internships, consult our website: <http://aysps.gsu.edu/career/internships>.

Resources for Finding an Internship

There are many places you can look to in order to find an internship. AYS Career Services offers various resources to help you with your internship search – so there should be absolutely no reason for you not to find one (or two, or three, or four!). Here is a list of resources we have to offer you in your search:

- ▶ **Join our Jobs/Internship Email Listserv** – we have built four different job & internship listservs; everything we hear about will go to these lists. These listservs are intended for Andrew Young students/alumni looking for a job or an internship. They will be used to distribute information about job and internship opportunities for the respective department/school within Andrew Young. **Always remember that these lists are provided for students and alumni of the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies – so please refrain from encouraging non-AYS students from joining. (Keep the competition out!)**

TIP: New graduates who took part in an internship program are more likely to have received a job offer than their peers who decided to forgo the experience, according to results of NACE's 2010 Student Survey. The study found that 42.3 percent of the seniors who had internship experience and applied for a job received at least one job offer. Conversely, only 30.7 percent of seniors without internship experience who applied for a job received an offer.

Getting Started (there are 2 steps!)

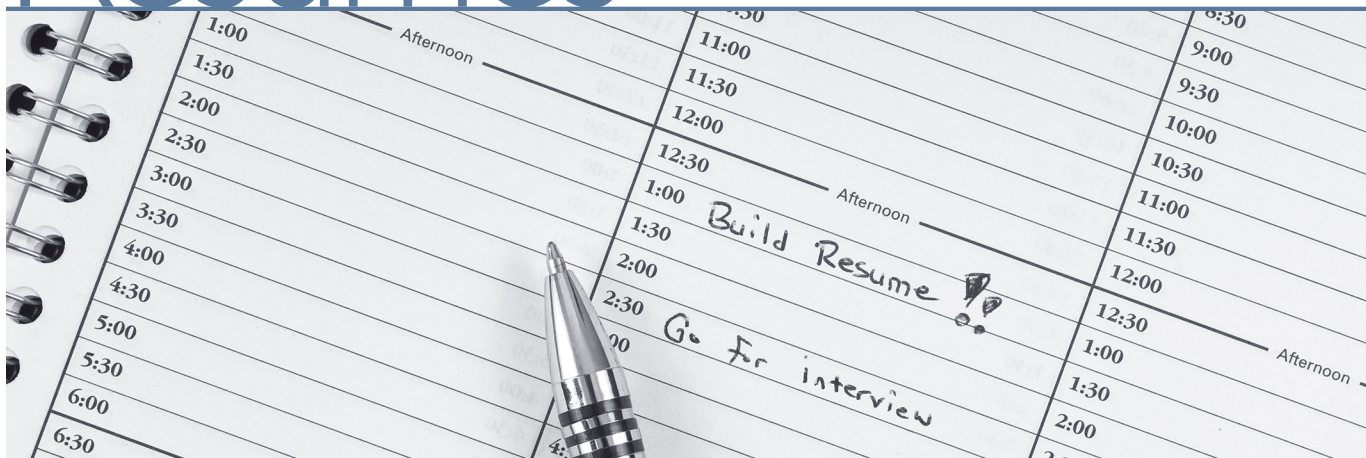
Step 1: Create a listserv account/log in.

- » Simply go to <http://listserv.gsu.edu>
- » Click on "Get Password"
- » Enter your email address and the desired password. *You may use either your GSU student email address or your personal email address (gmail, Hotmail, etc.)*
- » Click on the "Register Password" button
- » Then check your email inbox where you will receive an email from Georgia State University Listserv. Simply click the link in the email to activate your account. You are now registered as a GSU listserv user.

Step 2: Now join your department's listserv

- » Go back to <http://listserv.gsu.edu>, and click "log in" and sign in with your email address and password you created in step 1.
 - » Scroll down the list of available listservs to join, and select the list that corresponds to your academic department. The names of the lists are as follows:
 - [cjscareers](#)
 - [encareers](#)
 - [pmapcareers](#)
 - [swcareers](#)
 - » A new screen will appear and under "options" you will see "Join or Leave XXXCAREERS" (it should say the name of the list you are trying to join). Click "join..."
 - » Type in your First and Last Name. Do not click/change any other buttons on this page.
 - » Scroll down and hit the "Join" button and a confirmation email will be generated to your email inbox.
 - » Go to your email inbox and simply click the link in the email to activate your account.
- **Register with Panther Career Net:** – This is the job board hosted by University Career Services. http://www.gsu.edu/career/panther_career_net.html
 - **Internship Database** – the AYS Career Services office currently maintains various databases that track all of the internships our students have completed for the past 5+ years. The database is accessible via an intranet system on the AYS Career Services website: <http://aysps.gsu.edu/career/student-resources>. The password is "ayscareers".
 - **Industry/Key Interest Area Spreadsheets** – the AYS Career Services office has also compiled comprehensive spreadsheets on local (Atlanta and surrounding counties) and Washington DC employers who are sorted by either concentrations we offer in our school or by key areas that match many of our students' areas of interest. To gain access to these spreadsheets, visit the AYS Career Services' intranet at <http://aysps.gsu.edu/career/student-resources> (password is 'ayscareers'). A partial list of spreadsheets we have to offer (which include agency name, contact emails and phone numbers of leaders within that agency, and websites) includes:
 - » Budget & Finance Officers
 - » Child Trafficking, Slavery & Prostitution
 - » Disaster Management Agencies
 - » Federal Law Enforcement Agencies
 - » Foundations
 - » International Nonprofit Agencies
 - » Planning & Economic Development Agencies
 - » Poverty, Homelessness, Housing Agencies
 - » Public Health Agencies
 - » Public Safety Agencies
 - » Refugee & Immigration Agencies
 - » Think Tanks
 - » Youth Program Agencies
 - **Meet with Department Internship Coordinators** or the Director of Career Services in Andrew Young: <http://aysps.gsu.edu/career/internship/courses>.
 - **Meet with the internship coordinator in GSU University Career Services.**

Resumes



What is a Resume?

A resume is an employer's first impression of you. It should be an individually designed document that summarizes your education, experiences, and qualifications as they relate to your career goals and the hiring needs of a future employer. Your resume should market you and your abilities in order to land an interview.

In general, your resume should:

- Be easy to read in 30-60 seconds
- Command the reader's attention
- Stimulate interest in you
- Be designed to fit a specific career path
- Focus on skills related to the job to which you are applying

Note: If you are applying for state and federal jobs or internships, please note that there are different resume guidelines to consider for these employers. You should read the "Applying to Federal Jobs" section of this handbook.

Types of Resumes

CHRONOLOGICAL

The chronological resume is the most common type of resume, and expected by most employers. List your education, jobs, and experience in reverse chronological order, starting with the most recent. This type of resume focuses the employer on your work history and education.

FUNCTIONAL

The functional resume highlights specific skills directed towards the job sought. It lists major skill categories and combines all of your work experience together. This resume type is good for individuals changing career paths or with less than two years of work experience. It focuses the employer on your skill set rather than your work experience. Do not use this resume format, however, if you are applying for federal jobs via USAJOBS.

COMBINED

The combined resume is half functional and half chronological. This type of resume highlights specific skills directed towards the desired job, but also shows where the skills were obtained. It is appropriate for individuals changing career paths.

CV

The Curriculum Vita highlights education, professional experience, publications, presentations, conference attendance, honors, professional activities and memberships, research interests, teaching experience, and grant awards. This type of resume is typically used when applying for academic or research positions.

WHAT TYPE OF RESUME IS BEST FOR ME?

Consider a chronological resume if:	Consider a functional/combined resume if:
Most/all of your experience has been in one field.	You have very diverse experiences that don't add up to a clear-cut career path.
You are an established job-seeker with steady experience in your chosen field.	You are a college student with minimal experience and/or experience unrelated to your chosen career field.
Your experience is primarily traditional paid employment.	Some of your experience is not traditional paid employment, but internships, volunteer work, class projects, sports, leadership positions – and/or the actual experience may be secondary to the skills attained.
You plan to stay in the same field when you pursue your next job.	You want to transition to a new field that is very different from what all your previous experience points to.
You have minimal or no gaps in your work history.	You have been unemployed for more than a few months or have gaps in your work history. Example: Homemakers who took time to raise a family and now wish to return to the workplace. For those with gaps, a chronological format can draw undue attention to the gaps, while a functional resume enables you to portray transferable skills attained through such activities as domestic management and volunteer work.
Someone looking at your resume or work history for a few seconds would know immediately what you want to do and what you're good at.	Someone looking at your resume or work history for a few seconds would not be able to immediately discern what you want to do and what you're good at.
Your field is very conservative (examples: banking, law), and functional resumes are not the norm.	You seek a job in a field that is not extremely conservative.
You've been at most of your jobs for more than a year, and preferably at least two.	Your chronological resume gives the appearance of a "job-hopper" because some of your jobs have been of short duration and/or you've held several jobs over a relatively short period.
Submitting your resume to Monster.com and/or other job boards is a primary part of your job-seeking strategy.	You do NOT plan to submit your resume to Monster.com and/or other job boards that do not accept functional resumes (or you plan to have a chronological version for job boards and a functional version for other uses).
Submitting your resume to headhunters, recruiters, and/or executive search firms is a primary part of your job-seeking strategy.	You do NOT plan to submit your resume to headhunters, recruiters, or executive search firms – which tend NOT to favor functional resumes (or you plan to have a chronological version for headhunters, recruiters, and executive search firms and a functional version for other uses).

Writing Your Resume – Suggested Content/Layout

BASIC RULES

- Study the job descriptions of jobs that you are interested in applying for. See what they prioritize in their required/preferred qualifications.
- Conduct a gap analysis (see page 12) on the job classifications you are targeting – and prepare to develop more than one resume, depending on how diverse/divergent your career options are.
- Create your own name categories within the resume, based on pooling together sections that sell you best.
- Devote more space to and emphasize those aspects of your experience that best qualify you for the position. Imagine what you would talk about in an interview that makes you most qualified, and make sure that information is easy to find in your resume.
- Mirror the language of your target market. Use the same key words used in the announcement in your resume.
- Length: If you have recently graduated from an undergraduate program, most resumes will be one page. If you have an extensive work history, then your resume can be two pages maximum (different rules apply for federal resumes).
- The reader's eye travels from left to right and from top to bottom. Things on the right side of the page and towards the bottom have the chance of not being read! So put less important information at the bottom of the resume, and things you might want to "hide" towards the right margin (like employment dates if they were short).
- Are you selling your job title or your employer(s)? Whatever is going to sell you, list that item first and **bold** it! But you have to be consistent across your work history/education.
- Learn about how your resume is going to be reviewed (Federal, scanned, in-person review, etc.) and target/edit it appropriately.
- Paper: Print your resume on resume paper that can be bought at any office supply store. The paper is slightly heavier than regular print paper. Pick a color that is light and neutral. This will allow for your resume to be photocopied easily. Use the same color paper for all of your documents (resume, cover letter, etc.).
- Save your resume as a PDF if you anticipate emailing or uploading the document to employers or websites/job boards.

COMPONENTS OF THE RESUME

Name, Address, Telephone, & Email

Your name should be either centered at the top of the page or placed to the left. Include both your current and permanent addresses if necessary. Use only one telephone number where you can be easily reached, and be sure that the voicemail message sounds professional. List one professional email address (yourname@gmail.com instead of hotlips22@gmail.com). Check both voicemail and email regularly.

Education

Start with the highest level of education that you have achieved and work backwards. Leave off your high school diploma after sophomore year of college. Under the heading, include degree, concentration, and your expected graduation date. If applicable, you can also include additional information such as study abroad, thesis completion, honors, and relevant courses. Think about what sells you best – is it your degree title/major or the name of your university? Bold and list on the first line the one that sells you best.

Related Experience

This is the longest and most important part of your resume. It should include both paid and unpaid work, including part-time or full-time work experience. If you have held numerous part-time jobs to help finance your education, you may want to put a statement at the end of this section such as, "Held various summer and part-time jobs to finance educational expenses." Use action verbs to describe the work you did or do (use present tense for anything current and past tense for anything in the past). Be sure to choose your verbs creatively and do not be repetitive in your

Note: You might consider creating a new email account to be solely used for your job search so you do not miss important emails amidst junk mail and personal mail.

word choice. This section should reflect skills that are desired for the position you are applying for – not just a mere listing of your job responsibilities! Avoid labeling jobs as “part-time” as this tells the employer that you should only be given half credit for your time of service. Don’t give them ammunition to lessen your expertise.

Optional Sections

- Study Abroad/International
- Volunteer Work – additional transferable skills.
- Activities – both college and outside activities.
- Relevant Skills – list or describe special skills applicable to type of career sought (computer, language, etc.).
- Honors and Awards – academic honors, scholarships.
- Publications – list the articles, books or manuscripts you have published (if your senior thesis is going to be published, mention that here).
- Military Experience – include dates of service, ranks, duties, training, and honorable discharge.
- Other Skills and Interests – a catch-all category which allows you to add depth to your resume.

References

Most job applications require you to provide a list of 2-3 professional references. On the resume, you are not encouraged to include this list of names and addresses as part of your initial resume document, unless specified and asked for in the job announcement. References should be reserved and only provided when asked for by the employer. You do not want an employer contacting your references before you have had a chance to discuss a job application with them to brief them, and then prepare them for the reference check.

When compiling your references, you may question “Who Should I Ask to Serve as a Reference”? Consider faculty members, administrators, internship/co-operative education supervisors, and employers. The persons you ask to serve as a reference, or who you may ask to write a letter of recommendation for you, should:

- know you well
- know you long enough to write with authority
- know your work
- describe your work positively
- have a high opinion of you
- know where you are applying
- know your educational and career goals
- be able to favorably compare you with your peers
- be well known
- be able to write a good letter

Keep in mind that no one person will satisfy all of these criteria. Aim for a set of letters or references that cover the range of your skills. Ideally, letters should cover your academic and scholastic skills, research abilities and experiences, and applied experiences (e.g., co-operative education, internships, related work experience).

The appropriate format to use on your resume, when including your reference contacts, would be:

REQUIRED INFORMATION	EXAMPLE
<i>First and Last Name</i> <i>Job Title (Rank, if a Professor)</i> <i>Department (if applicable)</i> <i>Agency/Employer Name</i> <i>Mailing Address (full mailing address)</i> <i>Phone Number</i> <i>Email Address</i>	Dr. James Ricks Associate Professor Department of Criminal Justice Andrew Young School of Policy Studies Georgia State University 14 Marietta Street, NW Atlanta, GA 30303 (404) 413-0159 Jricks1@gsu.edu

The best thing that you can do to ensure that your references and/or reference letters cover all the bases is to provide your references with all the necessary information pertaining to the job(s) you are applying for. Do not assume that they will remember anything about you.

Make an appointment to speak with your letter writers and references. Give your letter writers plenty of time (three to four weeks at minimum). Provide a file with all of your background information:

- transcript
- resume or vita
- admissions essays
- courses you've taken with them
- research experiences
- internship and other applied experiences
- honor societies to which you belong
- awards you've won
- work experience
- professional goals
- due date for the application
- copy of the application recommendation forms (if provided by the institution to which you're applying)

Electronic Resumes

When submitting resumes, cover letters, transcripts, or writing samples electronically, always send as Adobe PDF files. Convert each file separately, and name them clearly with your last name and the type of document (ex: Tolan Resume or Tolan Cover Letter). When submitting via email, attach each file and write a brief explanation detailing the attached documents and the reason you are sending them (ex: job application, internship application, inquiry). Some employers suggest sending all files as one complete PDF file, so that you are ensuring your application arrives as a "packet." The preference is up to you.

Common Resume Mistakes

- Using "I", "me", or "we" in your resume.
- Making your name at the top of the page too small. Use at least 14 point font. Do not exceed 24 point font.
- Using odd/crazy font styles/colors. Common fonts to use would be Arial, Times Roman, Calibri or Garamond.
- Being inconsistent in style (ex. If you use periods in a bullet point description, use them throughout the entire resume).
- Including personal information, such as social security, marital status, citizenship, gender, photographs, and date of birth (some personal information is allowed in federal resumes).
- Being inconsistent in your action verbs – using past tense and present tense in jobs you held previously. We suggest using past-tense verbs in all job descriptions except the one you are currently in.
- Overcrowding your resume or making the font too small.
- Repeating information in multiple areas of resume.
- Using extremely old experiences. Focus on more recent experiences.
- Simply typing in what your job responsibilities were.
- Using acronyms (i.e. NATO, ACLU, USDA).

Action Verbs to Use in Your Resume

accelerated	constructed	explained	measured	reproduced
accomplished	contacted	explored	mediated	researched
achieved	continued	facilitated	modeled	resolved
acquired	contracted	figured	modified	responded
activated	convened	financed	molded	restored
adapted	conveyed	focused	monitored	retained
adjusted	coordinated	forecasted	motivated	retrieved
administered	corresponded	formed	named	reviewed
advised	counseled	formulated	negotiated	revised
allocated	created	fostered	observed	rewrote
analyzed	critiqued	founded	obtained	routed
annotated	decided	functioned	operated	scheduled
anticipated	defined	generated	ordered	searched
applied	delegated	governed	organized	selected
appraised	delivered	grouped	originated	served
arranged	demonstrated	guided	outlined	shaped
articulated	derived	helped	oversaw	shared
assembled	designed	identified	perceived	showed
assessed	detected	illustrated	performed	simplified
assigned	determined	immunized	persuaded	solicited
authored	developed	implemented	planned	solved
balanced	devised	improved	planted	specified
briefed	directed	increased	presented	spoke
budgeted	distributed	informed	presided	stimulated
built	drafted	initiated	printed	structured
catalogued	edited	instituted	produced	studied
categorized	educated	instructed	protected	supervised
chaired	effected	interpreted	provided	supported
clarified	elicited	interviewed	publicized	synthesized
cleared	encouraged	introduced	questioned	targeted
coded	established	invented	raised	taught
collaborated	evaluated	investigated	recommended	tested
compared	examined	judged	recorded	trained
compiled	executed	led	recruited	translated
completed	exhibited	listened	reduced	tutored
composed	expanded	maintained	rendered	updated
computed	expedited	managed	repaired	utilized
conducted	experienced	marketed	reported	verified
consolidated	experimented	mastered	represented	wrote

Resume Examples

CHRONOLOGICAL RESUME EXAMPLES

➤ Undergraduate with Coursework

320 West Ave. Tucker, GA 30084 • 678-555-8687 • iwanajob@student.gsu.edu

Iwana Job

Objective

A fast learner and dedicated worker, seeking an internship in human resources.

Education

Bachelor of Science in Public Policy

Concentration: **Public and Nonprofit Human Resource Policy**

Andrew Young School of Policy Studies – Georgia State University (Senior Standing)

- Received a scholarship from Ameri Corps for completing 300 hours of volunteer service.

Relevant Coursework: Families and Society, Race and Ethnic Relations, Working with Policy Data, Accounting I and II, Human Communication, Computer Information Systems, American Government, Global Issues, and Micro/Macro Economics

Experience

Georgia Department of Labor- Leadership Intern

Unemployment Insurance – Appeals Unit College Park, GA Summer 2012

- With little to no supervision, utilized MS Word to write office memos and client not valid complaint letters and utilized MS Excel to create spreadsheets for office use.
- While maintaining confidentiality, entered case information regarding unemployment benefits for the appealing party in the GDOL database system.
- Assisted executive management with the hiring and training of new staff by scheduling interviews, putting together selection packages, and training booklets.

Professional Promotions Brand Ambassador

Various Marketing Companies Atlanta, GA 20010-Present

- Serve as an independent contractor for various marketing companies hired to do promotional sales.
- Skills required to be a successful contractor include suggestive selling, interpersonal communication, sensitivity to diversity, and optimism.
- Acted as Field Marketing Manager for various accounts which included product display assembly and presentation, showcasing product lines, and ensuring administrative paperwork was filled out and sent to the clients and/or hiring marketing company.

Teacher Assistant

Centennial Place Family YMCA Atlanta, GA Sept. 2008-Feb. 2009

- Assisted the lead Pre-K teacher with routine activities and assignments for children ages 3 and 4.
- Ensured a professional approach to classroom management with all children, promoting a positive learning environment.
- Responsible for filing all class work for twenty children and documented children's daily routines for their parents to ensure effective parent communication and co-curricular involvement.

Volunteer Experience

City of Refuge- The Mission Church Summer 2010- Present

- Perform several hours a week of civic engagement by preparing and serving meals to homeless single women and children of the Eden Village Housing Center.

Jumpstart – AmeriCorps Spring 2007

- Interviewed and selected as a Jumpstart volunteer, helping children ages 4-5 to develop their reading and literacy skills. Skills developed in this position included team work, patience, and serving as a mentor.

► Undergraduate with Leadership Experience

Imma Nonprofit

2856 Iris Avenue, Atlanta, GA, 30339
 (404) 408-2000
immanp@gmail.com

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Science – Public Policy	Expected Graduation:
Concentration: Nonprofit Leadership	Dec. 2012
<i>Andrew Young School of Policy Studies - Georgia State University</i>	GPA: 3.4
 <i>James Madison University - Harrisonburg, Virginia</i>	2008- 2010
Major: Organizational Communication	

COMMUNICATIONS EXPERIENCE

- ♦ **Managing Editor** - *The Signal* (August 2010- Present)
 - Provide editorial oversight to Georgia State University’s main student newspaper.
 - Conduct weekly staff meetings with writers, editors, and advertising to develop bi-weekly publication.
- ♦ **Communication Intern and President’s Assistant** - *Michael Neill & Associates* (Summer 2009)
 - Managed employee invoices and company bills; Put together presentations on PowerPoint to present to clients; Assisted president during presentations to local financial institutions; Designed and implemented new client database

LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

- ♦ **Childcare Volunteer** - *Interfaith Outreach Home*—Atlanta, GA, (August 2010- Present): Attend outreach home to help with childcare during parental life skills meetings.
- ♦ **Teacher/Volunteer** *Cross Cultural Solutions*—Hohoe, Ghana, (Summer 2010): Taught a class of 7-13 year olds in numerous subjects as well as, took part in community building activities in a small village.
- ♦ **Community Service Chair** - *Alpha Sigma Alpha* – Harrisonburg, VA, (Spring 2009): Held an executive chair position where I oversaw and participated in all decision making for the entire organization
- ♦ **Recruitment Counselor** – *Panhelnic Council*—Harrisonburg, VA, (January 2008-September 2009): Led and mentored a group of potential new members through the recruitment process while taking disciplinary action when rules were broken
- ♦ **Standards Chair**- Harrisonburg, VA, Alpha Sigma Alpha (January 2008-December 2008): Was a part of a inter-sorority board that was in charge of disciplining members

FUNDRAISING/ EVENT PLANNING

Alpha Sigma Alpha- Community Service Chair, Harrisonburg, Virginia (January 2009- May 2010)

- ♦ **Event Planning:** Oversaw and planned all members community service activities
- ♦ **Leadership:** Conducted team meetings and built annual strategic plan.
- ♦ Planned weekly activities for local non-profits with members

The Mosby Foundation, Harrisonburg, Virginia (September 2009-November 2009)

- ♦ Planned, implemented, and directed the annual fundraiser, Pet Dog Extravaganza
- ♦ Raised over \$6,000 for The Mosby Foundation

The Chris Farley Foundation- Drug and Alcohol Abuse Seminar, Harrisonburg, Virginia (January 2008-March 2008)

- ♦ Planned and oversaw a fundraiser for The Harrisonburg Community Resource Center
- ♦ Coordinated talent schedule
- ♦ Raised \$800 for Harrisonburg Community Resource Center

Rock for RAK, Harrisonburg, Virginia (January 2008- September 2008)

- ♦ Co-sponsored fundraiser for Big Brothers/Big Sisters with another social fraternity
- ♦ Set up fundraisers to raise money to pay for talent
- ♦ Coordinated talent schedule and ticket sales
- ♦ Raised over \$2,000 for Harrisonburg Big Brothers/Big Sisters

SKILLS

- ♦ Proficient in Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint

► Undergraduate with Experience

CHARLES H. MCCANN

710 Justice Way, Atlanta, Georgia 30319
 Email: chuckmccann@yahoo.com | Mobile: 404.987.1234

Education

B.A. Criminal Justice Expected May 2013
 Georgia State University, Atlanta, GA.

- Hope Scholarship Recipient, GPA 4.0
- Leadership: Criminal Justice Student Association (CJSA) Vice-President
- Relevant Courses: Criminal Investigation, Policing and Individual Rights, Ethics in Criminal Justice

A.A. Criminal Justice May 2008
 Bauder College, Atlanta, GA

- Hope Scholarship Recipient
- Overall GPA: 3.8/4.0, Dean's List, Academic Excellence Recipient
- Relevant Courses: Terrorism and Counter Terrorism, Criminal Law-Judicial Process, Police and Society, Criminology, Report Writing- Interviewing, Ethics in Criminal Justice, Crisis Intervention, Crime and Loss Prevention, Corrections Policies and Procedures, Abnormal Human Behavior

Criminal Justice Experience

The Overseer Protective Services, LLC. Atlanta, GA
 Owner/President July 2009 – Present

- Control a budget by actively managing cash inflows and outflows including accounts receivables and company expenses/purchases
- Oversee team of up to 65 employees by delegating assignments, monitoring performance and providing feedback and coaching
- Assist with training in verbal de-escalation and criminal apprehension
- Write and maintain contracts and proposals for service agreements between company and clients
- Develop new and efficient policies and procedures to ensure customer satisfaction, maximize officer potential, and encourage company growth
- Complete conception and development of company's branding design
- Creation and development of company business articles including contracts, proposals, applications, training manuals, employee handbooks, report forms, and accounts receivable reports

Raven Arc Security, Inc. Atlanta, GA
 Partner June 2007– June 2008

- Solicited local companies and venues to acquire new clients
- Established rapport with account representatives to guarantee highest level of satisfaction
- Recruited and trained officers both inside and outside the classroom on weapon safety, crisis management, and reporting
- Implemented team building strategies to improve work performance and overall employee morale
- Conducted weekly meetings with other partners to perform company analysis by discussing current issues and improvement strategies

Security Officer/ Supervisor February 2005– May 2007

- Conducted team briefings to facilitate information flow and implement team building strategies
- Completed frequent check point inspections at susceptible locations within the facility
- Served as lead officer in maintaining a strict no weapon policy by regulating admission of patrons into the facilities
- Maintained order through exclusion, crowd control, and conflict mediation

Department of Juvenile Justice Decatur, GA
 Intern/ Juvenile Probation Detention Officer April 2005 – June 2006

- Acted as liaison between juveniles and their parents to ensure effective communication of progress updates
- Attended juvenile court arraignments to gather pertinent information for case files
- Documented activity and information regarding juveniles in case files
- Monitored activity of juveniles to assure they were in compliance with mandated court orders

E.D.S. Security Atlanta, GA
 Security Supervisor December 2003– February 2005

- Provided assistance to clients in handling daily operations, managing crisis situations and complaint resolution
- Implemented and enforced new policies and procedures including time clock management and shift check in systems
- Managed territory of approximately 25 employees to make certain that properties were adequately staffed

Skills and Credentials

Firearms Training/Qualification/Certifications 2008-2010

- ❖ Annual certification in firearm, weapon, and defense training from Georgia state certified instructors
- ❖ .40 Cal pistol qualification
- ❖ Field and classroom training on mindset, edged weapons, defensive tactics, precision shooting and real world scenario training

Relevant Skills

- ❖ Proficient in computer applications including Microsoft Word, Excel, Powerpoint, and Access. Familiar with QuickBooks
- ❖ Leader, Works Well Under Pressure, Self-Motivated, Thorough, Diplomatic, Excellent Communication Skills, Adaptable

► Graduate (two-page resume)

Susan B. Anthony

2014 East Peachtree Lane, # 3101
Atlanta, GA 30324

404.246.8101
susananthony@gmail.com

EDUCATION

Master of Arts, Economic Policy	Expected May 2013
Planning and Economic Development Graduate Certificate	Expected May 2013
<i>Andrew Young School of Policy Studies - Georgia State University, Atlanta, GA</i>	
Bachelor of Science, Economics - Magna Cum Laude, GPA 3.75	December 2010
<i>Andrew Young School of Policy Studies - Georgia State University, Atlanta, GA</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> French Minor, Honors Program Distinction; Earned Certificates: Analytical Economics, Contexts of Leadership Theory and Practice, Development Economics, European Union Studies, International Economics 	
Associate of Science, Business Administration - High Honors, GPA 3.84	May 2008
<i>Georgia Perimeter College, Atlanta, GA</i>	

WORK EXPERIENCE

Stimulus Accountability Intern - Governor's Office of Planning and Budget	2011-Present
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manage reporting, media and web content, performance measures and impact analysis for 723 awards across 23 state agencies totaling over \$7 billion from the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act 	
Administrative and Research Director - Polish-American Chamber of Commerce Atlanta	2011-Present
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research and analyze economic conditions, business climates, demographic trends, best practices, and investment opportunities in the areas of education, culture, and economic development between Poland, metro Atlanta, and the State of Georgia Manage enterprise obligations, social media updates, presentations, proposals, and secretarial duties 	
CTW and Web Administrator; Graduate Research Assistant - Georgia State University	2011-Present
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grade Intermediate Macro Creative Thinking through Writing research papers for the Department of Economics Provide ongoing, comprehensive web audit and update website content for the Department of Economics 	
Supplemental Instructor Macroeconomics; Graduate Research Assistant - Georgia State University	2011
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Taught three classes of principles of macroeconomics including exercises for analysis, application, and review 	
Global Commerce Intern - Georgia Department of Economic Development	2010
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Researched country and industry-specific statistics of international trade flows and policy updates for foreign trade consulates, local government officials, and Georgia export businesses 	
International Studies Program Policy Research Intern - National Science Foundation	2010
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Researched Uganda household survey data to construct custom variables and conducted probit model regressions for policy impact paper and presented on savings behavior and institutional choice 	
Logistics Director/Purchasing Administrator - East West Manufacturing, Inc	2004-2005
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managed import logistics, customs clearance, contracts, and payment accruals for invoices, duty, and tooling and maintained database for purchasing and inventory management 	
Operations Director/International Purchasing Agent - Marvin L Walker & Associates, Inc	2000-2004
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procured and managed all internal contracts, commissions billings, consignments, reports, forecasts, and release schedules for natural stone commodities from vendors abroad 	

SERVICE EXPERIENCE

Research Excellence in Economics Program; Georgia State University; Co-founder and Graduate Mentor	2011-Present
Urban Fellows Program (College of Law, Georgia State University); Policy Research Fellow	2011-Present
Habitat for Humanity; Home Builder	2009-Present
WSB-Radio Clark Howard Consumer Action Center; Consumer Advisor	2008-2009
Georgia Perimeter College Alumni Association; Vice President (Director, 2007-2009)	2007-2010
Hosea Feed the Hungry and Homeless; Food Server, Setup, Prep, and Cleaning Crew	2007-2009
Refugee Family Services; English and Math Tutor	2007-2008
Project Open Hand; Food Service Prep	2006-2008

➤ Graduate (two-page resume)

TECHNICAL PROFICIENCIES

ACT, Adobe Acrobat, Applied Statistics and Econometrics, ArcGIS, Google Docs, GTIS, Kompass, Microsoft Office Suite (Access, Excel, Outlook, PowerPoint, Word), Orbis, PIERS, Prezi, Reddot, SAS, STATA, Tableau

COLLEGIATE LEADERSHIP

Presidential Ambassador – <i>Georgia Perimeter College</i>	2008-Present
Economics Club, President – <i>Georgia State University</i>	2008-2009
Student Court Justice – <i>Georgia Perimeter College</i>	2008
French Club, <i>La Connexion Française</i> ; President – <i>Georgia Perimeter College</i>	2007-2008
Honors Program Student Association; President – <i>Georgia Perimeter College</i>	2007-2008
Phi Theta Kappa Alpha Zeta Mu Chapter; President – <i>Georgia Perimeter College</i>	2007-2008
Southeast Model African Union; Algerian Delegation; Executive Head of State and Government	2007

HONORS AND AWARDS

Georgia State University

Georgia State University Research Competition (GSURC) Award	2011
Highest Student Attendance and Participation Award; <i>GSU Department of Supplemental Instruction</i>	2011
Wall Street Journal Student Achievement Award	2010
Who’s Who among Students in American Universities and Colleges	2010
Outstanding Service Award	2009

Georgia Perimeter College

Academics, Leadership, and Service Award	2008
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Humanitarian Award	2008
Honors Program Certificate	2008
International Certificate	2008
Outstanding Service Award in Student Government	2008
Outstanding Student in Foreign Language	2008
President’s Award for Outstanding Student	2008
Student of the Month (<i>November</i>)	2007
Outstanding Student in Economics	2006

All USA Academic Team, Georgia Region; <i>American Association of Community Colleges</i>	2008
Communication and Leadership Award; <i>Toastmasters International, District 14</i>	2008

SCHOLARSHIPS

Alice Jacoby Egan Honors Scholarship	2007
Dunwoody Department of Business Norman Hollingsworth Scholarship	2007
Mary R. Futch Academic Honors Scholarship	2007
HOPE Scholarship (<i>127 credit hour maximum</i>)	2006-2009

SELECTED PAPERS, PUBLISHED WORKS, AND INVITED CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

“Growth Empirics and Economic Convergence in the European Union” (<i>Honors Undergraduate Thesis</i>) Presented: Eastern, Midwest, and Southern Economic Association Annual Conferences	2011
“An Empirical Analysis of Household Savings Behavior in Uganda” (<i>National Science Foundation REU Program</i>)	2010
“Realizing Optimum Currency Area Theory Criteria in the EMU” (<i>Honors Dimension</i>)	2009

HONOR SOCIETIES AND AFFILIATIONS

Alpha Beta Gamma; Alpha Pi Chapter *International Business Honor Society*
 American, Eastern, Midwest, and Southern Economic Associations
 Delta Epsilon Iota; Nu Delta Chapter *Academic Honor Society*
 Golden Key International Honour Society
 Net Impact Atlanta, Professional Edition *International Nonprofit promoting Corporate Stewardship*
 Omicron Delta Epsilon; Beta Beta Chapter *National Honor Society in Economics*
 Phi Theta Kappa International; Alpha Zeta Mu Chapter *Honor Society of Two-year Colleges*
 Urban Fellows Program; *College of Law, Georgia State University*
 World Affairs Council of Atlanta; *J. Mack Robinson College of Business, Georgia State University*

References, letters of recommendation, transcripts, and writing samples are available upon request

KANDY KALE

111 Peach Pass Road, Duluth, Georgia 30387
(770) 852-9515 kkale@yahoo.com

Education & Certifications

Master of Social Work (MSW) – Community Partnerships Georgia State University - Atlanta, GA	Expected Graduation: May 2013
Bachelor of Arts in Social Welfare and Sociology University of Georgia, Athens, GA	December 2010
Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)	Expires: Oct. 2011

Human Service Experience

Community Outreach Intern

<i>Duluth Elementary School Enrichment Program</i>	Duluth, Georgia	Aug. 2012-present
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing partnerships between students, families, local schools, and community service organizations to support students with educational and emotional needs Managing referrals from teachers; serving as a liaison between program and parents of students who have been referred Organizing and managing evaluation data in SPSS 		

Case Management Intern

<i>Fulton County Division of Family and Children Services</i>	Atlanta, Georgia	Sept. 2011- May 2012
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rotated through the offices of child protective services, foster care, and family independence. Attended court hearings, participated in field investigation work, and worked with children, youth, adults, and families Skills learned: case planning, intake procedures, case review, navigating the adoptions process 		

Camp Counselor

<i>Decatur YMCA</i>	Atlanta, Georgia	May 2011-Aug. 2011
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Directly supervised and led 25 children, ages 5-12, in daily sporting activities 		

Human Development and Family Studies Intern

<i>Bright Future Kindergarten Prep School</i>	Athens, Georgia	May 2010-Dec. 2010
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruited and registered children and parents for case study focused on the reading development of low-income children Observed students enrolled in the case study; recorded data in SPSS 		

Teaching Assistant and Tutor

<i>School After-School Program</i>	Athens, Georgia	Sept. 2007-Feb. 2009
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tutored middle and high school students in all academic subject areas and worked as a teaching assistant in the high school literacy program. 90% of literacy program students experienced improved English grades within one semester. 		

Skills

- Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel, Microsoft PowerPoint
- SPSS (Statistical Software)
- Intermediate Spanish

Community Service

Hands on Atlanta Volunteer		Oct. 2011-present
Emory John's Creek Hospital Front Desk Volunteer		Dec. 2010-present
YMCA of Clarke County Children's Program Volunteer		Jan. 2009-Dec. 2010
Boys and Girls Club of Clarke County		June 2006-Dec. 2010
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tutoring and Children and Youth Activities Programs Volunteer 		

Leadership & Professional Memberships

MSW Bridge Builders Club Member (Georgia State University)		Aug. 2011-present
National Association of Social Workers Student Member		Aug. 2011-present
Black Student Union, Treasurer		Aug. 2007-Dec. 2010

Additional Experience

Customer Service Associate

SunTrust Bank	Athens, Georgia	Jan. 2007-Dec. 2010
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsible for opening accounts, processing transactions and selling products and services. Recognized as a SunTrust Branch Top Performer - March 2008, June 2008, and December 2009 		

FUNCTIONAL RESUME EXAMPLE

SUSIE FUNCTIONAL

99 Azalea Drive, Decatur, GA 30303
 sfunctional@hotmail.com (404) 423-2310

QUALIFICATIONS SUMMARY

Administrative Management and Support professional experienced working in fast-paced environments demanding strong organizational, technical, and interpersonal skills. Trustworthy, ethical, and discreet; committed to superior customer service. Confident and poised in interactions with individuals at all levels. Detail-oriented and resourceful in completing projects; able to multi-task effectively. Capabilities include:

- Customer Service
- Word Processing & Typing
- Computer Operations
- Account Management
- Filing & Data Archiving
- Office Equipment Operation
- Telephone Reception
- General Accounting
- Problem Solving

EXPERIENCE HIGHLIGHTS

Administrative Support

- Performed administrative and secretarial support functions for the Vice President of a large sportswear manufacturer. Coordinated and managed multiple priorities and projects.
- Provided discreet secretarial and reception services for a busy family counseling center. Scheduled appointments and maintained accurate, up-to-date confidential client files.
- Assisted with general accounting functions; maintained journals and processed accounts payable and accounts receivable payments. Provided telephone support; investigated and resolved billing problems for an 18-member manufacturer's buying group. Trained and supervised part-time staff and interns

Customer Service & Reception

- Registered incoming patients in a hospital emergency room. Demonstrated ability to maintain composure and work efficiently in a fast-paced environment while preserving strict confidentiality.
- Conducted patient interviews to elicit necessary information for registration, accurate prioritization, and to assist medical professionals in the triage process.
- Orchestrated hotel special events and reservations; managed customer relations and provided exemplary service to all customers.

Management & Supervision

- Promoted rapidly from front desk clerk to assistant front office manager at an upscale hotel. Oversaw all operations including restaurant, housekeeping, and maintenance. Troubleshoot and resolved problems, mediated staff disputes, and handled customer complaints.
- Participated in staff recruitment, hiring, training, and scheduling. Supervised a front-desk staff.

EDUCATION & TRAINING

GRADUATE CERTIFICATE, **Nonprofit Management**, Georgia State University, 2012
 BBA, **Managerial Sciences**, Georgia State University, 2009

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

Accounting Assistant, Guardian, Inc., Peachtree City, GA (2009-2011)
 Patient Services Registrar, Georgia Health System Hospital, Peachtree City, GA (2008-2009)
 Assistant Front Office Manager, Sheraton Decatur, Decatur, GA (2006-2008)
 Receptionist/Secretary, Family Counseling & Guidance Center, Griffin, GA (2005-2006)
 Administrative Assistant, Southland Sportswear, Dacula, GA (Summer 2004)

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

After School Tutor, Peachtree City Children's Home, Peachtree City, GA (2006-present)
 • Tutor elementary school kids in math 5 hours per week
 Donation Volunteer, Dacula Soup Kitchen, Dacula, GA (2004-2006)
 • Coordinated and recorded intake of food donations from local food drives
 Cancer Walk Coordinator, American Cancer Society, Dacula, GA (2003)
 • Part of 5 person volunteer team that organized the Dacula Cancer Walk, which raised \$65,000 and had 300 participants

COMBINED RESUME EXAMPLES

➤ Combined Resume (two-page example)

NED A. JOB	
4491 Hamby Pond Place, Acworth, GA 30102 Telephone: (770) 677-9515 ♦ Email: NedJob@gsu.edu	
PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY	
<i>Experienced Manager</i> with several years of progressive operations management opportunities and continued educational enhancements. Innovative, hands-on, results driven manager with excellent record of exceeding performance management goals with proven experiences in the areas of marketing, management and development of new relationships. Career includes multiple leadership roles and a consistent record of accomplishing organizational objectives and increasing revenues. Technologically confident leader with a reputation for strategic vision, effective leadership, and flawless execution aiding in improving community partnerships; career skills include the following:	
<i>Professional Communication Skills ♦ Marketing & Strategic Planning Personnel Management ♦ Customer Relations Management ♦ Project Management Financial Management ♦ Leadership Skills ♦ Analytical & Problem Solving Skills</i>	
EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND	
Master of Public Administration – Management & Finance GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY, Atlanta, GA Andrew Young School of Policy Studies – 2013	Master of Business Administration UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA, Athens, GA Terry College of Business - 2007
Bachelor of Science – Information Technology GEORGIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY, Atlanta, GA - 2004 <i>Magna Cum Laude</i>	
INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE	
United Nations Mission in Liberia/United Nations World Food Programme	1990
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • served as a volunteer providing coordination and distribution of food to people affected by the Liberian Civil War. • International travel to 10 foreign countries • Foreign language proficiency in French and Russian 	
PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE	
Business Operations Specialist STATE OF GEORGIA, DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES, Atlanta, GA	Dec 2008 – Present
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage, plan and develop the regional consolidated transportation program serving 9 counties in Metro Atlanta. • Administer annual funding in excess of \$8 million. • Oversee the development and administration of contracts with private transportation contractors. • Monitor transportation providers for compliance with defined program services and operation. • Conduct needs assessment, accurately prepare requests for proposals and ensure that quality control measures are implemented. • Provide direction to regional and local program managers, local planners, government officials and the private sector in regards to the transportation program. • Interact with all levels of government, contractors and the private sector in a way that promotes respect, encourages cooperation and contributes to excellent performance. • Supervise the collection, compilation, analyzing and reporting of data and the preparation of financial and administrative reports. 	

► Combined Resume (two-page example)

NED A. JOB

4491 Hamby Pond Place, Acworth, GA 30102
Telephone: (770) 677-9515 ♦ Email: NedJob@gsu.edu

Manager

LANIER PARKING SYSTEMS, Atlanta, GA

Sept 2006 – Nov 2008

- Managed the parking and shuttle operations for Atlantic Station - a mixed use development, as well as a "Class A" high rise in midtown Atlanta.
- Effectively and successfully managed a *\$5 million* annual budget.
- Developed an operating budget based on detailed forecasts and managed the facilities to operate effectively within the established budget.
- Prepared comprehensive analysis reports showing comparison between expenses and budgets.
- Researched service needs and negotiated appropriate vendor contractual relationships.
- Hired, interviewed and trained a staff of 100+ professional and service level employees.
- Supervised all bookkeeping and accounting operations including payroll expenses, accounts payable and accounts receivables.

Project Manager

CENTRAL PARKING SYSTEM, Tampa, FL

Jan 2006 – Sept 2006

- Managed the daily parking operations for the Tampa Port Authority and the City of St. Petersburg.
- Managed an annual budget in excess of *\$4 million*.
- Implemented tighter revenue controls and as a result increased revenue by 50%.
- Interviewed, trained, motivated and supervised a staff of 40 employees to achieve maximum performance.
- Served as communications liaison for clients and executive management.
- Implemented and enforced policies and procedures that *improved customer satisfaction by 70%*.

Project Manager

CENTRAL PARKING SYSTEM, Atlanta, GA

Sept 2002 – Dec 2005

- Directed the parking operations of multiple locations throughout midtown and downtown Atlanta.
- Consistently exceeded revenue forecasts and increased revenue by 100% after performing a needs assessment and trend analysis of area restaurants and clubs.
- Ensured the timely processing of payroll, accounts payables, and other monthly statements.
- Performed all requisite personnel responsibilities including, but not limited to, hiring, training and supervising a staff of 12 employees.

Management Trainee

ENTERPRISE RENT-A-CAR, Atlanta, GA

Sept 2001 - Mar 2002

- Negotiated business relationships for products and services to local car dealerships, body shops, claims adjusters, insurance agents, hotels and corporations.
- Provided outstanding customer service to walk-in customers as well as those with reservations.
- Conducted administrative functions such as underwriting rental contracts, filing accident reports, and handling accounts receivables and collections.

Personnel Specialist

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE, Charleston, SC

Sept 1997 - Jul 2000

- Supervised the logistics of providing training for more than *4,000* active duty personnel; provided direct supervision in various disciplines including customer service, training, and counseling.
- Facilitated training and orientation programming for incoming Air Force personnel. Provided customer support and resources for base personnel and their families regarding an array of issues and concerns.
- Awarded "Personnel Manager of the Year 1998", "Airman of the Year 1998" and "Sharp Image Award".

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATION

- Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Inc.
- National Black MBA Association

► Combined with Courses (three-page Federal example)

HYRE MI

99 Peachtree Parkway
Atlanta, GA 30303

(404) 845-1478
hyre.mi@gmail.com

Seeking a full-time internship position with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

EDUCATION & CERTIFICATIONS

MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION, PUBLIC HEALTH – Georgia State University, January 2011-Present

- 4.0 GPA
- 3rd semester student
- Completed six FEMA certifications related to Disaster Preparedness, Communications, and Community Planning

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN NURSING – Emory University, 5/2006

- 4.0 GPA – *Summa Cum Laude*
- “Outstanding Scholar” of graduating class

BACHELOR OF ARTS - SOCIOLOGY – University of Georgia, 12/2002

RELEVANT COURSEWORK

Statistical Methods for Health Sciences

- Developed competency in the appropriate use of data summarization and presentation of basic statistical methods. Used SPSS and MS Excel to manipulate data and to perform basic analysis.

US Health Care System

- Established advanced knowledge of the US health care system, current organization of the health care system, ability of the system to meet population needs, policy environment that influences access to care, and trends that could impact the system in the future.

Evidence-based Management of Public Health Programs

- Techniques and procedures for monitoring achievement of a program’s objectives, generating evidence of program effectiveness, and assessing impacts in public health settings. Focus on evaluation framework that leads to evidence-based decision-making in public health.

Health, Risk, and Crisis Communication in Public Health

- Sharpened written communication skills that can be used in technical reports, crisis communication plans, or to provide objective summaries to groups or individuals.

Public Health Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Response

- Complemented primary care skills with responder training, which included securing advanced certifications from FEMA in Incident Command System (ICS) and National Incident Management System (NIMS). Developed community disaster plans for emergency management personnel.

Epidemiology in Public Health

- Developed skills to critically read and evaluate public health work using epidemiological principles.

Environmental Health Concepts in Public Health

- Survey of major topics of environmental health. Pending competencies include: Understanding existing regulatory frameworks for controlling environmental and occupational agents, identifying major economic and social implications of policy options related to environmental health environment, and examining current legal framework, policies, and practices associated with environmental health and how they improve public health.

HEALTH CARE / RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION – Atlanta, Georgia

April 2012 – Present

NATIONAL CENTER ON BIRTH DEFECTS AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

Student Research Assistant/Field Worker

Supervisor: Ann Clark, (404) 413-0945 Salary: \$18,000 Hours Worked: 20 hours

- Drafted standard operating procedures for research study
- Served as a member of the planning group that developed research study design and execution
- Used technical skills in various software programs to improve team project management
- Train field workers on specimen collection
- Use strong interpersonal and cultural sensitivity skills to establish rapport and recruit program participants
- Present research findings to individuals and will serve on technical writing team to publish findings
- Obtained CDC security clearance including laboratory access

► Combined with Courses (three-page Federal example)

CHILDREN'S MEDICAL GROUP, P.C. – Atlanta, Georgia

December 2008 – Present

Assistant Head Nurse

Supervisor: Jim Varrachio, (678) 598-3358 Salary: \$48,000 Hours Worked: 40 hours

- Train and supervise up to 18 registered nurses in a large pediatric practice.
- Monitor patient vaccination schedules, provide patient/parent education, facilitate sub-specialist care, and act as liaison between patients, physicians, and specialists.
- Serve on evaluating committee responsible for evaluating Electronic Health Records needs and vendor products and providing purchasing and operational recommendations in advance of practice EHR rollout.
- Create and maintain strong relationships with patients, practitioners, specialists, and vendors to ensure operational excellence.
- Collected and evaluated office productivity data and provided CMG physicians with recommendations that streamlined clinical processes to decrease patient wait time, improve patient outcomes and increase patient and employee satisfaction.

ATLANTA METRO MEDICAL CENTER – Marietta, Georgia

June 2007-Oct 2008

Registered Nurse

Supervisor: Gail Hackel (576) 685-2965 Salary: \$42,000 Hours Worked: 40 hours

- Provided direct patient care on a medical/surgical pediatric unit.
- Responsibilities included patient assessments and monitoring, daily care, charting, education, medication management, admissions, discharges and patient satisfaction.
- Established patient care goals, monitored and analyzed quantitative and qualitative data, provided recommendations to physicians, and provided patient education to improve health outcomes.
- Introduced asthma patient teaching program that streamlined the education process, better utilized employee and material resources, and achieved higher patient satisfaction while decreasing patient return rate.

COLLEGE OF NURSING, EMORY UNIVERSITY – Atlanta, Georgia

Summer 2007

Graduate Teaching Assistant

Supervisor: Dick Parsons, (404) 968-5873 Salary: \$15,000 Hours Worked: 20 hours

- Researched evidence-based practice in the pediatric primary care setting to ensure teaching materials were consistent with the latest industry standards.
- Reviewed course materials, organized and updated online course site, solicited student and faculty feedback via interviews and questionnaires, and communicated regularly.
- Created and distributed recruitment materials for adjunct faculty.

MANAGEMENT AND OPERATIONS EXPERIENCE

The Home Depot – Southeast Region

Oct 1988-Jan 2006

Director of Merchandise & Operations

- Provided leadership and direction for 9 district managers, 3 merchandise and operations managers, and 94 stores in 9 states generating approximately \$700 million in annual sales.
- Developed regional sales and expense budgets, sales initiatives, service programs, and succession plans, monitored progress towards goals and made operational adjustments necessary to meet or exceed goals.
- Developed and promoted regional, district and store staff members.
- Created and implemented corporate events program that generated \$4.5 million in sales for the region and an 8 point increase in customer satisfaction.
- Led regional committee related to customer service initiatives and served on various national committees related to sales driving, merchandise floor plans, marketing plans, operations rollouts, diversity awareness, and management recruitment & retention.

District Manager

- Provided leadership and direction for 15 stores in 3 states generating approximately \$100 million in annual sales.
- Responsibilities included personnel hiring and development, guest relations, profit and loss control, store operations, local media and community relations, and loss prevention.
- Successfully developed and promoted store staff into store, district and regional management positions.
- Coached and mentored new District Managers as part of the regional DM training program.

Operations Support Manager / Sales Manager

- Provided operations support to district management and store teams in a 50+ store region.
- Responsibilities included managing store openings/closings, store systems, supply procurement, vendor relations, contract negotiation, and store support.

➤ Combined with Courses (three-page Federal example)

- Developed and implemented new store signage and display program within established time and expense parameters which created a seven point improvement in the “competitive prices” service metric.
- Implemented new accounting policy and procedure that achieved greater fiscal accountability at store level decreasing store losses by an average of 5%.

Store Director

- Provided leadership and direction for single store operations with 40 to 130 employees and generating \$6.5 to \$11 million in annual sales.
- Responsibilities included personnel hiring and development, guest relations, profit and loss control, and execution of company standards.
- Recruited and interviewed management candidates and supervised training stores involving extensive coaching of management trainees.
- Regional facilitator for company diversity awareness and training programs.

Various Store Management Positions

- Provided leadership and direction for single store operations with 30 to 110 employees and generating \$6 to \$9 million in annual sales.
- Responsibilities included personnel hiring and development, guest relations, profit and loss control, and execution of company standards.
- Developed and presented training program for in-season Front End procedures (cash control, loss prevention, customer service).
- Participated in company diversity focus group.

PROFESSIONAL LICENSES / ACHIEVEMENTS

- Georgia RN license – RN12345
- Inducted into Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing, 2006
- Six Sigma Yellow Belt certification, 2008
- FEMA Certifications:
 IS-00700.a - National Incident Management System (NIMS) and Introduction – FEMA
 IS-00100.b – Introduction to Incident Command System (ICS) – FEMA
 IS-00200.b – ICS for Single Resources and Initial Action Incident – FEMA
 IS-00010.a – Animals in Disaster: Awareness and Preparedness – FEMA
 IS-00011.a – Animals in Disasters: Community Planning – FEMA
 IS-00111 – Livestock in Disaster - FEMA

TECHNICAL SKILLS

- Proficient in Microsoft Office – Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Access (data input)
- Beginning proficiency in SPSS
- Internet research tools – Explorer, Firefox, Google, PubMed
- Google Groups, Google Docs

CV

➤ CV (three-page example)

GEORGE H. COWAN

120 Peachtree Rd. Unit 3
 Alpharetta, Georgia 30329
 Phone: (770) 665-3498
georgehcowan@me.com

EDUCATION

Ph. D. Candidate (Public Policy) - May 2013 (expected)
 Joint Georgia State - Georgia Tech doctoral program in Public Policy - Atlanta, Georgia
 Specialization: Disaster Management and Environmental Policy
 Dissertation Title: "The Determinants of Disaster Preparedness: A Survey of New Orleans Organizations"
 Chair: Dr. Parker Bolten

Masters of Arts – Economics
 Georgia State University - Atlanta, Georgia, 2007

Masters of Business Administration – Water Resource Management and Policy
 Darton University - Albany, Georgia, 2005

Bachelor of Agriculture – Agricultural Economics
 University of Agriculture - Abeokuta (UNAAB), Ogun State, Nigeria, 2002

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Research Assistant - Andrew Young School of Policy Studies (AYSPS) *2011-Present*

- Writing a literature review on the history of the U. S. Emergency Management System

Research Assistant - Georgia Institute of Technology, School of Public Policy *2009-2010*

- Conducted interviews on disaster issues either individually or in conjunction with Dr. Roy Noon
- Helped design and code a follow-up survey for the interviewees
- Entered information into a database, analyzed the data and wrote a report
- Coordinated multiple stakeholders and facilitated the sharing of knowledge among them
- Helped to develop a proposal on the transportation of hazardous materials

Policy Analyst - Andrew Young School of Policy Studies and Georgia Health Policy Center *2008*

- Led a team that developed a comprehensive database of health-related publications.

Research Assistant - Andrew Young School of Policy Studies, Environmental Economics *2006-2007*

- Applied Geographic Information System (GIS) to map irrigated lands in southeast Georgia.
- Made substantial contribution to the final report.

Short-term Research Consultant - Water Planning and Policy Center, Albany, Georgia *2005*

- Prepared a research report on desalination
- Provided strategic coordination/leadership on desalination issues

Research Assistant – Darton University College of Business *2003-2005*

- Provided administrative support to faculty members
- Used the internet to conduct literature review searches for faculty members

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Georgia State University - Atlanta, Georgia
 Lecturer, "Research Design" *Summer 2012*
 Graduate Teaching Assistant, "Macroeconomics" *2011-2012*

Darton College - Albany, Georgia *2005*
 Guest lecturer, "Desalination"

► CV (three-page example)

COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECTS**National Youth Service Corps (NYSC), Karu Local Government, Nigeria** *March 2001–Feb. 2002*

- Served as a corps member for the Nigerian government upon graduation from the University of Agriculture.
- Service requirements included working as part of a community service team, which built public facilities for impoverished areas within the country and provided city beautification efforts.
- Self-initiated and managed two additional service projects, which were completed above and beyond the daily corps service requirements:

Poverty Reduction Project

- Developed a harvesting plan to grow fruits and vegetables which were donated to ten needy families

Facilities Enhancement Project

- Created a fundraising campaign to secure funding to provide office furniture and equipment for the NYSC office in Karu. The successful campaign raised approximately 27,000 Naira

AREAS OF RESEARCH AND TEACHING INTEREST

Disaster Policy (especially, earthquake policy)/Emergency Management, Environmental Policy, Poverty Issues, Natural Resource Management, Adaptive Ecosystem Management, Public Policy Analysis, Research Design, Organizational Behavior, Desalination.

CONFERENCE PAPERS AND PRESENTATIONS

Obstacles and Disaster Risk Reduction: A Survey of New Orleans Organizations, (Dr. Chris Smith, co-author), Southeastern Conference for Public Administration (SECOPA), Orlando, Florida, September 24th–27th, 2011.

Obstacles and Disaster Risk Reduction: A Survey of New Orleans Organizations, (Dr. Chris Smith, co-author), Andrew Young School of Policy studies, September 11, 2010.

Information and Disaster Risk Reduction: A Survey of New Orleans Organizations, (Dr. Chris Smith, co-author), Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago, Illinois, April 3-6, 2009.

The Role of Information in Disaster Risk Reduction: A Survey of New Orleans Organizations, (Dr. Chris Smith, co-author), Andrew Young School of Policy studies, March 25, 2009.

Actions and Perceptions of Disasters: A Survey of Organizations in New Orleans, Louisiana, (Dr. Chris Smith, co-author), Workshop for Original Policy Research, School of Public Policy, Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta, Georgia, September 28, 2008.

Digging Through the Rubble: A Meta-Analysis of Elite Opinion Flood Studies, (Dr. Chris Smith, co-author), Workshop for Original Policy Research, School of Public Policy, Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta, Georgia, September 21, 2008.

Influence of Political and Organizational Structure on Flood Decision Making: Preliminary Findings in New Orleans, LA, (Dr. Roberto Diaz and Dr. Chris Smith, co-authors), Mid-America Flood Center Annual Meeting, Chicago, February, 2008.

Adaptive Management in Developing Nations, Andrew Young School of Policy Studies, Georgia State University, 2007.

Desalination as a Water Source for Municipal and Industrial Water Users: The Future is Now (presented with Nancy Lynn, co-author), Georgia Water Resources Conference, University of Georgia, 2004.

WORK IN PROGRESS

Influence of Political and Organizational Structure on Flood Decision Making: Preliminary Findings in New Orleans, (Dr. Roberto Diaz and Dr. Chris Smith, co-authors), Stakeholder report for the MAF Center.

Obstacles and Risk Reduction: A Survey of New Orleans Organizations (Dr. Chris Smith, co-author, submitted to *Natural Hazard Review*).

Digging through the Rubble: A Review of Community and Elite Flood Studies (Dr. Chris Smith, co-author, submitted to *Review of Policy Research*).

➤ CV (three-page example)

CONFERENCES ATTENDED

Annual Natural Hazard Research and Applications Workshop, Broomfield, Colorado, July 2011
 Annual Natural Hazard Research and Applications Workshop, Boulder, Colorado, July 2010
 Annual Natural Hazard Research and Applications Workshop, Boulder, Colorado, July 2009
 Law Review Symposium, Atlanta, Georgia, February 2008
 National Environmental Partnership Summit, Atlanta, Georgia, May 2007
 Mid-America Earthquake Center Annual Meeting, Austin, Texas, January 2007

COMPUTER SKILLS

- MS Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Access; Stata and SPSS; GIS Arc View

HONORS/AWARDS

Carolyn Young Scholarship, AYSPS, GSU, 2011-2012
 Graduate Research Assistantship, NSF and Mid-America Flood Center, 2010-2011
 Graduate Research Assistantship, Georgia State University, 2006-2010
 Most Outstanding MBA Student Award, Albany State University, Albany, Georgia, 2004
 Certificate of Merit, NYSC, Nasarawa State, Nigeria, 2001

LANGUAGES

	<u>Reading</u>	<u>Writing</u>	<u>Speaking</u>
English (Native)	excellent	excellent	excellent
Arabic	good	fair	fair
French	fair	fair	fair
Yoruba (Native)	excellent	excellent	excellent

VOLUNTEER WORK

United Nations Online Volunteer, 2008-present
 Georgia Soccer, Atlanta, Georgia, 2007-present
 Graduate Student Mentor, AYSPS, 2007-present
 Georgia State University commencement, Fall 2006
 American Red Cross, Decatur, Georgia, 2005
 Habitat for Humanity, Albany, Georgia, 2002-2004
 State of Georgia water auction to retire agricultural water permits, Albany Georgia, 2003
 Management Committee on Transportation (MANCOT), UNAAB, 1999-2001

REFERENCES

Dr. P. Bolten
 Dept. Public Administration & Urban Studies
 Andrew Young School of Policy Studies
 Georgia State University
 P.O. Box 8520
 Atlanta, Georgia 30302-3992
 404-413-0022
pbolten@gsu.edu

Dr. C. Smith
 University of Colorado Denver
 School of Public Affairs
 P. O. Box 12345
 Denver, CO 80217 - 3364
 303-315-2000
Chris.Smith@UCD.edu

Dr. R. Noon
 Georgia Institute of Technology
 P.O. Box 1232
 Atlanta, Georgia 30302-3992
 404-854-9876
rnoon@gt.edu

Federal Government Resumes

The federal job application process is complex. To apply for federal positions, you must understand the process, find a job within www.usajobs.gov for which you are qualified, prepare a federal resume, and provide supporting documents. You may wish to consult the AYSPS Career Services library for an in-depth guide to applying for federal jobs or a website such as makingthedifference.org for more tips.

WRITING A RESUME FOR A FEDERAL JOB

The first thing you need to know, and accept, about applying for federal jobs is that the resume format used by USAJOBS is unique and it does not follow regular industry standards. Federal resumes are usually two or more pages in length, and it is not uncommon for them to reach 10 or more pages depending on an applicant's background. Here is a list of items customary to building a federal resume:

- You will include your social security number
- You will be asked to indicate your geographical preferences for seeking employment
- Foreign languages, if you have them, will be described by proficiencies
- You will include your references
- For each job you have held, you will be required to provide your supervisor's name and telephone number
- You are required to indicate how many hours you worked in each of your positions
- You will be given additional "points" if your resume indicates a GPA above a 3.5 or if you are member of an honors society
- Your resume will first be reviewed by a human resources specialist (not a hiring manager), so this is the first person you need your resume to speak to. Remember – HR specialists are not experts in the field you are applying for, so your resume needs to communicate and keyword match the job description/requirements. The more detail the better. Remember – length does not matter – so use extreme detail and show accomplishments and outcomes!
- You can upload/save up to 5 resumes in USAJOBS – so if you are applying for different career paths (economist vs. budget analyst), create a resume for each job title – to ensure you are putting your best foot forward with each resume.
- For additional information, visit: <http://www.usajobs.gov/Content/pdfs/Tutorials-Resume.pdf>

CONVERTING YOUR NON-FEDERAL RESUME TO A FEDERAL RESUME

Although the Federal Government does not require a standard application form for most jobs, they do need certain information to evaluate your qualifications and determine if you meet legal requirements for Federal employment. You are encouraged to build an account in USAJOBS and complete their resume builder program to ensure that you are providing all of the required and desired information they need to successfully qualify you for a position. However, if you wish to "upload" your own personal resume to apply for a job vacancy announcement, below is a list of common items required to include on a federal resume.

Job Information

- Announcement number, title and grade of the job you are applying for

Personal Information

- Full name, mailing address (with Zip Code)
- Day and Evening phone numbers
- Email
- Country of Citizenship
- Veterans' Preference
- Reinstatement eligibility (Proof of your career or career conditional status may be requested)
- Highest Federal civilian grade held (provide job series and dates held, if applicable)

Desired Location(s)

- Where you are willing to relocate to

Work Experience

Provide information for your paid and nonpaid work experience related to the job you are applying for.

- Job Title (include series and grade if Federal job)
- Job Address
- Duties and accomplishments
- Employer's name and address
- Starting and ending dates (month and year)
- Hours per week
- Salary
- Supervisor's name and phone number
- Indicate if they may contact your current supervisor.

Education

- High School
 - » Name, City, and State
 - » Date of diploma or GED
- Colleges or Universities
 - » Name, City, and State
 - » Majors
 - » Type and year of any degrees received
 - » If no degree, show total credits earned and indicate whether semester or quarter hours.)
 - » GPA
- A copy of your college transcript may be requested if you are using education to meet qualification requirements. An official transcript will be required prior to your appointment if selected.

Other Qualifications

- Job-related training courses (title and year) · Job-related skills, for example, typing speed, other languages, computer software/hardware, machinery, etc.
- Job-related affiliations, honors, awards and special accomplishments, for example, publications, memberships in professional or honor societies, leadership activities, and performance awards, etc. (Give dates but do not send documents unless requested.)

References

- Name
- Phone Number
- Reference Type (Professional, Personal, Academic)

scheduling management.

- Prepared employee surveys and project metrics using Windows Excel by compiling information and generated tables and graphs used in monthly presentations measuring company performance and to identify areas to improve operations.
- Employed strong customer service to visitors and callers by providing routine information and directing them to appropriate staff and locations for appointments and responding to inquiries regarding basic company operations.
- Organized client correspondence and files into categories improving staff's access to key contacts. (Contact Supervisor: Yes, Supervisor's Name: Christopher Kim, Supervisor's Phone: (909) 555-6543)

**Elliot School of International Affairs – The George Washington University
Washington, DC US**

9/2007 – 5/2009
Salary: 10 USD Per Hour
Hours per week: 20

Student Assistant

- Supported over 60 faculty members by updating and inputting files, records and contacts to an online database, improving their access to them and ensuring the most recent information.
- Managed department email and telephones by directing calls to faculty members and answered inquiries regarding departmental operations and curriculum, improving efficiency.
- Produced standard formatting guidelines for reports and presentation materials which improved the appearance and organization of letters, documents and emails.
- Wrote and edited agendas, letters, power points and other documents for faculty meetings resulting in more efficient and effective meetings. (Contact Supervisor: Yes, Supervisor's Name: Dr. Sam Smith, Supervisor's Phone: (202) 555-9090)

EDUCATION

The George Washington University
Washington, DC US
Bachelor's Degree – 5/2010
120 Semester Hours
Major: Political Science
GPA: 3.45 out of 4.0

LANGUAGES

Spanish
Spoken: Intermediate
Written: Intermediate
Read: Intermediate

AFFILIATIONS

International Affairs Society Vice President
College Democrats Events Chair

REFERENCES

Dr. Albert Einstein Department of Political Science – The George Washington University (202) 555-XXXX Department Chair
Phone Number: AEinstein@publicservice.com
Email Address: Professional
Reference Type:

John Doe ABC Tech Director
Phone Number: (909) 555-XXXX
Email Address: JD@publicservice.com
Reference Type: Professional

Dr. George Washington	The Elliot School of International Affairs – The George Washington University (202) 555-XXXX GW@publicservice.com Professional	Dean of Elliot School of International Affairs
Phone Number:		
Email Address:		
Reference Type:		

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Skills:

- Strong written and oral communication skills.
- Proficient in Windows-based programming including Excel spreadsheet, Word processing, Access and Power Point
- Strong analytical and problem solving skills.
- Excellent organizational and management skills.
- Typing Ability: 55 words per minute

Leadership Experience:

Vice President of the International Affairs Society

- Led organization of 100+ students.
- Planned semiannual meetings, developed recruitment efforts and served as the organization's representative at student association meetings.

Events Chair of College Democrats

- Coordinated major events by the College Democrats including seminars featuring prestigious guest speakers, as well as fundraising events giving me experience in event planning and logistics management.
- Served as the primary point of contact when sponsoring external events.

Activities:

Writer for the school newspaper, "The Hatchet"

- Wrote over 45 articles for "The Hatchet" involving student life.
- Conducted interviews and research to gather reliable information for the publishable articles.

Student Admissions Representative: Tour Guide

- Demonstrated excellent public speaking skills.
- Provided information to prospective students about the admissions process and the opportunities available to students at the George Washington University which played a crucial role in their college decision-making processes.

Freshman Orientation Leader

- Facilitated workshops and informational sessions on high school to college transition which acclimates new students and their parents to the George Washington University.
- Advised and counseled newly matriculated students and parents via small-group discussions.

Cover Letters



Purpose of the Cover Letter

A cover letter is a narrative summary of the information listed in a resume that you have created to apply for a specific position. Do not simply duplicate your resume in paragraph form, but instead use the cover letter to draw attention to connections between your qualifications, experiences, and interests and the employer's hiring needs. Use the cover letter as a tool to persuade an employer to invite you for an interview.

A strong cover letter introduces who you are, articulates why you are interested in working for a specific organization, and emphasizes the value that your relevant experiences and qualifications (as outlined in your resume) can bring to the employer. It is

also a preliminary writing sample that employers will use to assess your communication skills and the quality of your work. A poorly written cover letter, or one with grammatical or typographical errors, will be used to screen you out of the selection process.

Preparing to Write

Every employer has a unique set of hiring needs that determines what she/he looks for in an employee, and by extension, in a cover letter. **Create a customized and targeted version of your cover letter in response to every position.** In each cover letter, highlight only the information that is most relevant to each employer's hiring needs.

To create a targeted cover letter, you should research the following topics:

SCOPE OF WORK

Examine the organization's website, printed materials, published research, media coverage, and social media. Identify:

- The mission, vision, and goals of the organization
- How they describe their work
- How the organization differentiates itself from others in the field
- How the department to which you are applying fits into the organization

Using this information, develop a set of organizational characteristics to help you demonstrate your knowledge of and commitment to the organization's work in the first and last paragraphs of your cover letter.

POSITION REQUIREMENTS

Carefully read the job description from the employer. Then, find descriptions for similar positions in peer organizations. Identify:

- Responsibilities and tasks required for the position
- Degree, experience, and licensure requirements
- Required technical skills

Use these requirements to discuss your relevant skills and experiences within the body of your cover letter.

Tip: ALWAYS write a targeted cover letter for each job you apply for – unless otherwise directed.

Tips for Writing an Effective Cover Letter

STRUCTURE & CONTENT

Your cover letter should be a brief document with all of the relevant information about your interests and qualifications seamlessly integrated into three or four short paragraphs. Be sure to discuss the most important aspects of your education, experience, skills, and qualifications that are relevant to the position. Use the lists of organizational characteristics and position requirements that you gathered from your research to understand the employer's priorities and how your skills relate. Employers typically want to know:

- Can you do the job?
 - » Highlight the most important knowledge and skills that you have gained through work experience, education, and research. You can also focus on how and when you have performed job functions that relate to the position requirements.
- Will you do the job?
 - » Emphasize the degree to which your work experience, education, and research are related to the organization's mission and scope of work.
- Will you fit in?
 - » Convey shared organizational values and positive personal attributes. If you are familiar with the industry, be sure to incorporate specific language or jargon which demonstrates your understanding of the issues, policies, stakeholders, or other factors that impact the organization's work.



FORMAT

Your cover letter must look flawless! A single error in a cover letter may cause the employer to assume that you are careless in your work. Proofread your cover letter. Proofread it again. Have at least two other people proofread your cover letter. Then, proofread your cover letter at least one more time. And make sure if you are using a cover letter over and over as you apply for different jobs, that you take the time and make sure you have changed the employer name and job title you are applying for in each letter. This is one quick way to get yourself thrown out of a resume pile! However, you are strongly encouraged NOT to use a form letter – as each cover letter should be targeted for each position.

PAGE LENGTH

Generally, your entire cover letter should be one page. For more advanced students who have extensive work histories and applicable skills, two page cover letters are acceptable, as long as they are succinct.

FONTS & MARGINS

- Use consistent and clear fonts. Resist the urge to be fancy. “Times New Roman” or “Arial” are safe choices. Make sure the font matches the font used on your resume.
- Avoid the use of italics. They can be difficult to read.
- Do not use a font size smaller than 11.
- Maintain a sufficient amount of white space on the page so that your letter is easy to read.
- Use consistent margins – they should never be smaller than 0.5 in.

Sample Cover Letter Outline

Dear Ideal Employer:

I am writing to apply for the Program Coordinator position at The Building Bridges Women’s Center (BBWC) posted on the Andrew Young LinkedIn group. BBWC has a long, successful history of preparing teenage mothers to enter the workforce. With my in-depth experience in workforce development and commitment to women’s economic empowerment, I am uniquely qualified to help advance BBWC’s work through superior career coaching and innovative program development.

My professional background is a direct match to your stated employment needs. In my current role as Program Associate at the Atlanta Resource Center (ARC), I provide comprehensive career counseling to unemployed young adults and teenage mothers who live in Atlanta Public Housing. I also manage the organization’s employer recruitment program, successfully developing and implementing an employer cultivation initiative that increased ARC client recruitment by 40% over two years.

In addition to my professional experience, I am currently pursuing a Master of Public Administration degree at Georgia State University’s Andrew Young School of Policy Studies. Through my education, I have honed invaluable management skills, including budget analysis, evaluation, and research. I make full use of these skills in my current position, leading efforts to design, implement, and evaluate the ARC’s internship and mentoring programs. I am eager to leverage these skills to support the BBWC’s goal of enhancing programs through evidence-based practice.

Given my professional background, academic experience, and commitment to the workforce development field, I am confident that I would be an excellent addition to your team. I would greatly appreciate the opportunity to meet with you and talk more about the position. Please review the attached resume and contact me at 404-666-7777 or jane.candidate@student.gsu.edu to schedule a follow up interview.

Kindest Regards,

Jane Candidate

Introduction: State the position for which you are applying, where you heard about it, and the name of the person who referred you. State an important detail about their work that you find interesting or compelling. This statement should demonstrate your knowledge of the employer’s field of practice and your shared interests. Finally, state that you are an ideal candidate for the position.

Professional/Academic Experience: Focus on the aspect of your experience that is the greatest asset to you in applying for this position. Begin by establishing a connection between this aspect of your background and the employer’s hiring needs. Follow-up by discussing the specific responsibilities, accomplishments, research, analysis, and/or technical skills that are directly related to the position requirements.

Additional Professional/Academic Experience: Focus on the aspect of your experience (professional or academic) that you did not discuss in the 2nd paragraph. Refer to the position requirements outlined in the job description. Describe your experience in a way that highlights how you have gained and used the required job skills.

Synthesis/Conclusion: Conclude the cover letter by restating the most pertinent information in a concise sentence or two. You may want to stress your commitment to what the organization does, mention your high level of motivation, and restate that you have the professional and academic qualifications to do the job. Tell the employer that your resume is enclosed. Include your telephone number and email address. Thank the employer for their time and consideration and state that you look forward to hearing from them.

Common Errors to Avoid When Writing a Cover Letter

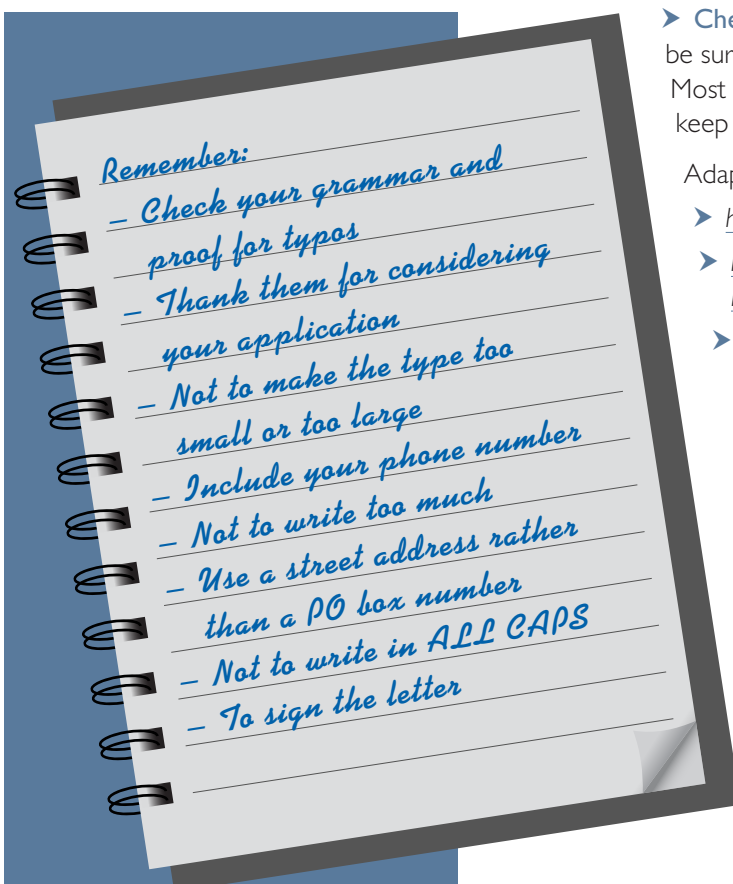
- **Spelling errors.** One applicant said he was well suited for “*writing and editing chores... contac t (sic) me at the adrwss (sic) below.*” Would you give him your editing work? Another writer said she would enjoy “*hearing form (sic) us.*” Word processing spell checkers make mistakes; so proof everything.
- **Typos**, like “thankyou for your assistance.”
- **Not checking grammar.** One person wrote, “It sounds exciting and give (sic) me the opportunity to use my skills.” Check your letters for correct sentence structure. Have friends review them too.
- **Unrelated career goals** – Tailor each cover letter to the employer who will receive it. An employer is interested in what you can do for him/her. Your letter should demonstrate a genuine interest in the position and a commitment to fulfilling its duties. You should not include what you hope to accomplish for yourself.
- **Addressing letters**, “Dear Sir:” or “Dear Sirs:” As you know, many readers today are women. If gender is unclear, the salutation should be something like “Dear Hiring Manager,” or “Dear Human Resources Manager.” Also, do not address letters with “**To whom it may concern.**” Find out who will receive the correspondence, and address it personally. An alternate to use could be “To the Selection Committee.”
- **Enclosing a photo.** Skip the photo unless you’re a model or an aspiring actor.
- **No signature.** Even if you type your name at the end of correspondence, you should either sign the page in your own handwriting to give it a personal touch or insert a scanned copy of your signature.
- **Being boring and formulaic.** Don’t waste your first paragraph by writing a boring introduction. Use the first paragraph to grab the employer’s attention. Tell the employer why you are writing and summarize the reasons you are qualified for the position, expanding on your qualifications in later paragraphs. Don’t use such cliches as “Enclosed please find my resume” or “As you can see on my resume enclosed herewith.” Employers can see that your resume is enclosed; they don’t need you to tell them. Such trite phrases just waste precious space. Write a letter that will make the employer want to get to know you better.
- **Forgetting the date and/or salutation.**
- **Faxing letters unexpectedly.**
- **Forgetting to include your phone number.** One woman wrote, “Please call me at home,” but didn’t include a phone number. That looked bad.
- **Cluttered desktop publishing.** With the advent of PCs, some job seekers feel the urge to “be creative” using various type sizes and fonts. Avoid this in business correspondence. Except in rare cases, business letters should look conservative. If you want to be creative, do so in your choice of words. Save Microsoft Publisher and Photoshop for your Christmas cards.
- **Using a post office box as an address.** Except in rare cases, such as conducting a confidential job search, use a street address. Post office boxes seem “transient.”
- **Oddball phrasing**, such as “an opportunity to expand my strengths and delete my weaknesses... “ Or, “You may feel that I’m a tad overqualified.” Or, “Enclosed herewith please find my resume.” Do you talk that way? You should write the way you talk. Avoid bad phrasing by having others critique your letters.
- **Mailing form letters.** Some letters contain “fill in the blanks.” Generic forms don’t work well.
- **Not saying enough.** One want ad letter read, “Please accept my enclosed resume for the position of Executive Director. Thank you.” That’s too short. A letter is an opportunity to sell. So say something about yourself.
- **WRITING IN ALL CAPS.** IT IS HARD TO READ. DON’T DO IT.
- **Abbreviating Cir., Ave., Dec., and all other words.** Take time to spell words out. It looks so much better.
- **Forgetting to enclose your resume.** If you say you’re enclosing one, then do.

- **Justifying right margins.** When you “justify right,” you create large gaps between words inside your sentences.
- **Using fading printer cartridges.** Whenever possible, use a laser printer, even if you have to borrow one – and FedEx/Kinkos is a nice 24/7 alternative. You can also use the computer lab on the 7th floor of the Andrew Young School.
- **Talking nonsense.** “I work in instilling proper conduits for mainstream educational connections while also encouraging individual creative forms.” What? Run that one by me again.
- **The 300-word paragraph.** The worst mistake in marketing is writing too long. Limit sentences to seven or eight words, and limit paragraphs to four or five lines. In letter writing, short is usually better. I try to limit my own letters to one page, seldom two. I believe if I can’t say it well in one page, I probably can’t say it well at all.
- **Really small font.** Make sure your cover letter font size matches the font size used on your resume.
- **Inaccurate information about the organization** – Make sure you verify any information about the organization if you are going to use it in your cover letter. Be specific and tie it into your skills and experiences. It is also important to not bluff your way through information. Do not state that you are familiar with the organization unless you have specific information to back that up.
- **Emphasizing a lack of experience** – Do not call attention to your weaknesses or lack of experience in your cover letter. This only emphasizes your shortcomings instead of your strengths. Center on your skills, organizational and industry knowledge.
- **Humor – Using anecdotes** – Your cover letter should be written in a serious, professional tone. If you use anecdotes, you run the risk of not being seriously considered. You should always keep a polite and respectful tone in your letter.
- **Inappropriate stationery** – The only universally accepted stationery colors are white and ivory. Using different colors is not the best way to get an employer’s attention – especially when applying to the conservative government sector.
- **Demanding statements** – You should never demand something from the employer in your cover letter. It is a common mistake to state “I am looking for a unique opportunity in which I will be adequately challenged and compensated.” This insinuates that you expect the employer to place you in a position that satisfies your needs – not theirs. It is more effective to indicate where you feel you could make a contribution to the organization.

- **Check the margins.** While it is fine to narrow your margins, be sure that your letter falls within common printer standards. Most printers need at least a 1/2-inch margins. You should keep yours at around 3/4-inch to be safe.

Adapted from

- <http://www.careerlab.com/letters/intro06.htm>
- http://www.wa.gov/esd/guides/resume/letter/letter_commonmistakes.htm
- http://www.ehow.com/how_2068858_spot-common-cover-letter-mistakes.html



Cover Letter Examples

➤ Internship application cover letter

July 1, 2013

Mr. Ideal Employer
CARE USA
151 Ellis Street
Atlanta, GA 30303

Dear Mr. Employer:

I am writing to apply for the Countries in Crisis Program internship at CARE USA. Like CARE USA, I am committed to the improvement of economic conditions for individuals and families in the world's poorest regions. I also possess the requisite knowledge and experience to be an excellent fit for this position.

As a second year MPA student at Georgia State University's Andrew Young School of Policy Studies, I have gained an in-depth understanding of best practices in international public administration. Having completed coursework in International Economic Development, Program Development for International Organizations, and Managing Humanitarian Challenges and Conflicts, I am excited by the prospect of applying my knowledge to CARE USA's current work, while developing innovative models for new programs.

You will find that I also possess highly relevant experience in emergency humanitarian programming and microenterprise ventures. As an Intern at Mercy Corps, I collaborated with senior staff to develop economic empowerment programs for populations living in post conflict/post natural disaster contexts in Sub-Saharan Africa. Prior to that, I worked with Trickle Up to facilitate business trainings for entrepreneurs in Zambia. I also developed partnerships with lending institutions to help ensure the availability of financial services to support future microenterprise ventures. In both of these positions, I routinely monitored, evaluated, and reported on outcomes for major programs.

I am confident that my knowledge and experience in international development would be of great value to CARE USA. I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to further discuss my background and relevant qualifications. Please review the attached resume, and feel free to contact me at 646-555-1212 or scleaver@gsu.edu. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Serwana Cleaver

➤ Job application cover letter (referral)

September 1, 2013

Ms. Melody Cooley
Moody's Investor's Service
56 Broadway
New York, NY 10003

Dear Ms. Cooley:

I am writing, at the suggestion of your colleague Mark Stevenson, Senior Director of Diversity, to express my interest in the Senior Associate Position within the Moody's Healthcare Group. As an experienced healthcare administrator, I understand and appreciate the value that Moody's adds to the healthcare industry as the leading provider of credit ratings and research. With my strong analytical and financial skills, I am ideally suited to help the Healthcare Group maintain this quality standard.

In my current position as the Logistics Manager at Emory Medical Center, I prepare and monitor a \$1.2M non-salary operating budget for 14 separate cost centers within the Nursing Department. This involves conducting detailed analysis of the monthly financial reports for each cost center; formulating and substantiating budget management recommendations; and reporting outcomes in written and oral form to senior administrators. I am also responsible for the examination of changes in patient acuity, census, and other trends in order to ascertain total cost ramifications of proposed equipment purchases and supply utilization practices.

In addition to the aforementioned, I have spent the past two years enhancing my expertise in quantitative research and analysis through the pursuit of an MPA in Health Policy at Georgia State University's Andrew Young School of Policy Studies. I am also taking supplemental finance coursework at the GSU Robinson College of Business.

Through my education and experience, I possess an in-depth knowledge of the healthcare field, as well as highly relevant research and finance skills that directly lend themselves to your stated employment needs. I have enclosed my resume for your review. If you have any additional questions, feel free to call me at 646-234-5678 or email me at mmcfly@gsu.edu. Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Marty McFly

► Comparison style cover letter



Michel S. Jaimez
1234 Peachtree Road
Atlanta, GA 30303

January 15, 2013

John Smith
Director of Personnel
Lutheran Social Services
987 Main Street
Atlanta, GA 30001

Dear Mr. Smith:

I am a recent MSW graduate of the Georgia State University Andrew Young School of Policy Studies. I am strongly interested in your current opening for a Coordinator of Immigrant Programs. Your position fits my experience, education and interests; I believe I could make a real contribution to the Lutheran Social Services mission of reaching out to the diverse populations of our growing community.

Your Requirements

Excellent communications skills; language skills

Familiarity with needs of immigrant community

Three or more years of nonprofit experience

My Qualifications

Extensive experience writing in varied forms for varied audiences. Persuasive speaking as advocate for homeless. Excellent interpersonal skills, effective listener. Fluent in Spanish.

Born in immigrant family. Worked with immigrants in homeless shelter. Researched barriers to healthcare access in the Atlanta Somali community for master's paper.

Four years in nonprofits: Bridge for Runaway Youth and The Refuge, a homeless shelter in downtown Atlanta.

I would appreciate an opportunity to interview for this position. I would be happy to answer any questions you might have about my candidacy. I can be reached at 678-224-5001 or mjaimez@comcast.net. I look forward to speaking with you.

Sincerely,

Michel S. Jaimez

➤ Cover letter (referral)

Iwana Job
824 Peachtree Crossing Drive
Atlanta, GA 30303

March 12, 2013

Mr. Ron Beeley
Criminal Investigations Division
Atlanta Police Department
226 Peachtree Street
Atlanta, GA 30303

Dear Mr. Beeley:

During recent discussions with one of your Forensic Analysts, Ms. Anna Brownley, I learned that the APD Criminal Investigations Division has an opening for a Forensic Technician. With the enclosed resume, I would like to express my strong interest in the Forensic Technician position. I feel that my experience and educational background make me a strong fit for your needs.

In December, I will graduate from the Georgia State University Andrew Young School of Policy Studies with my B.S. in Criminal Justice. I have maintained a 3.8 GPA during my course of study, and am completing the Legal track option within my program. I have completed coursework in advanced criminology, criminal law, principles of investigation, and crime typologies. In addition, I have completed a 300-hour forensic technician internship with the Douglas County Sherriff's Department. During the internship, I gained on-the-job training processing and documenting crime scenes and preparing technical reports of our results.

During my internship with the Douglas County Sherriff's Department, I have developed my analytical and problem-solving abilities. I am trained to operate electronic video surveillance equipment, police radio, and photographic equipment. In addition, I have refined my oral and written communication skills while becoming knowledgeable about police department functions and organization and the Criminal Code of Georgia.

I believe that my interest and background in criminal justice plus the technical and analytic skills I have developed during my internship make me a great fit for the APD. I am a dedicated, hard working individual committed to producing top-quality results. I welcome the opportunity to discuss this position with you. Please call at 404/636-8462 or contact me at iwana.job@gmail.com if I can answer any additional questions. I look forward to speaking with you.

Sincerely,

Iwana Job

➤ Letter of inquiry

Lucinda Bowers

4578 Peachtree Corners Blvd
Atlanta, GA 31234

October 11, 2013

Ms. Tamara Jackson
Executive Director
Fulton Child Advocacy Center
357 Peachtree Woods Avenue
Atlanta, GA 35486

Dear Ms. Jackson:

I am a graduate student in social work at the Georgia State University Andrew Young School of Policy Studies, studying issues affecting children's welfare. In my research, I came across the publications of The Fulton Child Advocacy Center and was impressed by both the quality of your work and the clarity of your positions. I am writing to inquire about the possibility of an internship with FCAC this coming summer.

Prior to entering GSU, I spent 3 years working with young children in southeast Atlanta. I saw the huge gap between the needs of these children and the resources available to them and their families. I learned a great deal about child development and the political, economic and social realities that affect these children's future. I returned to school to develop the skills to become an effective advocate for the changes our society must make if our children are to succeed.

At GSU, I am taking coursework in analytic tools: quantitative methods, policy analysis and program evaluation, as well as polishing my computer skills. Before June, I will also have completed a general course in social policy and a specialized course in Social Welfare Reform and Income Support Policy.

I would be happy to meet with you to learn more about the work of the Fulton Child Advocacy Center and to discuss the possibility of an internship that would be to our mutual benefit. I am especially interested in FCAC's research needs and how I might contribute to your work.

I will call in the next two weeks to set up an appointment at a time convenient to you. If you wish to contact me, I can be reached at (770) 788-3456 or at my e-mail address (lbowers@gsu.edu). Thank you for your time; I look forward to meeting with you.

Sincerely,

Lucinda Bowers

► Cover letter (application from online posting)

Alexandra D. Jones

275 Peach Blossom Lane • Atlanta, GA 31112 • 404-555-8888 (cell) • bdj0450@gsu.edu

Ms. Gabriella Smith
College Relations Manager
Bank of America
PO Box 81226
Charlotte, NC 27277

Dear Ms. Smith:

Please consider this letter in application for the Risk Analyst position, reference number 089175, at Bank of America that was advertised on your corporate web site. In May 2012, I will receive a degree in Economics, from the Georgia State University Andrew Young School of Policy Studies. Upon graduation, I will be relocating to Charlotte, NC. My internship experience, proven record of academic achievement, and leadership abilities match many of the qualities outlined in the corporate culture section of the Bank of America web site.

As my resume indicates, my internship at M&T Bank's credit department required strong analytical skills, independent thinking, and teamwork. Specifically, I reviewed defaulted loan cases and compiled findings in reports that were sent directly to a Vice President. In addition, I have completed a number of research projects that allowed me to develop excellent presentation, written communication, and teamwork skills. In Strategic Management, I conducted a thorough financial analysis of a Fortune 500 company using ratio analysis and studying past performance of key financial variables.

In addition to my work and academic experiences, I have been an active member in the Economics Club. This experience, along with professional site visits, has sharpened my decision making, event planning, and networking skills. As a result, I am adept at solving problems and creating new relationships with current professionals.

I would like to discuss my qualifications with you in person for the Risk Analyst position at Bank of America. I will call you within a week to hopefully arrange an interview. Thank you for considering my application.

Sincerely,

Alexandra D. Jones

Enclosure: Resume

► State government cover letter

Stewart Griffin

1234 Peachtree Road NE
Atlanta, GA 30324

404.123.4567
griffin@gmail.com

August 20, 2013

Governor's Office of Planning and Budget
270 Washington Street, SW, 8th Floor
Atlanta, GA 30334

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to apply for the Office of Stimulus Accountability intern position with the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget (OPB) posted through Dr. Maggie Tolan and the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies.

Since 1972, the OPB has provided the Governor and other officials of the State of Georgia with reliable research and timely analysis surrounding the budget processes, policy issues, agency requests, and strategic plans associated with sound state operations and fiscal stewardship. I am confident my solid academic background and internship experience in economics, planning, and economic development as well as a stellar six-year professional career in logistics and administration will combine to serve well the initiatives of the OPB and the responsibilities of the position.

My education and experience incorporate the research and analysis techniques of economics and public policy with a firm understanding of the dynamics surrounding planning, budgeting, and economic development policy. Building upon a solid foundation of leadership and administration, my proficiencies in inductive and deductive research, accurate and timely analysis, as well as self-discipline, time management, and organization have been critical to both my current role as Assistant Director of Research and Administration at the Polish-American Chamber of Commerce Atlanta and my previous success as a Global Commerce Intern with the Georgia Department of Economic Development.

My graduate career underscores my interest and enthusiasm for processes surrounding the development, implementation, and analysis of both economic and public policy. I have a sincere appreciation for how critical such work is to economic growth and the success of communities at all levels. Central to this is the budgeting and assessment process, making this internship opportunity an exceptional catalyst for my academic and professional aspirations. The numerous awards, certifications, and leadership roles I have obtained during my collegiate career as well as my ongoing success in independent empirical research reflect my dedication and determination to academics and my future in economic policy. I look forward to bringing this same work ethic and commitment to success to the OPB internship.

Please feel free to contact me at your convenience should you have any questions, concerns, or require any additional information. I greatly appreciate your time and consideration.

Gratefully yours,

Stewart Griffin

➤ Federal internship cover letter (federal government)

Joey Trustworthy
1514 Peachtree Park, Apt 101
Atlanta, GA 30324
404.411. 1111
joeyt@hotmail.com

March 30, 2013

United States Department of Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General – Office of Evaluation and Inspections (OEI)

RE: Part-time Internship Opportunity

To the Selection Committee:

The part-time Federal Internship opportunity with the Office of Inspector General – Office of Evaluation and Inspections is an opportunity that I am certain will prove mutually beneficial on many levels. I am confident my solid academic background in health policy and program evaluation as well as a stellar four-year professional career in health administration will combine to serve as valuable assets to the OEI. Similarly, I believe working with the OEI in this capacity will be a wonderful catalyst for my academic and professional aspirations in health policy and evaluation.

I am fascinated by the processes surrounding the development, implementation, and analysis of health policy and I have a sincere appreciation for how critical such work is to ensuring the efficiency and success of Department of Health and Human Services programs. An essential part of my collegiate career is seeking out opportunities beyond the classroom to develop my skill set and enhance my education and experience in program evaluation, health policy, and relevant research. Most recently, these interests have led me to proudly serve as the only undergraduate research assistant in the Georgia Health Policy Center, as well as taking the initiative to complete my honors undergraduate thesis exploring the potential impact of health insurance provisions in the Affordable Care Act on the 18-26 year old population. Both opportunities have afforded me valuable exposure to the literature, experience in inductive and deductive research, utilization of STATA and regression analysis, as well as the importance of self-discipline, time management, and organization.

The numerous awards and leadership roles I have obtained during my collegiate career as well as my 3.72 GPA underscore my dedication and determination in academics and my future in health policy and program evaluation. I look forward to bringing this same work ethic and commitment to success to the OEI. Please feel free to contact me at your convenience should you have any questions, concerns, or require any additional information. I greatly appreciate your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Joey Trustworthy

Thank You Notes

How and When to Say “Thank You”

It seems amazing, but it's true: A simple thank-you note after a job interview, informational interview, networking meeting, or job fair can wield considerable power and influence, and reflect very favorably on your candidacy for the position.

Why? Several reasons:

- **In sending a thank-you note, you show your interviewer common courtesy and respect.**

Unfortunately in our busy and often impolite world, we simply don't acknowledge each other's time, efforts and commitments. So in sending a thank-you note, you tell your interviewer in no uncertain terms that you appreciate the time he or she has given you. After all, he or she had to give up part or all of the day to be with you, and expend effort learning more about you and what you have to offer.

- **So few job applicants send thank-you notes that you automatically stand out if you do.**

It's shocking, but the majority of job applicants fail to send thank-you notes after their interviews. Why? Who knows? But the bottom line is that you wind up in a position to shine simply by putting forth the effort of sending a note. A thank you note should be written and mailed or emailed the day of your interaction. By simply tucking a few thank you cards and stamps in your padfolio, you can have your note written and mailed during your next coffee break.

- **A thank-you note gives you an opportunity to reiterate points you made during your interview.**

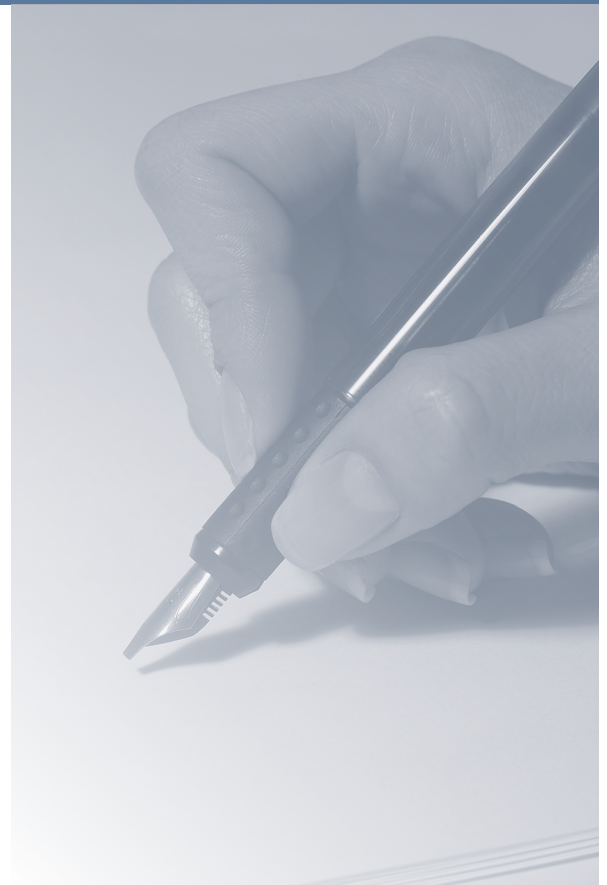
Have you ever left an interview wishing you'd more strongly emphasized a certain skill or experience the employer seemed to be looking for? A thank-you note gives you the chance to do just that. After using the first paragraph of your note to thank your interviewer, you can use a brief second paragraph to touch again upon the key points you made in your interview. You can also use a similar strategy to “clean up” any interview rough spots you might have had – i.e., to expand upon or clarify responses you felt were weak or shaky.

- **A thank-you note lets you make points you forgot to make in your interview.**

Sometimes after an interview, as you walk out to your car, you smack yourself on the forehead and say to yourself, “Why didn't I talk about _____?!” Frustrating? You bet. But you can take care of the problem to some degree in your thank-you note. Again, perhaps in the second paragraph, you can say something to the effect of “After our discussion, it occurred to me that I forgot to tell you about _____.”

- **A thank-you note demonstrates your written communication skills.**

In receiving and reading your thank-you notes, your interviewer will see firsthand how you handle yourself on paper. You'll be using similar skills every day with the company's potential clients, customers, and vendors – so the interviewer will be reading carefully to see how you come across in print. Be sure to proofread your note carefully before sending it, and, if hand writing the note, be sure to write neatly and legibly.



Thank You Note Tips

ELECTRONIC THANK YOU NOTES

If your interviewer has given you his/her business card and it has an e-mail address on it, then it is acceptable to send your thank-you that way. If you have any doubts, though, you are always safe sending a hard copy letter. It is also acceptable to send a brief thank you note through email on the day of your interview, and follow-up with a more detailed note through the mail.

When e-mailing, be sure to send from an email account with a professional address (*yourname@gmail.com* or *yourname@gsu.edu*, etc.) and remove any personal quotations or weblinks from your signature line. Use an easy to read font, and do not use any background images. Remember that this is a professional communication and should reflect the quality of the work that you can offer the employer. When “signing” your name, use the same font as the rest of your email – do not use a “cursive” font for your name.

INTERVIEW PANELS

If you interview with more than one person, be sure to get a card from each interviewer. Send a thank you note to each, noting a particular item that was discussed in the interview. Always send hard copy notes and personalized e-mails to individuals.

TIMING

Write and mail or email a thank you note within 24 hours of your meeting.

Adapted from <http://campus.monster.com/articles/jobhunt/notes/> by Peter Vogt



Thank You Examples

- After an interview (hard copy)

Brenda Frankly
Georgia State University Box 0001
Atlanta, GA 30302

September 14, 2013

Mr. Brendan Natural, Program Director
Oakdale Outdoor Education Center
Box 4000
Roswell, GA 30027

Dear Mr. Natural:

Thank you very much for interviewing me yesterday for the position of Program Coordinator. I enjoyed meeting you and learning more about the mission of the Oakdale Outdoor Education Center.

After talking with your staff and visiting the impressive facilities at Oakdale, I am eager to reaffirm my interest in the position. I think my education in environmental policy and previous experience leading environmental education programs fit closely with the job requirements you outlined. The potential to contribute to Oakdale's three-part mission of awareness, action, and research is very exciting to me.

Again, thank you for interviewing me and providing me the opportunity to learn more about the work of Oakdale Outdoor Education Center. If I can provide you with any additional information, please do not hesitate to call me at 770-443-0023 or email me at bfrankly@gsu.edu. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Brenda Frankly

➤ After an informational interview (hard copy)

Christopher Bacon
199 Peachtree Road
Atlanta, GA 30003
678-777-7777

September 1, 2013

Dear Mr. Smith:

I am glad we had the opportunity to meet at the Independent Sector Conference last week. I thoroughly enjoyed our discussion about the impact of the political landscape on the nonprofit sector. Your ideas have certainly enriched the scope of my knowledge. As you suggested, I have enclosed a resume to remind you of my background.

In addition to a Master of Public Policy degree in Nonprofit Policy and a Bachelor of Arts in Economics, I offer five years of experience in positions ranging from Research Assistant with the Georgia Budget and Policy Institute to my most recent position as Associate Policy Analyst with the Georgia Office of Planning and Budgeting.

My experience includes a range of policy work, including budgetary analysis, data analysis for program evaluation, strategic planning, and tracking economic trends and state policy developments.

I am interested in exploring senior policy analyst positions, particularly in the area of program evaluation and strategic management, at other public or nonprofit institutions. If you know of any openings, or have colleagues who may be aware of analyst positions, I would appreciate your passing the information along to me.

I hope to speak with you again soon. It was certainly a pleasure meeting you.

Sincerely,

Christopher Bacon

Enc. Resume

➤ Email examples

Dear Ms. Walter:

Thank you so much for your generosity of time and information yesterday. Your assistance in matching my skills and interests to future possibilities has given me a much broader perspective for my search.

I am particularly interested in following up on your suggestion about internship opportunities with the Georgia Department of Justice and will be contacting George Nunez later today.

Again, thank you so much for your help and I will let you know how everything turns out.

All the best,
Joe Smith

Dear Ms. Brady,

Thank you for the opportunity to shadow you yesterday during your work day. It was wonderful speaking with you and also understanding the full scope of the work that you do at the Center for Children and Young Adults.

Although I plan to pursue a career in social work after completing my BSW, I had not given thought to working exclusively with young adults until I visited your office. The Early Intervention Program you direct is an amazing venture, and an inspiration to become involved with an agency targeting at-risk youth.

Currently, as you recommended, I am applying for an internship with the Atlanta Teen Intervention Center. I will keep you updated on the status of my application.

Thank you again for the interest you expressed in my career development. I appreciate all of your help.

Sincerely,
Tamara Keith

Business Etiquette

From job interviewing to hosting business meals, from making the phone call to landing the deal, etiquette, image and the ability to convey your “brand” are what make lasting impressions on employers.

Business etiquette is basically the social guidelines and manners to be followed in business situations when dealing with others.

Business Etiquette Basics

THE BASICS

Good posture, shaking hands in the traditional manner, making eye contact, smiling upon introductions and reciprocating in small talk are the very basics of business etiquette. In most professional circles, avoid using first names, replacing them with titles such as Mr. or Ms. unless instructed otherwise.

OBSERVE AND MIRROR

Observe the interactions of your superiors with coworkers and clients. At meetings, sit or stand when the group or individual does, watch your posture and keep your attention on the speaker. Always arrive on time and come prepared if you are actively involved in the meeting.

PUNCTUALITY AND WORK COVERAGE

Being on time for work and meetings and after breaks is also a form of basic business etiquette. If you are going to be late or need to be absent, call your supervisor immediately and provide as much advance notice as possible. Speak to someone in person. It is preferable to speak to your supervisor or a support staff member to ensure your message is delivered.

COMMUNICATION ETIQUETTE

Respond to all emails and voice mails within a specified time period even if you do not have an answer right away. Remove unprofessional “signatures” from your email account profile. Use appropriate grammar and punctuation.

MANNERISMS AND DRESS

In business, you will be dealing with coworkers and clients of different ages, cultures and backgrounds. Avoid using trendy phrases, slang and curse words. Dress to the level of your clients and coworkers or slightly above, and avoid flashy jewelry and strong colognes or perfumes. Inappropriate mannerisms include nontraditional handshakes, hugging, “dance” moves, “street” hand gestures and making faces.

Common Business Etiquette Violations

- Arriving late (or way too early!)
- Checking personal email/Facebook
- Texting friends on your cellphone while in the office setting
- Using headphones in the work place
- Use “text” language in your business emails
- Excessive drinking at social sponsored events
- Being “too casual” with your attire
- Forgetting your manners



- Coming to a meeting unprepared
- Wearing headphones/earbuds when in the office
- Using slang or profanity
- Talking about your employer via Facebook
- Talking about politics or religion
- Excessive talking at meetings

Dress for Success

Remember, you only have one chance to make a first impression! All Andrew Young students should view themselves, while they are in school, as “on the job market” – which means always dressing as a future professional does. Does this mean you need to wear a business suit every day to school? No, but it does mean that you need to seriously look at your closet and your clothing choices, and ask yourself – if I met my ideal future employer today when I was at school, would I want them to remember me for how I was dressed? What impression would I leave with them?

WHAT TO WEAR TO AN INTERVIEW, INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW, OR CAREER FAIR

Use the interview to determine the culture of the organization, including dress policies, but do not give the employer any reason to select someone else over you before they have had a chance to get to know you.

- **Avoid Strong Fragrances** – Wear deodorant, but do not wear perfume, cologne, or aftershave. Many people have allergies to fragrances, and you could be interviewing in tight office spaces which could allow your fragrances to overpower the employer.
- **Be Well-Groomed** – Clean nails, showered, good breath, and a neat hairstyle are always crucial. Shined shoes and fresh clothes that are crisply ironed/dry cleaned are also important. Bring some breath mints. Also make sure that tattoos are covered.
- **Practice, Practice, Practice** – It is a good idea to “try out” your interview suit once or twice before the interview so you know how you feel in it while walking, sitting, and standing. Also, make sure your suit fits well. If it does not, have it altered. A well-fitted suit looks professional and gives you confidence.
- **Avoid Items That Show You Are A Student** – Backpacks, water bottles, and other campus gear are not necessary for an interview. Also, turn OFF your cell phone! Even a cell phone on vibrate is a disturbance. Buy a portfolio/padfolio to carry with you and to also hold additional copies of your resume. Make sure you bring a pen – and make sure it is new so it has ink!
- **Less is More** – Keep your look simple. Wear minimal jewelry and do not carry more than one briefcase or handbag. Remember, you need a free hand to shake hands with everyone you meet.



FOR WOMEN

- **Grooming:** Hair should be away from your face and neatly cut or styled. Wear daytime, natural-looking makeup – no heavy eyeliner or glittery shadows. Nails should be clean, in a uniform color; avoid overly long fingernails and nail art. Lip color should not be trendy or bright.
- **Suit:** Wear conservative, two-piece matching business suits. Knee-length skirts or pant suits are both appropriate. Color should be worn under your suit jacket. Be prepared to take off your suit jacket.
- **Blouse:** Lighter-colored professional button-down shirt, shell, or sweater should be worn under your suit jacket. V-neck line should not expose cleavage, and shirts should not be too tight fitting so that buttons pull across the chest line exposing skin or undergarments.
- **Hosiery:** Never show bare legs! Wear at or near skin-toned pantyhose or trouser socks. And always have a spare pair in case you get a run.

- **Shoes:** Low-heeled and closed-toe pumps are a must. Avoid brightly colored shoes. Black, brown, or navy blue are traditional colors. Make sure they are polished and not scratched up along the heel.
- **Accessories:** Keep it simple. No more than one ring on each hand. No visible tattoos or piercings, except for one pair of earrings and a small necklace or bracelet. Carry either a purse or a professional bag, but not both.

FOR MEN

- **Grooming:** Have your hair neatly trimmed, including facial hair. Nails should be clean and neat.
- **Suit:** Wear a conservative, two-piece matching business suit, preferably dark in color (navy or black). You can also mix/match suit coats with dress slacks – as long as the colors/patterns compliment one another.
- **Shirt:** Wear a long-sleeved, light-colored, button-down shirt. The shirt should fall 1/4- to 1/2-inch below the suit sleeve. Be sure your shirt is pressed and ironed. Poly-cotton blended shirts withstand wrinkles best, but they are also warmer. *Wear a white cotton t-shirt underneath your shirt to hide perspiration and to protect your suit.*
- **Ties:** Yes, you need one! Choose a tie with a conservative pattern that ends at mid-belt. Practice tying your knot over and over, and if you are still new to tying ties, watch a YouTube video on how to tie one!
- **Shoes:** Comfortable leather shoes, with or without laces, should match your suit color. Do not wear brown shoes with black or blue suits. Black shoes are best. Make sure they are polished.
- **Socks:** Wear dark-colored socks to match your suit. Socks should be worn over the calf.
- **Accessories:** Leather belts should match the color of your shoes. No visible piercings or tattoos. Bring a portfolio.



BUSINESS CASUAL

Much like interview attire, business casual should still be crisp, conservative, covering, and neat. It is not as formal as a full interview suit, but not as casual as attire you would wear to school or a party. You are still in a business environment and want to be comfortable meeting even the CEO of your organization.

Business casual attire can be worn to workshops and presentations that are sponsored by the Andrew Young School or to employer information sessions if the session is more of a lecture. If the employer session is more of a reception, professional dress is suggested. We also encourage students to wear business casual daily to school – just in case!

Men: Wear black or khaki pants, neatly pressed, and a pressed long-sleeved button-down shirt. Polo shirts (also ironed!) may be appropriate if the environment will be more casual, or outdoors. Wear a leather belt and leather shoes. Athletic shoes and sandals are inappropriate. Ties are generally not necessary for business casual, but if in doubt, you can wear a tie without a sport coat.

Women: Do not confuse club attire with business attire. Follow the same rules regarding skirt or pant length and fit as you would in interview attire – continue to conceal cleavage. In addition to tailored shirts or blouses, tailored knit sweaters or sweater sets are appropriate business casual choices. For the most conservative look, toes should be covered. Thin straps and high heels are not appropriate. Hosiery is not essential for business casual, but still preferred.



Job Search

The job search process can be overwhelming and confusing. A common saying is that looking for a full-time job is a full-time job. And remember that one important statistic – 85% of the currently available jobs in the job market are not advertised! So finding the hidden opportunities takes time. There are ways to reduce the stress of the job search, present yourself as an attractive and competitive candidate, and effectively utilize your time.

KNOW YOURSELF

You will be more successful in your job search if you are confident that your experience and skills qualify you for the position for which you are applying. To do this, you must have a clear idea of your skills, interests, accomplishments, experience, goals, and values. If you have not done so already, maybe completing some of the self-assessment tools outlined under “Career Planning” in this handbook might be helpful.

DO YOUR HOMEWORK AND FIND A GOOD MATCH

Thoroughly research the position and organization to which you are applying and make certain you are a good fit. Think about products and services offered, growth, competitors, number of employees, organizational structure, geographic locations, working climate, benefits, community involvement, and anything else that you consider important. Look up recent articles published about the organization or company – read their current news.

BE OBSESSIVE ABOUT THE DETAILS

Understand exactly what the position requires and tailor your resume, cover letter, online application, and interview answers specifically to each position for which you have applied. Yes, this means you need more than one resume! Check, double-check, and have a friend check again to be sure that your documents are free of typos. You can also make an appointment with a career counselor either in the Andrew Young Career Services office or the GSU University Career Services office.

BE FOCUSED

Be persistent and follow-up. Keep careful records of your job search process, including all materials used in the job search: resume, references, recommendation letters, cover letters, job postings, research conducted on employers, correspondence from employers, and any other relevant materials. Make sure you print out the job announcement you are responding to, as these announcements will be pulled down from HR websites and unavailable later should you secure an interview. Many students build MS Excel spreadsheets to track their application, modes of communication, closing dates, etc.

If you are high tech and enjoy using phone apps to help manage your time and keep you organized, there are smart phone applications on the market that will help you not only search for jobs, but keep your records in order and at your fingertips. To read more, visit: <http://www.salary.com/the-10-best-job-hunting-apps-to-get-you-hired/>.



HAVE A POSITIVE ATTITUDE

Be flexible and open to new opportunities. This could mean being willing to relocate, expand your horizon from the ideal job to more tangentially related areas, or accept a more entry level position than anticipated in order to secure a position in a desirable organization or company. Continue to have informational interviews, use your network, and research new positions to always have new opportunities to apply for.

Why Should I Hire You?

It is becoming increasingly difficult to attain a job or internship opportunity these days, so it is essential to both be properly prepared, and to fully utilize your extended network of professional and educational connections. Remember, your competition is not only your classmates who are earning the same exact degree as you, but your competition is everyone else out in the market and across the nation (or even internationally). So your non-stop guiding question, every day to yourself, should be “Why Should They Hire Me?”

Utilizing Your Network

Networking is not asking for a job; it is developing a broad range of contacts. The key to networking starts before the job search, and includes involvement in campus events and student organizations, as well as professional associations. It also means conducting numerous and various types of informational interviews with people who are in the positions you wish to hold, with hiring officials at the organizations you wish to work at, and with senior executives looking for young talent in your area of study.

LinkedIn

Each of the Andrew Young School departments/schools has established a LinkedIn group for its current students and alumni. We encourage you to build a profile in LinkedIn (use a professional picture please), and start connecting to your classmates and alumni. Remember, finding a job is about who you know! We also encourage you to join other groups within LinkedIn (professional associations, your previous alma maters, employer groups, etc.). To begin your LinkedIn profile, visit: www.linkedin.com. To join the AYS current student/alumni group for your department/school, visit:

- **Department of Criminal Justice** – <http://www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=3980527>
- **Department of Economics** – <http://www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=3007105>
- **Department of Public Management & Policy** – <http://www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=160945>
- **School of Social Work** – <http://www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=3851381>

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

Joining professional associations as a student member has its benefits. As a student member, you not only gain access to the membership directory of the organizations (to be used for securing informational interviews), but you can also attend conferences, trainings, workshops, and social networking events offered by the organizations. They also may post fellowship opportunities and scholarships. For a comprehensive list of associations tied to each of the Andrew Young majors and degrees, visit: <http://aysps.gsu.edu/career/professional-associations>.

ALUMNI ASSOCIATIONS

Be sure to take advantage of alumni association events and connections in your area. Many universities and colleges have alumni groups in locations throughout the country, and in some cases, the world. Alumni association mixers, networking events, or service opportunities may allow you to connect to fellow alumni and offer you another network within which to work. Be sure to join the GSU Alumni Association so that you may benefit from their networking events.

CLASSMATES AND FACULTY

Andrew Young School students and faculty offer a broad range of personal and professional experiences. Almost 50% of our AYS student body is currently employed in some capacity – so everyone is connected to employment opportunities. Take advantage of events, student clubs, speakers, mixers, and academic opportunities from which you may connect to individuals with similar interests to your own. By engaging in the Andrew Young School community while you are a student, you will begin to form a network which will last throughout your career.

Being Prepared

You never know who you will meet, or when. You should always have an up-to-date, neat resume and business card available and ready to hand out. Buy a padfolio (leather folder) to carry to meetings and interviews which always has more than one copy of your resume, business cards, paper on which to take notes, and a pen. Your appearance should always be tidy and appropriate for a business casual work environment, even when going to class. If your teacher brings a surprise guest speaker to class, or you happen to enter an elevator with a great contact, you want to be ready to leave a favorable opinion.

THE MARTA EXAMPLE

What would you do if you met the CEO of your dream company on the MARTA train? Would you be able to describe yourself in the time it took to reach the next stop? Would you have a presentable resume on hand to leave with the employer? As a job seeker, developing this pitch is an important tool that can be used frequently in networking and interviewing situations. An effective pitch will immediately convey (in one minute or less) to the listener who you are as a professional, what your unique qualifications are, and how you can meet the employer's needs.

Use these questions to guide you in developing your own MARTA pitch:

- What is the focus of your search? What kind of position are you looking for?
- What skills and qualifications do you offer? What is your background?
- What is it that differentiates you from your peers?
- What are your professional accomplishments?
- How can you benefit the employer?

Now, put it all together and PRACTICE! Don't go into too much detail. Your goal is simply to pique your listener's interest and make yourself memorable. And remember to practice asking for business cards – so you can send a thank you card/ note later that evening or the next day. Do not forget to follow up!

AYSPS Career Services

Whether you are a current student in the Andrew Young School, an alumnus from one of our programs, or an employer seeking a top caliber candidate to meet your hiring needs, we are happy to provide career resources to meet your individual goals. **An important tip to remember: the more we see you in our office, the more we know you, the more we keep an eye out for you!**

The Career Services & Student Life office provides resources to help Andrew Young students successfully integrate into the Georgia State community, and to develop opportunities to gain career and leadership skills. Students and alumni from all Andrew Young departments/schools are welcome to benefit from our services.

CAREER LIBRARY

Located within the AYS Career Services & Student Life office, students are invited to peruse and check out at their leisure one of our many books focused on your job searching, resume writing, major guides, volunteering resources, etc. A comprehensive listing of our books can be found at: <http://aysps.gsu.edu/career/ays-career-library>.

CAREER ADVISEMENT

Students are invited to schedule individualized career advising appointments with our staff of counselors. To schedule an appointment, visit: <http://aysps.gsu.edu/career/career-counseling>. Topics commonly covered during 30-minute advisement appointments include: resume review, internships, getting involved with student organizations, proofing cover letters, seeking guidance to develop a career plan, study abroad options, graduate school admissions, and job searching.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Each semester the AYS Career Services office will publish a Career Calendar of events, which include workshops, employer sessions, career fairs both on campus and in the Atlanta community, and a comprehensive listing of meeting dates for all AYS student clubs and organizations. To visit this semester's calendar, go to: <http://aysps.gsu.edu/career/events>.

JOB/INTERNSHIP FAIRS

Each semester the AYS Office of Career Services & Student Life offers professional development, career exploration, and networking opportunities to help our students enhance their career readiness to enter the job market. We normally host career fairs in government, nonprofit, and private industry. Please review the list of the upcoming events both on the AYS Career Calendar and on the GSU University Career Service calendars.

AYS JOBS & INTERNSHIP LISTSERVS

We have built four different job & internship listservs; everything we hear about will go to these lists. These listservs are intended for Andrew Young students/alumni looking for a job or an internship. They will be used to distribute information about job and internship opportunities for the respective department/school within Andrew Young. ***Always remember that these lists are provided for students and alumni of the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies – so please refrain from encouraging non-AYS students from joining. (Keep the competition out!)***

Getting Started (there are 2 steps!)

Step 1: Create a listserv account/log in.

- » Simply go to <http://listserv.gsu.edu>
- » Click on "Get Password"
- » Enter your email address and the desired password. *You may use either your GSU student email address or your personal email address (gmail, Hotmail, etc.)*
- » Click on the "Register Password" button
- » Then check your email inbox where you will receive an email from Georgia State University Listserv. Simply click the link in the email to activate your account. You are now registered as a GSU listserv user.

Step 2: Now join your department's listserv

- » Go back to <http://listserv.gsu.edu>, and click "log in" and sign in with your email address and password you created in step 1.
- » Scroll down the list of available listservs to join, and select the list that corresponds to your academic department. The names of the lists are as follows:
 - cjcareers
 - encareers
 - pmapcareers
 - swcareers
- » A new screen will appear and under "options" you will see "Join or Leave XXXCAREERS" (it should say the name of the list you are trying to join). Click "join..."
- » Type in your First and Last Name. Do not click/change any other buttons on this page.
- » Scroll down and hit the "Join" button and a confirmation email will be generated to your email inbox.
- » Go to your email inbox and simply click the link in the email to activate your account.

GSU University Career Services (UCS)

Location: 260 University Center

Office Hours: Monday – Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 5:15 p.m.

Main Reception Line: (404) 413-1820

Walk-in resume reviews (no appointment needed):

Monday – Friday, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.

The mission of University Career Services is to assist students with the identification of, preparation for, and transition into opportunities that reflect their purpose and passion in the pursuit of success in a global society. Programs they offer include:

- **Career Resource Center** – Career library, computer lab, online career tools, and support personnel, all to support students exploring their passion and purpose.
- **Career Development Team** – Coordinates career counseling, career assessment, and campus workshops.
- **Employer Relations Team** – Generates student jobs, internships, and career opportunities, coordinates career and internship fairs and campus employer visits, and helps students prepare for the job/internship search.
- **Graduate and Professional School Planning Program** – Coordinates yearly recruiting fair and assists students with their advanced degree planning.

PANTHER CAREER NET

Panther Career Net is Georgia State University's 24/7 online job and internship board. It provides free access to students and employers. This job board has over 15,000 Georgia State University students using it. Students can upload their resume and have it ready for employers recruiting for internships, part-time on- and off-campus jobs, as well as career entry-level positions. You must have your resume reviewed and approved by the career counselors in UCS in order to use and interview through Panther Career Net, so it is imperative to meet with their counseling staff during their resume walk-in advising appointment times. To learn more about Panther Career Net, visit: http://www.gsu.edu/career/panther_career_net.html.

PRACTICE INTERVIEWS

Successful interviewing is a skill that requires confidence. Confidence is acquired through knowledge and practice.

UCS sponsors practice interviewing sessions with professional recruiters from around the nation. Students registered with UCS through Panther Career Net can sign up for a mock interview with an employer.

Upon completion of the interview, the interviewer will provide the student with specific feedback on interviewing skills and the effectiveness of the student's resume.

VIPS (POWERED BY INTERVIEW STREAM)

VIPS is another opportunity for students to practice their interviewing skills in a non-threatening environment. The main purpose is to give the student valuable experience and practice in developing interview skills. Since the self-produced mock interview is stored and accessible on-line, job seekers and students can solicit feedback and constructive criticism from career services staff, alumni, friends, family and employers about their performance. And you can practice as often as there are available time slots! Practice, practice and more practice is the key to successful interviewing. You will leave this University feeling confident about your skills in interviewing, and isn't that what you want?

Log into your Panther Career Net account to sign up and have fun in your virtual interview!

Applying for Jobs

GENERAL TIPS FOR SUBMITTING JOB APPLICATIONS

When submitting an application, resume, cover letter, or letter of inquiry for any job, you must be sure to pay attention to detail. Typos, grammatical errors, formatting errors, or incorrect job details may mean the difference between your application being considered or not. Proofread your documents and communications carefully, and if possible, have a friend read them as well. A good strategy is to write your document, let it sit for several hours, and then proofread again. Also remember to send in your documents as Adobe PDF files to ensure your formatting and page breaks remain intact.

HOW TO FIND OPEN JOBS

While job boards and electronic job postings provide a wealth of information about companies and opportunities, remember that many jobs are not posted, or posted for a VERY brief amount of time. Use your network, internship sites, friends, colleagues, and mentors to learn about word of mouth job opportunities. To review our list of job search resources, please visit: <http://aysps.gsu.edu/career/job-resources>.

Applying for Federal Jobs or Fellowships

On December 27, 2010, President Obama signed [Executive Order 13562](#), entitled “Recruiting and Hiring Students and Recent Graduates,” which established two new federal hiring programs and modified another. They are the Internship Program for current students; the Recent Graduates Program for people who have recently graduated from qualifying educational institutions or programs (2 years from the date the graduate completed an academic course of study); and the reinvigorated Presidential Management Fellows (PMF) Program for people who obtained an advanced degree (e.g., graduate or professional degree) within the preceding two years.



INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

The [Internship Program](#) is for current students. It replaces the Student Career Experience Program (SCEP) and Student Temporary Employment Program (STEP). The new Internship Program provides college students with paid opportunities to work in agencies and explore Federal careers while completing their education. To find out more about the Internship Program, go to the Program Fact Sheets webpage: <http://www.opm.gov/HiringReform/Pathways/program/interns/>.

RECENT GRADUATES PROGRAM

The [Recent Graduates Program](#) provides developmental experiences in the Federal Government. It is intended to promote possible careers in the civil service to individuals who, within the previous two years, graduated from Georgia State University with a bachelor's, master's, professional or doctorate degree. To be eligible, applicants must apply within the previous two years of degree or certificate completion (there are exceptions for veterans). To find out more about the Recent Graduates Program, go to the Program Fact Sheets webpage: <http://www.opm.gov/HiringReform/Pathways/program/graduates/>.

PRESIDENTIAL MANAGEMENT FELLOWS (PMF) PROGRAM

For more than three decades, the [PMF Program](#) has been the Federal Government's premier leadership development program for advanced degree (e.g., masters or professional degree) candidates. Executive Order 13562 expands the eligibility window for applicants, making it more “student friendly” by aligning it with academic calendars and allowing those who have received a qualifying advanced degree within the preceding two years to participate about the PMF Program, go to the PMF webpage: <http://www.pmf.gov/>.

FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMS

Many federal agencies operate uniquely tailored and funded fellowships, intended for students who are recent graduates of masters or Ph.D. programs. Students are encouraged to visit individual agency sites (like the CDC, for example: http://www.cdc.gov/employment/menu_fellows.html), and review their “student” pages – which normally outline such opportunities. It is standard for many of these fellowship programs to have application deadlines up to 12 or 18 months ahead of their start dates, so start searching for these opportunities early.

International Students



Job hunting as an international student involves extra challenges. Beyond the difficulty of graduating and finding a job that suits you, you will have to carefully plan your strategy to make sure you have the appropriate work authorization and to find an employer who will be willing to sponsor you. Keep in mind that most of your search will be self-directed, consisting of direct application to employer vacancies. Although personal and professional networks are important in finding jobs in the U.S., in general, you must create these networks and you must be proactive in identifying job opportunities. Begin the job search process early – it may take up to a year, so try to begin 6 months to one year in advance of when you would like to start working. Allow at least 4 months to get USCIS work authorization for Optional Practical Training if you are in F-1 status.

It is imperative that you prepare yourself thoroughly to apply and interview, and arm yourself with knowledge about your current visa status and about the H-1B visa process. Each student's situation is different so be sure to make an appointment with University Career Services and the International Student and Scholar Services Office to discuss your plans to go on the U.S. job market and to learn about relevant work permission guidelines and immigration regulations. Have patience and persistence. Every year, the US grants almost 200,000 H-1-B visas.

Remember that employers are not allowed to discriminate in hiring on the basis of immigration status. If you are asked about your visa status on an application or during an interview, be honest and positive about your specific situation.

Keep in mind that many jobs, particularly those linked with the government, require employees to be U.S. citizens or permanent residents. A good place to begin is with companies that have a history of hiring international students. You may also want to call your country's embassy or consulate to inquire about your home country's companies which do business in the U.S.

There are several websites which may be helpful as you begin your search:

- The Riley Guide: Comprehensive guide to job listings from multiple countries and regions (rileyguide.com/internat.html)
- Information, services, and resources for international students (www.internationalstudent.com/jobsearch)
- H-1 Visa Jobs: Online database of American employers for international professionals (hlbase.com)
- Foreign Labor Certification Data Center: Employers who have submitted foreign labor certification applications (flcdatacenter.com)

Remember to check with the International Students and Scholars Office (<http://www.gsu.edu/issss/>) to discuss your specific situation and sign-up for any workshops they are offering relating to job placement.

Interviewing

Scheduling Your Interview

On your resume and cover letter, you should include contact information (phone and email) which you check and answer at least daily. If you are contacted about setting up an interview, reply immediately. Many jobs are time sensitive, and you may lose your opportunity if you wait to follow-up. Additionally, any delays in scheduling your interview impart the impression that you are not eager or excited by the job.

Some questions you should ask when scheduling your interview:

- How many people will be in on the interview?
- What will the structure be like (group, writing sample, shifts of different people, etc.)
- Is there anything they would like you to bring with you to the interview?
- Anything you should know about their location (parking, etc.?)



Preparing for Your Interview

After scheduling your interview, you should be sure to research the organization and the individuals with whom you will meet. If you are unsure about the exact person you will meet, research the job, department, company, and try to learn about leaders within the company. Be sure to have a clear understanding of the qualities that you feel make you a good fit for the job and organization, as well as craft at least 5 questions to ask your interviewers. They may be questions about the organization, the position, or the individuals. Your questions show how much research you have done. Do not ask random questions that seem wasteful or too generic. Remember – this is your chance to interview them as well! If you are interviewed by a panel, or tag-team interview, have some questions that are the same and some that show you have researched their backgrounds.

Timeliness

Check and double check your interview time and location. Leave enough time for travel, even on the worst of traffic days. Be prompt, but not too prompt – 15 minutes early is acceptable. If you arrive on-site earlier, listen to the radio, take a walk, get a bottle of water, or otherwise occupy yourself until your time. If you know that you are navigationally challenged, you may want to map out/travel to your destination the day before your interview so that you will arrive without mishap.

Types of Interviews

Things to remember:

- It is not about what you want. It is about what they need.
- Presentation, presentation, presentation.
 - » Dress to impress
 - ▶ Men – clean nails, facial hair groomed (if at all), colored socks, dress shoes, tie/suit
 - ▶ Women – tuck in the cleavage, skirt respectable length, no perfume, minimal jewelry, power suit

- » Padfolio, Resume, and Pen
 - ▶ leave the BIG purse/book bag in the car
- » Handshake
 - ▶ Be firm and not a limp fish
- ▶ Understand the different types of interviews

INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW

TIPS: Come prepared with thoughtful questions about the field and the company. Gain references to other people and make sure that the interviewer would be comfortable if you contact other people and use his or her name. Give the interviewer your card, contact information and resume.

- ▶ This type of interview is not about asking for a job! You are seeking insight and information only!
- ▶ A meeting that you initiate, job seekers secure informational meetings in order to seek the advice of someone in their current or desired field as well as to gain further references to people who can lend insight.
- ▶ Employers that like to stay apprised of available talent, even when they do not have current job openings, are often open to informational interviews, especially if they like to share their knowledge, feel flattered by your interest, or esteem the mutual friend that connected you to them. During an informational interview, the jobseeker and employer exchange information and get to know one another better without reference to a specific job opening.

Questions To Ask @ Informational Interviews

- ▶ Questions about the job
 - » What kinds of tasks do you do on a typical day or in a typical week?
 - » What types of tasks do you spend most of your time doing?
 - » What do you like best about this job?
 - » What excites you most about this job?
 - » What are some of the more difficult or frustrating parts of this career?
 - » I really like doing _____. Do you have an opportunity to do that type of work in this career?
 - » What characteristics does a person in this job need to have?
 - » Do you usually work independently or as part of a team?
 - » What types of decisions do you make?
 - » How does your work fit into the mission of the organization?
 - » What types of advancement opportunities are available for an entry-level worker in this career? I read that _____ is an issue in this occupation. Have you found that to be true?
 - » Is this career changing? How?
- ▶ Questions about working conditions
 - » What kind of hours do you work?
 - » Is your schedule flexible or set?
 - » Are those hours typical for most jobs in this occupation, or do some types of jobs have different hours?
 - » Does this career include or require travel?
 - » Do you have any health concerns associated with your career? How does this career affect your lifestyle?
- ▶ Questions about training
 - » How did you prepare for this career?
 - » How did you find this job?
 - » Do you have any advice on how people interested in this career should prepare?
 - » What type of entry-level job offers the most learning opportunities?
- ▶ Questions about other careers and contacts
 - » Do you know of any similar careers that also use _____ or involve _____?
 - » I know that people in this career specialize in _____ and _____. Do you know of any other specialties?
 - » I think I really like this career. But do you know of similar jobs that do not have this _____ characteristic?
 - » Can you suggest anyone else I could ask for information? May I tell them that you have referred me?

SCREENING/PHONE INTERVIEW

- Companies use screening tools to ensure that candidates meet minimum qualification requirements. Screening interviewers often have honed skills to determine whether there is anything that might disqualify you for the position.

TIPS: Highlight your accomplishments and qualifications. Get into the straightforward groove. Your personality is not as important to the screener as verifying your qualifications. Answer questions directly and succinctly. Save your winning personality for the person making hiring decisions! Even if the interview is on the phone, dress up and prepare just like you would if it was live.

DIRECTIVE/ STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

- In this style of interview, the interviewer has a clear agenda that he or she follows unflinchingly. Sometimes companies use this rigid format to ensure parity between interviews; when interviewers ask each candidate the same series of questions, they can more readily compare the results. Directive interviewers rely upon their own questions and methods to tease from you what they wish to know.
- These interviews might feel a bit impersonal/cold.

TIPS: Flex with the interviewer, following his or her lead. Do not relinquish complete control of the interview. If the interviewer does not ask you for information that you think is important to proving your superiority as a candidate, politely interject it.

MEANDERING INTERVIEW

- This interview type, usually used by inexperienced interviewers, relies on you to lead the discussion. It might begin with a statement like “tell me about yourself,” which you can use to your advantage. The interviewer might ask you another broad, open-ended question before falling into silence. This interview style allows you to tactfully guide the discussion in a way that best serves you.

TIPS: Come to the interview prepared with highlights and anecdotes of your skills, qualities and experiences. Do not rely on the interviewer to spark your memory-jot down some notes that you can reference throughout the interview. Remain alert to the interviewer. Even if you feel like you can take the driver’s seat and go in any direction you wish, remain respectful of the interviewer’s role. If he or she becomes more directive during the interview, adjust. Ask well-placed questions. Although the open format allows you significantly to shape the interview, running with your own agenda and dominating the conversation means that you run the risk of missing important information about the company and its needs.

BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEW

- Many companies increasingly rely on behavior interviews since they use your previous behavior to indicate your future performance.
- In these interviews, employers use standardized methods to mine information relevant to your competency in a particular area or position. Depending upon the responsibilities of the job and the working environment, you might be asked to describe a time that required problem-solving skills, adaptability, leadership, conflict resolution, multi-tasking, initiative or stress management. You will be asked how you dealt with the situations.

TIPS: Anticipate the transferable skills and personal qualities that are required for the job. Review your resume. Any of the qualities and skills you have included in your resume are fair game for an interviewer to press. Reflect on your own professional, volunteer, educational and personal experience to develop brief stories that highlight these skills and qualities in you. You should have a story for each of the competencies on your resume as well as those you anticipate the job requires. Prepare stories by identifying the context, logically highlighting your actions in the situation, and identifying the results of your actions. Keep your responses concise and present them in less than two minutes.

THE STAR METHOD

The STAR method is a structured manner of responding to a behavioral-based interview question by discussing the specific situation, task, action, and result of the situation you are describing.



- » **Situation:** Describe the situation that you were in or the task that you needed to accomplish. You must describe a specific event or situation, not a generalized description of what you have done in the past. Be sure to give enough detail for the interviewer to understand. This situation can be from a previous job, from a volunteer experience, or any relevant event.
- » **Task:** What goal were you working toward?
- » **Action:** Describe the actions you took to address the situation with an appropriate amount of detail and keep the focus on YOU. What specific steps did *you* take and what was *your* particular contribution? Be careful that you don't describe what the team or group did when talking about a project, but what you actually did. Use the word "I," not "we" when describing actions.

- » **Result:** Describe the outcome of your actions and don't be shy about taking credit for your behavior. What happened? How did the event end? What did you accomplish? What did you learn? Make sure your answer contains multiple positive results.

Make sure that you follow all parts of the STAR method. Be as specific as possible at all times, without rambling or including too much information. Oftentimes students have to be prompted to include their results, so try to include that without being asked. Also, eliminate any examples that do not paint you in a positive light. However, keep in mind that some examples that have a negative result (such as "lost the game") can highlight your strengths in the face of adversity.

SAMPLE STAR RESPONSE:

- » **Situation (S):** Advertising revenue was falling off for my college newspaper, *The Review*, and large numbers of long-term advertisers were not renewing contracts.
- » **Task (T):** My goal was to generate new ideas, materials and incentives that would result in at least a 15% increase in advertisers from the year before.
- » **Action (A):** I designed a new promotional packet to go with the rate sheet and compared the benefits of *The Review* circulation with other ad media in the area. I also set-up a special training session for the account executives with a School of Business Administration professor who discussed competitive selling strategies.
- » **Result (R):** We signed contracts with 15 former advertisers for daily ads and five for special supplements. We increased our new advertisers by 20 percent over the same period last year.

HOW TO PREPARE FOR A BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEW

- » Recall recent situations that show favorable behaviors or actions, especially involving course work, work experience, leadership, teamwork, initiative, planning, and customer service.
- » Prepare short descriptions of each situation; be ready to give details if asked.
- » Be sure each story has a beginning, middle, and an end, i.e., be ready to describe the situation, including the task at hand, your action, and the outcome or result.
- » Be sure the outcome or result reflects positively on you (even if the result itself was not favorable).
- » Be honest. Don't embellish or omit any part of the story. The interviewer will find out if your story is built on a weak foundation.
- » Be specific. Don't generalize about several events; give a detailed accounting of one event
- » Vary your examples; don't take them all from just one area of your life.

SAMPLE BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Practice using the STAR Method on these common behavioral interviewing questions:

- » Describe a situation in which you were able to use persuasion to successfully convince someone to see things your way.
- » Describe a time when you were faced with a stressful situation that demonstrated your coping skills.
- » Give me a specific example of a time when you used good judgment and logic in solving a problem.
- » Give me an example of a time when you set a goal and were able to meet or achieve it.
- » Tell me about a time when you had to use your presentation skills to influence someone's opinion.
- » Give me a specific example of a time when you had to conform to a policy with which you did not agree.
- » Please discuss an important written document you were required to complete.
- » Tell me about a time when you had to go above and beyond the call of duty in order to get a job done.
- » Tell me about a time when you had too many things to do and you were required to prioritize your tasks.
- » Give me an example of a time when you had to make a split second decision.
- » What is your typical way of dealing with conflict? Give me an example.
- » Tell me about a time you were able to successfully deal with another person even when that individual may not have personally liked you (or vice versa).
- » Tell me about a difficult decision you've made in the last year.
- » Give me an example of a time when something you tried to accomplish and failed.
- » Give me an example of when you showed initiative and took the lead.
- » Tell me about a recent situation in which you had to deal with a very upset customer or co-worker.
- » Give me an example of a time when you motivated others.
- » Tell me about a time when you delegated a project effectively.
- » Give me an example of a time when you used your fact-finding skills to solve a problem.
- » Tell me about a time when you missed an obvious solution to a problem.
- » Describe a time when you anticipated potential problems and developed preventive measures.
- » Tell me about a time when you were forced to make an unpopular decision.
- » Please tell me about a time you had to fire a friend.
- » Describe a time when you set your sights too high (or too low)



GROUP INTERVIEW

- Interviewing simultaneously with other candidates can be disconcerting, but it provides the company with a sense of your leadership potential and style. The group interview helps the company get a glimpse of how you interact with peers – are you timid or bossy, are you attentive or do you seek attention, do others turn to you instinctively, or do you compete for authority? The interviewer also wants to view what your tools of persuasion are: do you use argumentation and careful reasoning to gain support or do you divide and conquer? The interviewer might call on you to discuss an issue with the other candidates, solve a problem collectively, or discuss your peculiar qualifications in front of the other candidates.

TIPS: Observe to determine the dynamics the interviewer establishes and try to discern the rules of the game. If you are unsure of what is expected from you, ask for clarification from the interviewer. Treat others with respect while exerting influence over others. Avoid overt power conflicts, which will make you look uncooperative and immature. Keep an eye on the interviewer throughout the process so that you do not miss important cues.

TAG-TEAM INTERVIEW

- Expecting to meet with Ms. Glenn, you might find yourself in a room with four other people: Ms. Glenn, two of her staff, and the Sales Director. Companies often want to gain the insights of various people when interviewing candidates. This method of interviewing is often attractive for companies that rely heavily on team cooperation. Not only does the company want to know whether your skills balance that of the company, but also whether you can get along with the other workers. In some companies, multiple people will interview you simultaneously. In other companies, you will proceed through a series of one-on-one interviews.

TIPS: Treat each person as an important individual. Gain each person's business card at the beginning of the meeting, if possible, and refer to each person by name. If there are several people in the room at once, you might wish to scribble down their names on a sheet of paper according to where each is sitting. Make eye contact with each person and speak directly to the person asking each question.

- » *Use the opportunity to gain as much information about the company as you can. Just as each interviewer has a different function in the company, they each have a unique perspective. When asking questions, be sensitive not to place anyone in a position that invites him to compromise confidentiality or loyalty.*
- » *Bring at least double the anecdotes and sound-bites to the interview as you would for a traditional one-on-one interview. Be ready to illustrate your main message in a variety of ways to a variety of people. Prepare psychologically to expend more energy and be more alert than you would in a one-on-one interview. Stay focused and adjustable.*

PANEL INTERVIEW

- A panel job interview takes place when an applicant for employment is interviewed by a panel of interviewers. In some cases, the candidate will meet separately with the panel. In other cases, there will be panel of interviewers and multiple candidates all in the same room.

TIPS: Make direct eye contact with the person asking the question – but also make eye contact with other panelists. Try to remember names of people so you can refer to them as you talk (write their names down when they introduce themselves in the beginning).

FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEW

- Companies bring candidates back for second and sometimes third or fourth interviews for a number of reasons. Sometimes they just want to confirm that you are the amazing worker they first thought you to be. Sometimes they are having difficulty deciding between a short-list of candidates. Other times, the interviewer's supervisor or other decision makers in the company want to gain a sense of you before signing a hiring decision.

TIPS: Be confident. Accentuate what you have to offer and your interest in the position. Probe tactfully to discover more information about the internal company dynamics and culture. Walk through the front door with a plan for negotiating a salary. Be prepared for anything: to relax with an employer or to address the company's qualms about you.

- The second interview could go in a variety of directions, and you must prepare for each of them. When meeting with the same person again, you do not need to be as assertive in your communication of your skills. You can focus on cementing rapport, understanding where the company is going and how your skills mesh with the company vision and culture. Still, the interviewer should view you as the answer to their needs. You might find yourself negotiating a compensation package. Alternatively, you might find that you are starting from the beginning with a new person.

CASE INTERVIEW

- Mostly used by consulting firms in their hiring
- Case interviews are a broad, two-way discussion demonstrating your ability to creatively approach complex or ambiguous problems in unfamiliar businesses, structure your thinking, and reach sensible conclusions in a short time based on the available facts.
- Suggested resources to learn more about Case Interviews:
 - » http://www.mckinsey.com/careers/apply/interview_tips
 - » <http://www.joinbain.com/apply-to-bain/interview-preparation/default.asp>
 - » <http://mycareer.deloitte.com/us/en/students/gettingthejob/caseinterviewpreptool>

Common Interview Mistakes

When an employer advertises a job, chances are they will receive many more applications than there are available positions. When your application shines and you secure your interview, avoid these common mistakes:

- Arriving late.
- Arriving too early – 15 minutes before the interview is appropriate.
- Lighting up a cigarette, or smelling like a cigarette.
- Drinking or staying up late the night before
- Using inappropriate humor
- Forgetting to take out your piercings/cover tattoos.
- Look like you just pulled your clothes out of the dresser drawer
- Bad-mouthing your last boss or over explaining why you left your last job.
- Lying about your skills/experience/knowledge.
- Wearing the wrong (for this workplace!) clothes.
- Forgetting the name of the person you're interviewing with – write it down in your padfolio if you tend to forget names.
- Wearing perfume or aftershave.
- Wearing sunglasses – even on top of your head.
- Forgetting to turn off your phone or wearing a Bluetooth earpiece.
- Failing to research the employer in advance.
- Failing to demonstrate enthusiasm.
- Inquiring about benefits too soon.
- Talking about salary requirements too soon.
- Being unable to explain how your strengths and abilities apply to the job in question.
- Failing to make a strong case for why you are the best person for this job.
- Forgetting to bring several copies of your resume and/or portfolio.
- Failing to remember what you wrote on your own resume.
- Asking too many questions or no questions at all.
- Being unprepared to answer the standard questions.
- Failing to listen carefully to what the interviewer is saying.
- Talking more than half the time – people really like to talk about themselves, so you should let your interviewer do that.
- Interrupting your interviewer.
- Neglecting to match the communication style of your interviewer.
- Yawning.
- Slouching.
- Bringing along a friend, or your mother.
- Chewing gum, tobacco, your pen, your hair.
- Laughing, giggling, whistling, humming, lip-smacking.
- Saying “you know,” “like,” “I guess,” and “um.” If you tend to use filler words, practice eliminating them before your interview. Don't be afraid to pause while thinking about your answer rather than using fillers.
- Name-dropping or bragging or sounding like a know-it-all.

- Asking to use the bathroom. Leave enough time before your interview to use the facilities before your interview begins.
- Being falsely or exaggeratedly modest.
- Being too familiar and jokey.
- Shaking hands too weakly, or too firmly. Practice!
- Failing to make eye contact (or making continuous eye contact).
- Becoming angry, defensive, or complaining.
- Speaking rudely to the receptionist. Remember, the receptionist is typically your gatekeeper. It pays to be nice to him or her!
- Checking the time.
- Oversharing.

Following Up After Your Interview

During your interview, make sure you get the contact information of each person you speak with. Send a thank you card/ email within one (yes one!) business day. Highlight why you are still interested in the position and include a short statement about why you are a fit for the position/org. Be sure to tell them you want the job!!!



Responding to a Job Offer

Salary negotiation is a process where one person negotiates amount of pay, earnings, salary, wages, bonuses, benefits, perks, annual review, or salary raise with another person.

Reality of Negotiation

- CareerBuilder.com surveyed 875 hiring managers and found that over 60% of managers leave some room for offer negotiation
- A Society for Human Resource Management survey found that 8 out of 10 recruiters are willing to negotiate salary and benefits, yet only 33% of applicants negotiate.
- Managers want to hear candidates explain why they're worth more by highlighting specific accomplishments.
- Men are 4x more likely to initiate negotiations as compared to women.
- 20 percent of adult women say they never negotiate at all, and when they do, they typically ask for and get less when they do negotiate – on average, 30 percent less than men.

Many people fail to negotiate their salary due to these common fears:

- I will not get hired
- I will get fired if I try to do it for an internal advancement opportunity
- I might damage my ability to be considered for a pay raise or promotion
- I hate conflict
- I am not sure if I am worth more money (uncertainty of self-worth)
- I fear hearing the word NO

Salary Research Resources & Determining Your Worth

Before you even apply for a position, you should have already researched and determined what the average starting salary for the position is you are considering. If you have not done so already, here are a few resources to help you begin your search and comparisons.

- Occupational Outlook Handbook: <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/>
- Salary.com
- Payscale.com
- Jobnob.com
- Glassdoor.com
- Federal GS Pay Levels: <http://www.fedjobs.com/pay/pay.html>
- Nonprofit Sector – Opportunity Knocks Wage & Benefits Report (www.opportunityknocks.org)



Once you have researched the averages, you should then determine three (3) numbers to help you enter your negotiations:

1. Minimum annual salary you will need to survive (rent/mortgage, car payments, college loan repayments, etc.)
2. Based on the industry research, a number you think is a fair salary for the position
3. A padded version of the industry norm – but be realistic

	Ideal	Offered	Acceptable	Comments
Compensation				
Salary				
Bonuses				
Relocation				
Etc				
Paid Leave				
Vacation/PTO				
Maternity/Paternity Leave				
Etc				
Benefits				
Retirement/401K				
Care Plans (child/elderly)				
Insurance (health, life, disability)				
Etc				
Perks				
Parking				
Smartphone				
Etc				

Figure 2. Example Spreadsheet for Salary/Offer Comparisons

Things to consider when you are trying to come up with your three numbers. Will this job give me the opportunity to learn new skills? What is the potential for growth within the organization? What is the potential for growth outside it? If the company went under tomorrow, what new skills and experiences would you bring to your next employer? Will I have the opportunity to work with a diverse group of people, and expand my list of professional contacts? Do I like my potential boss as a person? Do I respect him or her? Do the people in the office seem like they are happy and satisfied by the work they do? Does this job fit with my values and long-term career goals?

You might also considering building a spreadsheet similar to Figure 2 below, which may help you map out how to compare offers.

Salary Negotiation

EVALUATING AN OFFER

Candidates should look at all of the items listed below as part of their salary negotiation. Most of the information related to benefits for an organization will be listed under their human resources webpages. Use your salary research tools above to determine cost of living equivalencies. If you have a family or want to inquire about the diversity practices of an organization, there are also websites available to help you review a community you are considering (example: <http://www.greatschools.org/>).

Remember, when considering an offer, consider all of the following factors:

- Hiring or Signing Bonus
- Benefits
- Location
- Relocation Assistance
- Cost of Living
- Commute Time
- Cost of Commuting
- Opportunities for Professional Growth
- Opportunities for Family

RULES FOR NEGOTIATING SALARY

Some companies will try to screen out candidates with expectations that do not match with theirs early during the interview process. Carefully evade the question if you can. If they insist on you offering the initial salary range, make sure you give a large range, and that the smallest number within the range is still within shooting distance of your ideal salary.

When you begin to negotiate your starting salary, consider the following:

- Prepare Options
 - » Have options and alternatives to reduce defensiveness and to lead to positive resolution for all concerned.
 - » Quantify your value and performance
 - » Mention your value in quantifiable terms, such as how much money you saved your company and how your projects increased revenues by X thousands of dollars. Then say how valuable you expect to be in your new job.
- Listen
 - » Negotiation requires persuasion and listening to others. Don't miss information vital to negotiation.

DOS AND DON'TS ABOUT SALARY NEGOTIATION:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>Do</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Make sure you cannot change something small that would make the job attractive ➤ Use the phone or voice messages, not e-mail <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Calling conveys confidence, respect and professionalism » Always follow up your phone call with a letter ➤ Be positive <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Thank the recruiter for the offer – indicate how a competing offer seems more appropriate now for your career goals, location, etc ➤ Keep in touch <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Recruiters are always looking to identify good people » Who knows where your career might take you, or where the recruiter may end up! | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Be diplomatic and professional at all times <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Keep in mind you have to work with these people » Do not get on their bad side before you even start work! » Know when to stop negotiating <p>Don't</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Burn any bridges <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Decline with grace – you may turn the recruiter into a professional ally ➤ Highlight negative reasons why you're declining the offer |
|--|---|

Applying for Graduate School

Should I Go to Graduate School?



Before you consider attending graduate school, there are a couple of things you should consider and review before finalizing this decision.

- ▶ **Is a graduate degree necessary** (not just helpful) to gain access to the job market you are seeking access to (or a promotion you would like to secure)? Many times an undergraduate degree and years of experience are sufficient. However, with the federal government, for example, advanced degrees are almost a must in order to enter at higher pay levels.
- ▶ **Which degree is required or helpful?** Make sure you research the industry and employers you are considering applying to. Some organizations may have preferences for certain degrees (an MPA instead of an MBA), and other organizations might prefer a certification instead of an advanced degree. Consider all of your options.
- ▶ **Do I need experience first?** Some careers and graduate programs will not admit or hire a candidate unless they come to the application with demonstrated experience in the field. Remember, once you complete an advanced degree, you are now more expensive to hire. So do not out price yourself solely on education without the experience to back your skills up.
- ▶ **What does the economy look like?** Read and watch industry trends. Read about the outlook and future demand of your desired field using the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Occupational Outlook Handbook. If indicators are suggesting that there will be a lull in hiring for two years in your desired field, and you already know that an advanced degree will be necessary, then perhaps attending graduate school for two years is a good choice.
- ▶ **Affordability.** Once you have an undergraduate degree, the federal government considers you "educated", and as a result, there are fewer scholarships and loan dollars available to students pursuing graduate studies. There are financial resources available in some "high need" areas such as math, science, and public health, but overall – just know that you will need to fund your graduate education with either student loans, private loans, or personal savings. Some graduate programs offer graduate assistantships, teaching assistantships, or fellowships, which help off-set tuition expenses and provide a small stipend, but these awards are normally not sufficient enough to support the day to day living expenses of a full-time student. Students should investigate the total cost of tuition for the total years of the required program, and map out how long it would take you to pay those student loans back, based on the salary you expect to earn upon graduation.
- ▶ **Do I have support?** Graduate school, depending on the level (Master's vs. Ph.D.), can be very taxing on families and friends of a student. The academic demands are usually more intense than at the undergraduate level, and late nights and weekend projects are the norm – which detracts from the time you have for your kids, your partner, or your circle of friends. If you are someone who greatly depends upon the support of your personal network, talk to them about the demands of graduate school and make sure everyone is on board to help you navigate that process.

For additional questions to consider about whether or not graduate school is for you, visit: <http://www.petersons.com/graduate-schools/guide-students-graduate-school.aspx>.

Choosing a Graduate Program

Just like shopping for a new car or a new computer, you want to do your research and make sure you are getting the best return on your investment. Here is an exhaustive list of things you should consider when trying to select a graduate program.

- **Tuition Costs** – While most prospective grad students don't like the idea of figuring tuition costs into the equation when searching for a school, it is quite necessary, particularly if you do not have a full scholarship. The average grad student spends tens of thousands of dollars each year on tuition. If you can't get a return on your investment or if you can't afford to pay your student loans after graduation, you may regret attending a high-priced school.
- **Cost of Fees, Books and Supplies** – Tuition costs aren't the only financial matter worth considering. It is also a good idea to estimate how much you will spend on fees, books and other supplies. You will be surprised how quickly these costs can add up. In fact, it wouldn't be unreasonable to expect to pay as much as \$10,000 to \$15,000 per year.
- **Average Financial Aid Package** – The average financial aid package awarded to students at each school is just as important as the cost of tuition itself. The more you can receive in grants and scholarships, the less you will have to borrow or pay out of pocket. In most cases, the financial aid office at your school of interest will have this information readily available.
- **Selectivity Rating** – Some grad schools accept nearly everyone who applies, but others are extremely selective. The more selective a school is, the lower your chances are of getting an acceptance letter. This does not necessarily mean that you should avoid applying to the schools that don't accept high numbers of applicants; it simply means that you might be better off finding more than one school that fits your academic needs.
- **School Reputation** – A school's reputation in your field of interest is worth checking out. Grad school is an excellent opportunity to study with leading professors in your field, and a chance to jumpstart your career. By studying at a school with a good reputation, you increase the likelihood of getting an education that you can be proud of.
- **Class Size** – Some students prefer large classes that allow them to blend in, while other students prefer small classes that do not limit student participation. No matter what your preference, class sizes will have a huge impact on your overall education. If possible, determine which option is best for you, and then find a school that meets your needs.
- **Accreditation** – Making sure the school or program that you are interested in pursuing is accredited is an absolute must. While accreditation doesn't necessarily guarantee quality, it does provide an insurance against potential problems later on. For example, if you study law at a grad school that is not accredited, you may not be eligible to take the bar exam or practice law.
- **Degrees Offered** – When looking at a particular graduate school, one of the first things you need to do is find out what type of programs are available and what kind of degrees are being offered. Some schools provide the opportunity for dual degrees and some don't. If a school doesn't have the degree you need to further your career, there is no sense wasting any time with that school.
- **Student/Faculty Ratios** – The student/faculty ratio of a school is the ratio of full-time (instructional) faculty members to all enrolled students. This figure is important if you thrive in an environment that provides individualized attention. A school that has a student/faculty ratio of 30:1 is less likely to provide individualized attention than a school that has a student/faculty ratio of 5:1.
- **Teaching Method** – Teaching methods are another aspect of the grad school education that can vary from school to school. Some grad schools focus more on research, while others employ lecture and case study methods. Choosing a program that utilizes a method that is conducive to your learning style and academic goals will be to your benefit.
- **Professor Reputation** – Your graduate school education will only be as good as the professors who lead your classes. This is why it pays to check out a professor's reputation prior to enrolling in any graduate program. If at all possible, you will want to find professors that are leaders in your field of study.
- **The Alumni Network** – The alumni network of any given grad school can provide you with important contacts that last throughout your career. You can learn more about alumni by checking a school's website. Most schools love to brag about their former students and offer complete access to lists of alumni.

- **Average GRE Score** – State schools frequently have minimum GRE score requirements, as do private schools with competitive admissions. When researching schools, you should investigate average GRE scores to see how your score measures up and to determine whether or not you meet the minimum requirements.
- **TOEFL Requirements** – To evaluate a student's ability to communicate and understand the English language at the grad school level, many English speaking grad schools require non-natives to supply TOEFL scores. Some schools have minimum score requirements, so you will want to factor that into your grad school decision.
- **Average Undergraduate GPA Ranges** – Didn't do so hot in undergraduate school? You may want to take a close look at the average undergraduate GPA ranges before applying. If your GPA falls too far below the average, it could hurt your chances of acceptance. Some schools may even have minimum GPA requirements, which generally scraps your chances of getting in altogether.
- **Minimum Work Experience Requirements** – It isn't unusual for the admissions committee at a grad school to impose minimum work experience requirements. In business programs, for example, most applicants are required to have at least two to three years of professional experience prior to applying. Before choosing a school, it is a good idea to scan these requirements to make sure you are eligible for the program.
- **Average Age at Entry** – Do you care how old your classmates are? If so, you will want to check the average age of applicants at the school you are interested in attending. You can usually find this information on the school's website or in grad school guide books.
- **Admission Requirements** – If you are trying to get into a top graduate school, the admissions process can be a trying experience. This is why it is recommended that you make note of admission requirements as you research schools. Knowing what is in store with each school you apply to will not only increase your chances of getting your application in by the deadline, it will also help you to determine whether or not you are a good fit for a particular school.
- **Application Deadlines** – Every grad school has different application deadlines. Some schools have one application round, and others have two or three. You should carefully keep track of the deadlines for each school you are interested in, and make sure you apply on time. In some cases, the earlier you apply, the greater your chances are of getting accepted.
- **Application Fees** – Most grad schools charge prospective students an application fee. These fees can add up very quickly, and are likely to drain a nice chunk of your savings if you aren't careful. While there is generally no way to get an application fee waived, you can control how much you spend by keeping track of the fees and limiting the number of schools you apply to. But it also never hurts to ask if a school offers application fee waivers.
- **Location** – The location of the graduate school is a major consideration because it will affect not only where you live while you complete the program, but also the cost of your education. For example, if you reside in the same state as the school you will be attending, tuition costs will be less than they would be if you were an out-of-state student.
- **Student Housing** – While you earn your graduate degree, you will need someplace to live. The school you are interested in attending may provide dorms for students or they may not. If you have no interest in living in a dorm, you will have to find a suitable place to lay down your head while you aren't in class. Since the cost and availability of housing can vary greatly depending on the school's location, it is a good idea to hammer out housing details as soon as possible in the search process.
- **Program Length** – How long do you want to attend grad school? This is something you need to ask yourself before you begin researching programs. Some schools offer accelerated programs, which will allow you to earn your degree faster. Other schools have lengthy programs and residency requirements. There is also the option of attending school part time versus full time.
- **Program Flexibility** – When searching for the perfect grad school program, you will want to pay special attention to program flexibility. This is especially true if you aren't exactly sure what line of study you want to pursue. Some grad schools offer a multidisciplinary curriculum, and the opportunity to pursue one interest in the beginning of your education and another later on. Other schools are much less flexible, and have programs that are virtually set in stone.
- **Part-Time vs. Full-Time Programs** – The decision to attend grad school part time versus full time is a big one. If you go part time, you can still work and maybe even have a social life. If you attend school full time, holding anything more than a part-time job will prove to be very difficult. As tempting as it can be, make sure you don't bite off more than you can chew. If you do, your education and your career will suffer.

- **Course Load** – The intensity of a graduate program varies by school. Some schools load their students up with so much work that there is very little time to do anything else. Other graduate schools take a more laid back approach and make an effort to keep the course load manageable.
- **Evolving Curriculum** – A good grad school program is up-to-date with recent changes in the field and the curriculum reflects it. To determine whether or not your school has an ever-evolving curriculum, ask as many questions about the program as you can. Find out how it changes from year to year and question how the need for updates is determined.
- **Competition Levels** – Some grad schools have a reputation for being particularly cut throat. Students are competitive, and every class is like a race to the finish. Other schools have more of a collaborative atmosphere and emphasize teamwork. Deciding which competition level would suit you best will help you to pick a school that is a better fit for your learning style.
- **Diversity** – Attending a graduate school with a diverse group of students will enrich your education experience and better prepare you for working in a global environment. You can usually get an impression of a school's diversity from national school rankings and from grad school guide books. You may also be able to learn a few things from the school's admissions office or website.
- **Campus Culture/Social Atmosphere** – Every grad school has a different reputation in regards to social atmosphere. It's best not to get any preconceived notions from glossy brochures. Your most valuable research tool for this grad school factor is current students. Talk to them about what the school is like, and use your instincts to determine whether or not the social atmosphere (as they describe it) fits your personality.
- **Academic Strengths** – Before investing any time or money in any one grad school, you need to make a list of that school's academic strengths. Is the school known for excellence in one particular program? Will renowned professors teach your classes? What makes this school's academics stand out among other schools?
- **Academic Weaknesses** – Although identifying a graduate school's academic strengths is highly recommended, it is perhaps more important to single out a school's weaknesses. For example, if a grad school is not known for having a strong program in your discipline, this would be a definite academic weakness, and possibly a good enough reason to consider another school.
- **The School's National Ranking** – There are many different organizations that rank graduate schools. A few examples include *Business Week*, *U.S. News*, *Wall Street Journal*, and *The Princeton Review*. Although these rankings are considered to be important, and may even help you to decide which school is best, you should not let the rankings influence your decision without investigating the criteria used to rank the schools.
- **Opportunities for Minorities** – If you are a minority student, you should pay special attention to the grad schools that offer special opportunities for minorities. These schools are probably more vested in your future, and will be more likely to provide a supportive culture for minority students.
- **Opportunities for Women** – Female grad school students should also consider the opportunities that are available for women at a particular grad school. Things to inquire about include the number of women on the faculty, the number of female students currently attending, and the resources that are available specifically for women.
- **Networking Opportunities** – A big part of grad school is networking. You will network with not only professors and other students, but also with other people who are an influence in your field. While some grad schools offer outstanding networking opportunities, this will not be the case everywhere you go. For this reason, you should research the different networking opportunities that will be available to you at each school, and then factor the research into your decision.
- **Campus Facilities** – Many graduate schools claim to have state-of-the-art facilities, but definitions of the term “state-of-the-art” can vary. For this reason, it is essential that you do investigative work of your own. Start by making sure the school has the type of facilities you need, and then find out the condition of each building, and the year it was last updated.
- **Life Outside of Class** – You will be spending years earning your graduate degree. To make sure you won't be completely miserable when you aren't studying, it pays to learn more about the area in which the school is located. Is there entertainment? Places you would be interested in touring? What about the community? Is it nice? Are the people friendly?
- **A Day in the Life** – Before enrolling in a graduate school program, one of the best things you can do is find out what your daily life will be like. You can do this by visiting the school campus or by speaking with students who are currently enrolled in your program of interest. Ask them how busy their day is, how much time they devote to their studies during the week and on the weekend, etc.

- **Commitment to Foreign Applicants** – If you are a U.S. student attending a foreign school or a foreign student attending a U.S. school, it is essential that you investigate the level of commitment your school has to foreign applicants. Some grad schools will help guide you through the entire process, and with other schools, you are more or less on your own.
- **Internship Programs** – To get your grad school degree, you may need to successfully complete an internship program or residency. Learning whether or not your school helps to place you in such a program will be beneficial. If they do not offer automatic placement, you will want to question what kind of recruiting opportunities will be available to you and what happens if you are unable to find a suitable program on your own.
- **Work-Study Programs** – If you don't have enough in grants and scholarships to pay for your grad school education, and you don't want to sign your life away on student loans, it may be worthwhile to search for a graduate school that offers a work-study program to students who need assistance paying for tuition, room and board, books, and other supplies.
- **On-Campus Recruiting** – Top grad schools offer top notch recruiting opportunities to their students. With lower level grad schools though, this is not necessarily the case. If you do not already have an internship or a post-graduation job lined up, you will want to carefully evaluate each school's on-campus recruiting procedures, as well as the type of recruiters who visit the school each year.
- **Career Placement Statistics** – One of the main reasons people decide to go to grad school involves the desire for career advancement. If you fall into this category, it makes sense to research the career placement assistance each school offers, as well as the career placement statistics for the schools' most recent grads.
- **Employment Rates After Graduation** – As important as career placement statistics are, you will probably want to take it a step further to get a really good idea of a school's overall employment rates. With a little bit of sleuthing, you should be able to find out where schools are placing their students and what type of jobs these students are getting. Although some schools plump these numbers to look more favorable, the numbers can still give you an indication of how successful your job hunt will be after graduation.
- **Regional Bias** – Some companies like to support schools in their area by hiring graduates from these schools. There is also a trend among large national companies to hire grads from schools that are located near the companies' corporate offices. In other words, regional bias could play a huge role in your ability to get a job. For this reason, it is a good idea to factor regional bias into your grad school search.
- **Reputation with Employers** – If you plan on pursuing a career in a field like business, the school you choose will need to have a good reputation with employers. Some Fortune 500 companies only recruit graduates from certain schools. Getting into one of these schools will bode well when it comes time to get a job. You can usually learn more about a school's reputation with employers directly from the school itself or from published reports by *U.S. News and World Report* and similar organizations.
- **Return on Investment** – If you are like most prospective grad students, you probably have more than a little undergraduate debt left on your plate. While attending grad school, you are likely to at least double or triple your financial obligations. Before taking on this much debt, you need to seriously analyze what your return on investment will be like. You can do this by researching your earning potential upon graduation and the amount you are likely to spend getting your degree.

Adapted from: www.gradwise.org

What Admissions Counselors Look For

Unfortunately, there is no simple answer for the criteria weighed by admissions committees. Each committee is different, but some criteria which most consider are:

- **Undergraduate GPA** (especially from the last two years of college)
 - » Grades are important – not as a sign of intelligence, but as a long term indicator of how well you perform your job as a student. They reflect your motivation and your ability to do consistently good or bad work. However, not all grades are the same. Admissions committees understand that applicants' GPAs often cannot be meaningfully compared. Grades differ between universities and amongst professors in the same university. The admissions committee will take these issues into account when considering your GPA. The committee will also likely examine the context of the GPA. For example: What courses were taken? Where were the courses taken? Were the courses challenging or the easiest courses at the school?

► Graduate Record Exam (GRE) scores (or GMAT, LSAT, etc.)

- » The GRE and other standardized tests provide information about how you rank amongst your peers. Because they are standardized, results can be compared between applicants. The way admissions committees evaluate GRE scores, however, varies. Some committees will use the scores as cutoffs to eliminate applicants. Others will use them as criteria for GRAs or other funding opportunities. Still others use GRE scores to offset weak GPAs, or will overlook poor GRE scores if an applicant demonstrates significant strengths in other areas.
- » Some students will take a commercially available GRE test-prep class to prepare. Others will self-study using a preparation text. There are free test-prep materials and practice exams available on ETS's GRE webpage which may help you assess the best way to prepare for the exam.

► Recommendation Letters

- » Letters of recommendation provide context within which to consider an applicant's GPA and GRE score. It is important that the faculty members who write your letters of recommendation know you well so that they can thoroughly discuss the person behind the scores. Generally speaking, letters written by professors known to committee members tend to carry more weight than those written by "unknowns." Letters written by well-known people in the field, if they signify that they know you well and think highly of you, can be very helpful in moving your application towards the top of the list.
- » When considering who to ask for a letter, consider faculty members, administrators, internship/co-operative education supervisors, and employers. The persons you ask to write your letters should:
 - ▶ know you well
 - ▶ know you long enough to write with authority
 - ▶ know your work
 - ▶ describe your work positively
 - ▶ have a high opinion of you
 - ▶ know where you are applying
 - ▶ know your educational and career goals
 - ▶ be able to favorably compare you with your peers
 - ▶ be well known
 - ▶ be able to write a good letter

Keep in mind that no one person will satisfy all of these criteria. Aim for a set of letters that cover the range of your skills. Ideally, letters should cover your academic and scholastic skills, research abilities and experiences, and applied experiences (e.g., co-operative education, internships, related work experience).

- » The best thing that you can do to ensure that your letters cover all the bases is to provide your referees with all the necessary information. Don't assume that they will remember anything about you.
- » Make an appointment to speak with your letter writers. Give your letter writers plenty of time (three to four weeks at minimum). Provide a file with all of your background information:
 - ▶ transcript
 - ▶ resume or vita
 - ▶ admissions essays
 - ▶ courses you've taken with them
 - ▶ research experiences
 - ▶ internship and other applied experiences
 - ▶ honor societies to which you belong
 - ▶ awards you've won
 - ▶ work experience
 - ▶ professional goals
 - ▶ due date for the application
 - ▶ copy of the application recommendation forms (if provided by the institution to which you're applying)

➤ Personal Statement

- » The personal statement, also known as the admissions essay, statement of purpose, and personal goal statement, is your chance to introduce yourself, speak directly to the admissions committee, and provide information that doesn't appear elsewhere in your application.
- » Faculty read personal statements very closely because they reveal lots of information about applicants.
- » Your essay is an indicator of your writing ability, motivation, ability to express yourself, maturity, passion for the field, and judgment.
- » Admissions committees read essays with the intent to learn more about applicants, to determine if they have the qualities and attitudes needed for success, and to weed out applicants who don't fit the program.

Graduate School Timetable

SUMMER/SEPTEMBER

If you haven't done so already, take the necessary *standardized tests* for admissions. You will either take the **GRE**, **MCAT**, **GMAT**, **LSAT**, or **DAT**, depending on what your program requires.

- Gather *graduate program* brochures (which you've collected over junior year and the summer or are working feverishly now to obtain) and narrow your choices.
- Consider which faculty members to ask for *letters of recommendation*.

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER

- Research sources of *financial aid*.
- Carefully examine each of the *program applications*. Note any questions or essay topics that will require your attention.
- Write a draft of your *statement of purpose*.
- Ask a faculty member or the career/grad admissions counselor at your school to read your essays and provide feedback. Take their advice!
- Ask faculty for *letters of recommendation*. Provide faculty with a copy of your transcript, each program's recommendation form, and your statement of purpose. It may also be helpful if you provide the professors with *sample recommendation letters*. Ask him or her if there's anything else that you can provide to help them.

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER

- Arrange for your official *transcript* to be sent to each program to which you apply. Request that the Registrar hold your transcript until the Fall semester grades are in.
- Finalize your *essays and statement of purpose*. Don't forget to seek input from others.

- Apply for fellowships and other sources of *financial aid*, as applicable.
- Check and record the due date for each application.

DECEMBER/JANUARY

- Complete the *application forms* for each program. Reread your *essays and statement of purpose*. Spell check!
- Mail your applications – or submit them on-line
- Relax and breathe!
- Most schools send a postcard or confirmation email upon receipt of each application. Keep track of these. If you don't receive a confirmation notice within a reasonable amount of time, contact the admissions office by email or phone to ensure that your application has been received before the deadline.
- **Fill out the Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) application.** You'll need your tax forms to do this.

FEBRUARY

- Depending on your field, start planning for the *admissions interviews*. What questions will you ask? Prepare answers to common questions.

MARCH/APRIL

- Visit schools to which you've been accepted.
- Discuss **acceptances** and **rejections** with a faculty member or the career/graduate admissions counselor at your school.
- Notify the program of your **acceptance**.
- Notify programs that you're **declining**.

The Application Process

Remember that most graduate programs are strict about application requirements and deadlines. Do your research early and understand what information you will need to gather for each program. Most programs require GRE or other standardized tests, official transcripts, and letters of recommendations. Plan ahead in order to allow enough time to study and register for the test, and request your transcripts and letters. Also, be aware that most programs have a required application fee, although some programs may be able to waive the fee for instances of financial need. If you are unable to pay the fee, inquire with the program to see if a waiver is possible.

As you start to consider different programs, think about how you are going to pay for school. Inquire about GRAs, scholarships, fellowships, and other types of financial assistance at each school. Remember that the application deadlines for financial assistance may differ from the general admissions deadline.

Writing a Statement of Purpose

Before you begin your statement of purpose, do a personal assessment. Begin by taking notes on what drives you. Describe your hopes, dreams, and aspirations. What do you hope to gain from graduate study? Carefully consider your academic record and personal accomplishments. How do the attitudes, values, and personal qualities that you've listed correspond to these experiences?

Next, do your research. Consider the questions posed by each application. Target your responses to each program. Do NOT use a "generic" essay. Be sure to answer the question, "Why should we select you?"

How do I choose a theme for my admissions essay?

It may be helpful to make a list of all of your experiences and interests at first and then try to find an overlapping theme or connection between the different items on the list. However, your underlying theme should be why you should be accepted into graduate school or specifically accepted into the program to which you are applying. Your job is to sell yourself and distinguish yourself from other applicants through examples.

What type of tone (attitude towards the subject) should I incorporate in my essay?

The tone of the essay should be balanced or moderate. Don't sound too cheerful or too morose but keep a serious and ambitious tone. When discussing positive or negative experiences, sound open-minded and use a neutral tone. Remember not to hit the extremes (too high or too low) and remain in balance. Additionally, do not sound too casual or too formal. Portray confidence and use an active voice.

Should I write in the first person?

Although you were taught to avoid using I, we, my, etc., you are encouraged to speak in the first person on your personal statement. Your goal is to make your essay sound personal and active. However, avoid overusing "I" and, instead, alter between I and other first person terms, such as "my" and "me" and transition words, such as "however" and "therefore."

How should I discuss my research interests in my personal statement?

First, it is not necessary to state a specific and concise dissertation topic in your personal statement. You are only to state, in broad terms, your research interests within your field. The reason you are asked to discuss your research interests is because the program would like to compare the degree of similarity in research interests between you and the faculty member you wish to work with. Admissions committees are aware that your interests will likely change over time and, therefore, they do not expect you to provide them with a detailed description of your research interests but would like for you to describe your academic goals. However, your research interests should be relevant to the proposed field of study. Additionally, your aim is to show your readers that you have knowledge in your proposed field of study.

What if I don't have any unique experiences or qualities?

Everyone has qualities that can distinguish themselves from other individuals. Make a list of all your qualities and think of how you utilized them in the past. Discuss the ones that will make you stand out but will still have some connection to your field of interest. If you do not have many experiences within your field, then try to make your other experiences relate to your interests. For example, if you are interested in applying to a psychology program but only have experience working at a supermarket, then find a connection between psychology and your experiences at the supermarket that can show your

interest in and knowledge of the field and portrays your ability to become a psychologist. By providing these connections, your experiences and you will be depicted as unique.

Should I mention which faculty members I would like to work with?

Yes. It makes it easier for the admission committee to determine if your interests match with the faculty members you're interested in working with. However, if possible, it is recommended that you mention more than one professor you wish to work with because it is a possibility that the professor you are interested in working with is not accepting new students for that year. By mentioning only one professor, you are limiting yourself, which can decrease your chances of being accepted. Additionally, if you only wish to work with a specific professor, then you are more likely to be rejected by the admissions committee if that professor is not accepting new students. Alternatively, it may be helpful to contact professors and find out if they are accepting new students before applying. This reduces the chances of being rejected.

Should I discuss all volunteer and job experiences?

You should only mention volunteer and employment experiences that are relevant to your field of study or have helped you develop or acquire a skill that is necessary for your field of interest. However, if there is a volunteer or job experience that is not related to your field of interest yet has helped influence your career and academic goals, discuss it in your personal statement as well.

Should I discuss flaws in my application? If yes, how?

If you think it may be helpful, then you should discuss low grades, low GRE scores, etc., providing an explanation. However, do not whine, blame others, or try to explain away three years of poor performance. When you discuss flaws, make sure you aren't giving unreasonable excuses, such as "I failed my test because I went out drinking the night before." Provide explanations that are reasonably excusable and comprehensive to the academic committee, such as an unexpected death in the family.

Can I use humor in my personal statement?

It depends. Humor may keep the reader entertained but at the same time it may hurt you if it is not taken in a light manner. If you do plan on using humor, do so cautiously, keep it limited, and make sure it is appropriate. The last thing you want to do is offend the admissions committee. Instead, aim to leave a smile on the reader's face.

Is there a limit in the length of the personal statement?

Yes there is a limit but it varies depending on the school and the program. Usually, personal statements are between 500-1,000 words long. Do not exceed the limit. More importantly, remember to answer all the questions being asked.

By Tara Kuther, Ph.D., About.com





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