



CAREER SERVICES

# YOUR ULTIMATE JOB SEARCH GUIDE



2018-2019

Finding jobs and internship opportunities, writing your résumé and cover letter, marketing yourself online, and more!

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## SECTION 1

# CHECK YOURSELF

## KNOW YOURSELF AND WHERE YOU WANT TO GO

Before starting your job or internship search, reflect on who you are and prioritize what you're looking for in an employer. This will help you secure a job or internship but also will help you to understand what you have to offer and find an opportunity where you will be successful.

### 1 Identify, Narrow, and Prioritize

Beyond the work environment and culture, there are several questions to ask to learn what might be the right career path to pursue.

What are your priorities?

- What geographical areas do you want to live in?
- What industries, career fields, and/or job titles are you looking for?
- What is your ideal salary range?
- Are there certain employers/organizations that really interest you?

Examples:

"I only want to live in New York City."

"I want to work in the Healthcare Industry."

"I want a minimum starting salary of \$45,000."

"I want a summer internship that has a strong team environment."

Select three priorities to help narrow down what is most important to you in your career search.

1

2

3

### 2 Research Potential Careers

- Conduct career searches based on top interests, skills, and values.
- Research industries that appeal to you to learn more about specific career paths.
- Research organizations that appeal to you to learn about their opportunities.

For more information about researching careers, see the Explore Majors and Careers brochure at: [go.unl.edu/iqnf](http://go.unl.edu/iqnf).



## POSITION YOURSELF

Now that you know more about what you are looking for, it's time to set yourself up for success by strategizing on how to meet your career goals.

### Reflect on Your Skills and Experiences

Utilize this graph to think comprehensively about your experience thus far.

Then circle the experiences that best showcase your skills and what makes you best standout. To find and target additional opportunities to gain experience, see Section 2 of this guide (p. 5-9).



### Identify and Articulate Your Transferable Skills

Most college students will not have direct experience in the field they are interested in. However, employers are often interested in skill sets that can be transferred from one industry or field to another. These skills are called “transferable skills” because they are often associated with professional success in any industry. The following is an adapted list of skills/qualities desired by employers of candidates as compiled by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE Job Outlook Survey, 2017).

TRANSFERABLE SKILL	DEFINITION	HOW/WHERE YOU DEVELOPED THIS SKILL
Verbal communication	Ability to verbally communicate with persons inside and outside the organization	Example: greeted customers as a cashier, utilizing communication skills
Teamwork	Ability to work in a team structure	
Problem solving/decision making	Ability to make decisions and solve problems	
Organization	Ability to plan, organize, and prioritize work	
Critical thinking	Ability to obtain and process information	
Analytical	Ability to analyze data, people, and/or situations	
Technical knowledge	Technical knowledge related to the job	
Technology	Proficiency with computer software programs	
Written communication	Ability to create and/or edit written reports	
Interpersonal communication	Ability to sell, influence, or lead others	



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## SECTION 2

# FIND OPPORTUNITIES

Depending on your career goals, there are lots of ways to gain experience. This section describes types of opportunities, how to find and target them, and how to put forward your best application.



### Handshake

Handshake allows students and alumni to search for internships, part-time jobs, on-campus jobs, full-time positions, career events, and/or interviewing opportunities.

#### Benefits

- The University of Nebraska–Lincoln fosters relationships and reviews employers that post opportunities for students.
- The employers that post are more likely to look for entry-level candidates versus other online job boards.

#### Ways to Leverage

- Complete your profile and upload your updated résumé well before the career fair so you can be found by potential employers and have time to research organizations. See a sample Handshake profile on p. 39.
- To increase your visibility, make sure your résumé is accessible to employers.

## CAMPUS INVOLVEMENT

### Research

Participate and collaborate with University of Nebraska–Lincoln faculty/staff in research or creative activities. This is especially important for students who would like to go to graduate school or certain scientific professions. To learn more, visit [ucare.unl.edu](https://ucare.unl.edu).

### Leadership & Student Organizations

Growing as a leader and a team member is vital experience that employers look for in candidates. The University of Nebraska–Lincoln offers hundreds of organizations in a wide variety of interest areas. To learn more, visit [involved.unl.edu](https://involved.unl.edu).

### Volunteer/Service Learning & Civic Engagement

Engaging with University of Nebraska–Lincoln faculty, staff, and students to make a positive impact on campus and in Lincoln communities demonstrates character and other valuable attributes. To learn more, visit [engage.unl.edu](https://engage.unl.edu).

### Education Abroad

Gaining independence, developing communication skills, and learning about other cultures while taking courses abroad is another way to stand out. To learn more, visit [educationabroad.unl.edu](https://educationabroad.unl.edu).

### Coursework

Utilizing the knowledge and skills you have been building in the classroom can be marketed. Seek out class projects that allow you to demonstrate specific skills that are relevant to your career goals.

## PART-TIME JOBS

Holding a part-time job develops transferable skills, builds a network, and establishes references. While looking for relevant positions to your career interests is ideal, remember you can still market your transferable skills from any experience.

Career Services advertises a wide variety of jobs on- and off-campus in Handshake at [my.unl.edu](https://my.unl.edu).



### On-Campus Jobs

Training, flexible schedules, and competitive wages are just a few benefits you may expect from an on-campus employer. Each university department hires independently for student openings and will have specific instructions for applying.

Work-study jobs are partially funded by federal financial aid. University of Nebraska–Lincoln Scholarships and Financial Aid ([financialaid.unl.edu](https://financialaid.unl.edu)) may award work-study as part of your federal financial aid package. With work-study, you may apply for any on-campus job, and once selected, you will earn the award through a paycheck for the hours you work. Make your hiring department aware of your work-study award.



### Off-Campus Jobs

Many employers depend on University of Nebraska–Lincoln students to make their organizations run. Lincoln offers employment opportunities in government, health and human services, retail, food services, technology, and other industries.

## INTERNSHIPS

Internships have become a key to securing employment after graduation. They provide the chance to “test-drive” a career.

Many University of Nebraska–Lincoln academic departments allow interns to earn academic credit in conjunction with an internship or co-op. Regular tuition and fees will be incurred. Contact your academic advisor or department to explore credit options.

Open to all majors, Directed Field Experience (EDPS 496), is a course Career Services offers through the Department of Educational Psychology. Contact Career Services to pursue this option.

To find an internship, consider these resources:



**Handshake.** This free tool allows you to post and send résumés to employers, request on-campus interviews, stay up-to-date on career opportunities, and search jobs, internships, and employers. See p. 39 for more details.



**Career fairs and events.** Attend University of Nebraska–Lincoln career fairs and events to interact directly with employers. Check with other colleges to see if you can attend their events.



**InternNE.com and other geographic resources.** Internship Nebraska lists internships from Nebraska employers. Consider websites from targeted cities or states.



**Employer websites.** Review internships listed on employer websites.



**Nonprofit/volunteer organizations.** Nonprofit employers may have internships or career-related volunteer positions. Check sites like [idealist.org](https://idealist.org) for ideas.



**Government employers.** State and city government often hire interns. The federal government Pathways program is another resource.



**Professional organizations.** Membership in professional organizations may allow access to internships in your field.



**Social networking sites.** Let friends and family know about your internship search.



**Internship placement organizations.** Providers find an internship for you. Program participation costs may be up to \$15,000.



**Create your own internship.** Talk to your employer about ways to enhance your part-time job or contact other organizations of interest and ask about them creating an internship for you.

For more information about internships, visit: [careers.unl.edu/internships](https://careers.unl.edu/internships).

**As a student employee or intern, make sure you have reviewed your rights and responsibilities.**  
This information is available at [careers.unl.edu/internships](https://careers.unl.edu/internships).



## FULL-TIME JOBS

When you start seeking full-time job opportunities, it is important to be strategic throughout the process. Set goals, perform research, and truly think about what you want most out of a job. Reflect back on your interests, skills, values, and strengths to get started.

### Begin the Process

Online job searching should only consume half of your job-searching time.



#### PERSONAL CONTACT

- Put out the word that you're in the market for a new job.
- Don't be shy about sharing this in conversations with friends, family members, former colleagues and classmates, and anyone else you happen to meet.
- Share your résumé freely (e.g. career fairs, networking events, with family/friends, etc.).
- Spend the other half of your time networking face-to-face, cold-calling/emailing inquiries to organizations that interest you, and talking through your job search with people who want to help you.



#### ONLINE

Use keywords to focus your searches on types of work that interest you. These can be in job boards, LinkedIn, Google, and anything with a search capability.

**Categories of keyword examples:**

- Location.
- Organization/company.
- Industry.
- Skills.
- Job type.
- Languages.

**Examples:** “start-ups in Omaha”, “nonprofits in Kansas City”, or “entry level public accounting jobs at mid-sized firms.”

Focus on sites and services that lead you to the data you really want, whether that's networking groups, lists of potential employers, or job listings specific to your industry, job function and/or location.

**Example sites to use:**

- Handshake.
- Professional Associations.
- LinkedIn.
- Industry Specific.
- Indeed.
- Glassdoor.
- Nebraska Related Sites (CareerLink, InternNe.com).

For a complete list, visit:

[careers.unl.edu/job-and-internship-listing-resources](https://careers.unl.edu/job-and-internship-listing-resources).

**When targeting organizations and deciding if you want to spend the time applying, research the following:**

- Organizational history and type: (public/private/nonprofit).
- Recent news/press releases/social media feed.
- Products/services provided.
- Organization values/philosophies/culture.
- Desired skills and positions they hire for.
- What are they known for? What's their reputation/brand?
- Who's their consumer/client/market?
- Competitors/peer institutions and/or organizations.

**Questions to Ask Yourself (After Research):**

- Does this organization meet my requirements for a good match?
- How can I tailor my application materials to highlight that I am the candidate they need?
- What do I want to tell them during the interview to show that I am qualified?
- What can I mention naturally in the interview to show them I did my research?
- What questions do I want to ask them based on my research?



## Create Your Target List

- Identify 10 organizations you have on your target list at one given time.
- If one organization seems to be going nowhere, put it on the backburner and replace it with a new prospect.
- Give organizations at the top of your list extra time and effort.
- Visit with career advisors to discuss your job or internship search.
- Consider making phone calls and email inquiries each week.

## Track Your Progress and Develop Action Steps

Consider creating a list to both prioritize and keep track of your target organizations. See the example chart below to help you start:

ORGANIZATION	INDUSTRY	LOCATION	WARM CONTACT?	MOTIVATION LEVEL (1-5)	JOB POSTING	TYPE OF POSITION
Garmin	Tech	Nebraska	Y	5	N	Sales Associate
Google	Tech	California	N	4	Y	Sales Representative

After you have prioritized your target list, develop goals and action steps with dates to continue staying on track:

ORGANIZATION/POSITION	GOALS, ACTIONS, AND DATES
Garmin, Sales Associate	Reviewed application materials with career coach on 5/1. Submitted materials on 5/9.
Google, Sales Representative	Call friend who interned with them to get more inside information by 5/15. Tailor résumé and application materials by 5/20. Apply before due date, 5/30.

# APPLY

## Job Boards

There are many websites and job boards that may help with your job search process. Some are general websites and some are industry-specific.

- Follow employer-specific website instructions, but be cautious in providing personal information such as your social security number.
- Target your information to the specific organization and position.
- Have an unformatted résumé on hand that allows you to cut and paste into an online application.
- Be cautious about including all of your contact information on your résumé if you choose to upload it to a job board. Your email is encouraged, but not your address.
- Submit applications for each position of interest, updating your profile as appropriate.
- Complete all fields, even those that are not required.

Remember to tailor your résumé for each and every position you apply for. See Section 4: Put it on Paper (p. 16) to understand how to do this effectively.

## ATTEND CAREER FAIRS

### Prepare for the Career Fair

Our career fairs are a great way to gain personal connections in the job search process. Visit [careers.unl.edu/events](https://careers.unl.edu/events) for dates and details for each fair.

Get prepared by using the following checklist:

- Make sure your profile is up-to-date on Handshake.
- Identify and research employers attending the fair.
- Update and tailor your résumé.
- Plan to dress to impress. Selecting and wearing appropriate and professional attire will make a great first impression.
- Practice your introduction (elevator pitch).
- Be aware of employer information booths and on-campus interviewing opportunities.

The day of the fair tips:

- Prioritize and map out which employers you want to speak to.
- Have several résumés printed on résumé paper and store in a portfolio.
- Approach employers with a firm handshake, eye contact, and plenty of enthusiasm and interest.
- Ask the representative for any tips when applying online if that is the required application process. Note that some employers cannot accept hard copy résumés.
- Have an open mind to employers you may not have identified ahead of time; be open to surprises!
- Ask for a business card for contact information.



Remember to follow up within a week after the fair. Employers leave a career fair meeting many potential hires; this is a great way to stand out to recruiters!



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## SECTION 3

# START NETWORKING

## IDENTIFY AND BUILD YOUR NETWORK

### Why Network?

Connecting with others and building your network is one of the most effective methods of not only finding the right job or opportunity but continuing to develop as a professional in your field.

Not sure what you want to do after college? No problem! Take time to find professionals who are in positions you might like and ask them to have coffee with you so you can learn more about the field. This is called informational interviewing.

What is the hidden job market? Many times employers will not list a position, but if the right people are available, they will hire them. This starts from building relationships with these organizations early.

Connect and create professional relationships with those who are interested in the same thing—you never know when you might need advice!

### Identify Your Network

- 1 Start building your network by identifying who is in it already.  
The best place to start is having an informal conversation with someone you already know. Examples include meeting with faculty or staff, attending a career fair, introducing yourself to a guest speaker in class or at a student organization meeting, discussing plans with family, friends, or others, or even posting messages on social media.
- 2 Begin to identify who you might want to connect with outside of your current network.
- 3 Use your resources:
  - Ask for referrals from people you know.
  - Ask those in your network, “Do you know someone who would know something about \_\_\_\_\_?”
  - Join professional associations or organizations.
  - Take advantage of opportunities to network with alumni.
  - Utilize LinkedIn and Handshake (see p. 32-39).

## Using LinkedIn

LinkedIn has a variety of features to find professionals and get connected to those you already know. Check these out:

- Click on “My Network”. This piece of LinkedIn allows you to find people you may know, connect with alumni, and research professionals in a certain industry or job title.
- Join groups to have access to potential connections and it will give you the functionality to message and connect with those with similar skills and interests. LinkedIn allows you to message people you haven’t connected with as long as you are in the same group.
- Use the “Filters” tool to narrow searches based on groups, keywords, location, industry, and more to target and personalize potential connections and organizations.



### Start Your Contact List

Take a second to determine who is in your network and someone that you wish was in your network:

NAME	ORGANIZATION	PHONE	EMAIL	RELATIONSHIP

Before you start connecting, reflect and research. Why are you reaching out and how does it relate to the person you are connecting with? Each time you reach out to a professional or apply to a different position you need an individualized approach. Be as professional as possible.

What is the contact’s preferred way of connecting? If email is your preferred way to communicate, be willing to communicate through the channels your contact prefers.

#### DO

- Be as professional as possible.
- Use a professional email address.
- Write a clear and concise subject line.
- Keep the communication focused.
- Address your communication to a specific person.
- State who you are, how you found them, and what you are asking them for.
- Share your major or career aspirations.
- Be prepared to discuss your experiences, skills, and qualifications.
- Ask for advice, ideas, and referrals.
- Use proper grammar and spelling.
- Always have someone proofread your communication before you send it to a potential employer.
- Follow up and do what you said you would.

#### AVOID

- Thinking about only your needs. What can you do to help the other person as well? Being interested in them will make them more interested in you.
- Being too informal. Your communication and tone should be authentic and appreciative but professional.
- Sending a standard one-size-fits-all email or message to every networking connection. Personalize it to each person.
- Grammar, spelling, and other editing errors. Emails and other electronic messages are still forms of professional communication. Proofread!
- Asking for a job if requesting an informational interview or LinkedIn/networking connection.

## Sample Written Networking Communication Messages

### CAREER EXPLORATION OR NETWORKING INQUIRY EMAIL

Dear Mr. Smith:

I am a student at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln majoring in Psychology and exploring career opportunities in sales. As part of my exploration, I would like to learn more about this career and determine if it is the right fit for me.

I found your name on the University of Nebraska–Lincoln Alumni Association LinkedIn group and am interested in the work you are doing in sales. Would you be willing to speak with me in person, over the phone, or via email about your job and career path? I am looking to complete a 30-60 minute informational interview in the next three weeks.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Riley Greene  
riley.greene16@gmail.com  
402-555-5555

### LINKEDIN REQUEST

Dear Mr. Davis:

I am a student at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln interested in sales. I found your profile on the university Alumni Association LinkedIn group and would like to connect with you to learn more about the sales field. Would you be willing to add me as a professional connection?

Sincerely,  
Riley Greene

### CAREER FAIR FOLLOW-UP EMAIL

Dear Ms. Beck:

Thank you for visiting with me about sales positions at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln Career Fair last week. I was excited to hear about your opportunities and believe my skills and experiences are an excellent match for your needs. Specifically, my experience as an Executive Store Intern at Target and Phonathon Caller with the University of Nebraska Foundation helped develop strong customer service, communication, and problem solving skills needed to build and maintain relationships with clients.

Please find a copy of my résumé attached to this email. Per your recommendation, I have applied for the Technical Sales Representative position through your website. If you need more information or would like to discuss my qualifications further, please contact me at 402-555-5555 or riley.greene16@gmail.com.

Thank you again for taking the time to visit with me at the career fair. I look forward to speaking with you soon.

Sincerely,  
Riley Greene

Informational Interviews

Informational interviewing is a great way to gain personalized information about a career, industry, or organization. Before the meeting, have questions in mind that will allow you to learn but also develop a relationship.



Sample Questions to Ask

- What has your career path been? How did you get to where you are today?
- What does a day in the life of a technical sales representative look like?
- What challenges and opportunities are associated with this type of position?
- What skills and experiences do you recommend I seek out if I would like to enter this field?
- What type of positions do most people in this industry start with?
- What I should expect for starting pay in an entry-level position within the industry?
- What advice would you have for me as I prepare to leave college and enter the work force?



Informational Interviewing Tips

- Map out a plan of who you want to talk with and how you will reach out.
- Review your résumé and be prepared to discuss your experiences.
- Prepare topics and questions to discuss.
- Share your career aspirations.
- Dress professionally (i.e. business casual) if you are visiting someone in-person.
- Bring a résumé.
- Get directions to the site beforehand.
- Arrive approximately 10 minutes early.
- Be prepared to talk about yourself.
- Listen closely.
- Take notes.
- Ask for referrals.
- Leave every networking experience with a concrete next step.



Follow Up

- Send a thank-you. See an example thank-you note on p. 47.
- Follow up and stay connected (LinkedIn is a great tool for this!).
- Keep a record of your contacts and referrals.
- Send an email to the additional contacts you were given.
- Stay in touch and maintain the contact.

To see sample written communications to use while conducting informational interviews, see p. 13.

In Person Networking – Your 30 Second Elevator Pitch

Think of your elevator pitch as your 30-second commercial. It’s your first impression and introduction of who you are, what you do, what you can offer, and what you are looking for. Having an elevator pitch that is well thought-out allows you to showcase your communication skills, preparedness, and qualifications in any type of networking scenario—from career fairs to actually meeting someone on an elevator.

The key to a smooth elevator pitch is practice and knowing how to adapt it based on the scenario. Review the parts of an elevator pitch below to learn what is vital to say and then practice your own.

DO	AVOID
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Write out pitch</li><li>• Keep it short (less than 45 seconds)</li><li>• Practice without memorization—spontaneity will make it feel unscripted</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Exaggerate or use too much jargon</li><li>• Summarize your résumé</li><li>• Give too much personal information (i.e. siblings, marital status)</li></ul>



## 1 WHO YOU ARE

When introducing yourself during your elevator pitch, it's important to think about the scenario in regards to what information might be the most important for your target audience. For a career fair, employers will want to know your educational background versus a networking scenario, where an individual may be more interested in your current position and what you are good at doing.

**To get started:**

Hello, my name is (name), and I am a (class year) (major) student at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln.

### CAREER FAIR SCENARIO

Hello, my name is Riley Greene, and I am a junior psychology student.

### NETWORKING SCENARIO

Hello, my name is Riley Greene, and I build relationships to create valuable partnerships.

## 2 WHAT YOU DO + WHAT YOU CAN OFFER

Next in your pitch, think about what you do best, what's your impact, and what sets you apart. Ask yourself if there are any notable accomplishments you would want to share and what skills you should be advertising. Tie these ideas together to show you have something to offer.

**To get started:**

I am involved in/work at \_\_\_\_\_ + explain skills and experience in relevance to an industry/position

My interest in \_\_\_\_\_ has grown through (experience) + explain skills in relevance to an industry/position

### CAREER FAIR SCENARIO

I work at the Foundation as a phonathon caller and am part of the process of building relationships with alumni. In this experience, I have enjoyed learning how to collaborate with all kinds of individuals to continue to advance the University of Nebraska.

### NETWORKING SCENARIO

My interest in relationship building comes from studying psychology at Nebraska, and working part-time for the Foundation. Last month, I established over 20 connections and want to continue utilizing my communication skills to meet the goals of any organization.

## 3 WHAT YOU ARE LOOKING FOR

Lastly, draw the connection between who you are + what you can do + what you can offer. From there, you want to end with a question or an "ask" based on the scenario. Bonus: You may also find the opportunity to showcase your research on an employer/position.

**To get started:**

- I was wondering what opportunities you have available next summer?
- Would you be willing to give me any advice about this type of position and the best way to enter the field?
- I am very interested in your organization and I was wondering what the selection process looks like?

### CAREER FAIR SCENARIO

With this experience and my classes, I have become interested in sales. Could you tell me more about your sales internship position that I recently saw posted on Handshake?

### NETWORKING SCENARIO

Can you tell me a little bit more about your role?

## HELPFUL TIPS

**Throughout the conversation:**

Be an active participant, listen and respond appropriately.

Then, ask questions to show interest:

- What does a day in the life of a \_\_\_\_\_ look like?
- What challenges and opportunities are associated with this type of position?
- What skills and experiences do you recommend I seek out if I would like to enter this field?
- What type of positions do most people in this industry start with?

**End of the conversation with contact information and knowing next steps:**

- When do you anticipate accepting applications?
- May I contact you if I have additional questions?

Say thank you and follow-up accordingly.



# RÉSUMÉ & PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATIONS

## Start early.

Build your skills by getting engaged inside and outside of the classroom through internships/co-ops, related part-time jobs, student organizations, volunteer opportunities, class projects, research experiences, etc. These experiences will develop skills to achieve your academic and career goals.

## Document your experiences and skills regularly.

Regularly update your professional materials and keep them in a master document, so you will have this information for future applications. This can also help you identify gaps or areas to develop to make you a better candidate.

## Personalize your documents to the reader.

While it is tempting to develop a basic template of these materials once, then simply update it as time passes, it is more effective to tailor each document you submit to the specific audience, often times the organization and hiring manager. To demonstrate your fit, reflect on your qualifications including experiences, skills, and abilities and specifically address how these meet the qualifications desired for the role.

## Analyze the opportunity.

How do you know what qualifications the role desires? Read and analyze the job description to determine the skills and experiences sought.

### DO

- Use a common, easy-to-read font in a readable size (typically 10-12 point font).
- Set all margins between .5 to 1 inch.
- Use bold, underline, and italics purposefully and consistently to highlight and separate sections.
- Limit to one page unless more pages are typical in your industry.
- Develop a separate unformatted version of your résumé with no bold, italics, or other designs for online applications.
- List experiences in reverse chronological order (most recent first).
- Make sure your GPA is accurate if you choose to include it.

### AVOID

- Templates or “wizards” that reduce control, can limit content, or may not be readable by online application systems.
- Tables and grids that do not transfer well when emailing or applying online.
- Colors or designs, unless specifically required for the position or industry.
- Paragraph descriptions of experiences.
- Personal pronouns (i.e. my, I, our, we).
- Inconsistencies in structure, layout, or formatting.
- Photographs of yourself, clipart, or borders.
- Abbreviations except for states and GPA.
- Rounding your GPA up.
- Listing generic transferrable skills that lack proof.

## Let's Practice!

Read the following sample job description and circle the keywords, skills, and experiences required of a successful candidate. This is applicable to scholarships, part-time jobs, and internships too. After this activity, see page 28 for a highlighted version.

### Technical Sales Representative

YYY Company, named a “Best Place to Work” five years in a row, is seeking ambitious candidates for our technical sales representative position. At YYY Company, we embrace working as a team to meet our clients’ needs and drive industry leading results. Our goal is to make a positive impact for our clients and on the world.

This entry level sales role will build relationships with internal and external clients managing the entire sales process including regular outreach and follow-up, maintain a deep understanding of the product, and ability to identify the unique needs of the client to provide appropriate products. When our clients win, we win.

#### Preferred Qualifications:

- Bachelor’s degree in related field
- Written and verbal communication skills to appropriately explain complex concepts to peers/clients
- Ability to work independently and as part of a team
- Strong problem-solving and critical thinking skills
- A self-motivated individual who is able to get results
- Knowledge of Microsoft Office programs

# ALL THINGS RÉSUMÉ

## What is a Résumé?

A résumé is your personal marketing tool to quickly show how and why you are the ideal candidate for the role. A strong résumé generates interviews or follow-up communication regarding your qualifications. Your résumé may look different depending on the industry and position you are applying for, so be sure to research these in order to guide your résumé format and make the best possible first impression.

## Sections of Your Résumé



### Contact Information

Name, address, city, state, zip code, phone, email, and tailored LinkedIn profile URL, professional website, or blog.

*Example:*

**Riley Greene**  
1234 Kennedy Drive  
Lincoln, NE 68512  
402-555-5555  
riley.greene16@gmail.com  
www.linkedin.com/in/rileygreene



### Objective

Professional Objective | Career Objective  
Skills and experiences you would contribute to the position.

*Example:*

Seeking a full-time position in technical sales requiring excellent organization, communication, and customer service skills



### Education

Educational Background | Academic Background | Academic History

- Includes institution name, location (City, ST or City, Country), degree, graduation date, and major(s).
- Institutions listed with most recent degree first.
- May include GPA, minor, concentration, education abroad, etc.

*Example:*

University of Nebraska–Lincoln, Lincoln, NE  
Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, May 20XX  
(anticipated)  
Major: Management; Minor: Political Science;  
Cumulative GPA: #.##/4.00; Major GPA: #.##/4.00



### Related Coursework

Relevant Coursework | Professional Coursework | Academic Courses

- Include coursework specific to the profession or industry.
- Courses should be listed by their full name (Sales Communication not MRKT 257).

*Example:*

Human Nutrition & Metabolism, Human Physiology, Human Anatomy, Scientific Principles of Food Preparation



### Skills

Computer Skills | Technical Skills | Certifications | Laboratory Skills

- Use for specific fields or jobs that list skills in the requirements.
- Include other skills based on your specialty and skill level such as computer, language, laboratory, certifications, etc.

*Example:*

Computer: Microsoft Excel, Access, Word, PowerPoint; SPSS, SAS  
Language: Proficient in Spanish; Basic knowledge of French



### Work Experience

Employment History | Additional Experience | Work History

- Includes organization name, location (City, ST or City, Country), position title, dates of employment (month and year), and description of tasks and responsibilities.

*Example:*

Super Saver Foods, Lincoln, NE  
Grocery Clerk/Cashier, May 20XX–Present

- Manage financial transactions in a quick and efficient manner.
- Communicate with 100+ customers daily to resolve concerns and answer questions.





## Activities

Leadership Experience | Activities & Honors | Involvement

- Strongly recommended if you have been involved over several months/years.
- Includes organization name, location (City, ST or City, Country), position title, dates of involvement (month and year), and description of responsibilities (optional).
- Could include student, academic, community, or social organizations.
- List in reverse chronological order (most recent first).
- Could be combined with a Volunteer Experience and/or Honors/Awards section.
- Include interests only if appropriate to your field or industry of interest.

*Example:*

Mexican American Student Association, University of Nebraska–Lincoln, Lincoln, NE  
Vice President of Membership, January 20XX–Present

- Educate new members about the organization's mission and activities.



## Honors/Awards

- Strongly recommended if you do not include the information in the “Education” or “Activities” sections.
- Includes award, honorary, or scholarship name and dates. It is recommended to also include a brief description if it is not obvious from the award's name.
- Most often used for academic honors, but could also include athletic, service, performance, work/professional, etc. honors.
- Honors listed in reverse chronological order (most recent first).

*Example:*

University Honors Program, 20XX–Present  
Alpha Lambda Delta (first year academic honorary), 20XX–Present



## References

- Do not include references on your résumé.
- Create a separate reference page that lists your references.

*For a sample reference page see p. 25.*



## Relevant Experience

Related Experience | Professional Experience | Internship Experience | Volunteer Experience

- Includes organization name, location (City, ST or City, Country), position title, dates of employment (month and year), and description of tasks and responsibilities.
- Can include all relevant experiences, even unpaid positions, volunteer work, internships, summer and part-time jobs, extra-curricular activities, research projects, class projects, etc.
- Experiences listed in reverse chronological order (most recent first).

*Example:*

Citibank, New York, NY  
Investment Banking Intern, May 20XX–August 20XX

- Researched and prepared offering documents for potential clientele.
- Generated financial models utilizing SPSS comprehensive statistical software.



## Additional Sections

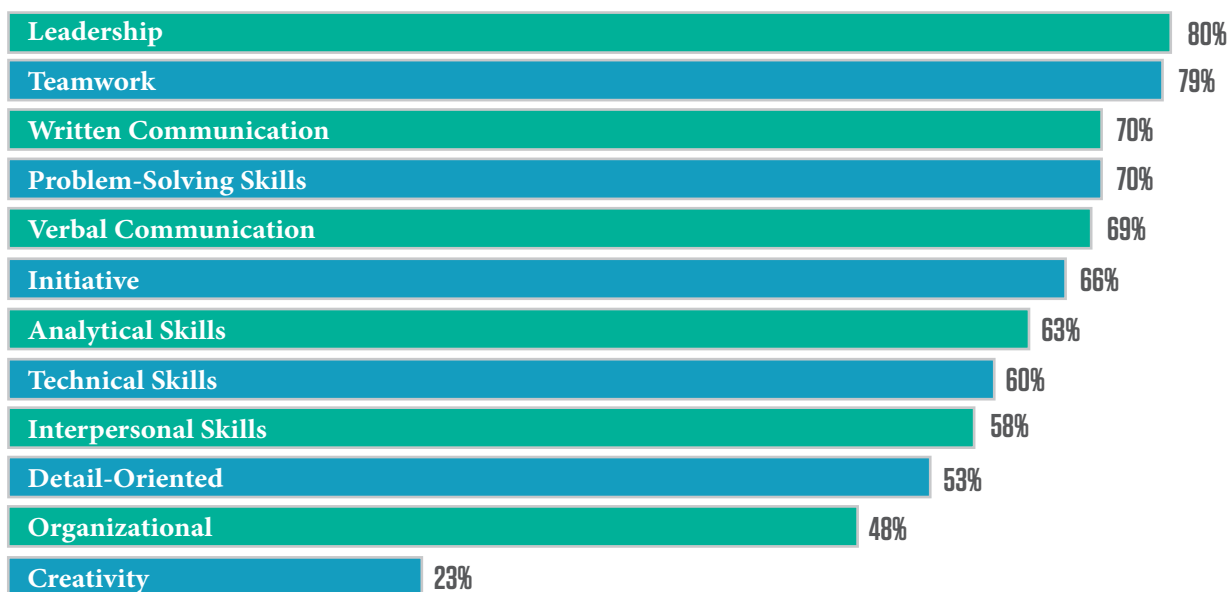
International Experience | Certifications | Senior Design Project | Research Experience | Teaching Experience | Military Experience | Publications | Presentations | Professional Affiliations

- Include other sections to best highlight your skills and experiences for the opportunities you are seeking.
- Could be added to other résumé sections depending on how significant the experience is and how relevant it is to your industry or field.

## Identify Your Transferable Skills

Most college students won't have a lot of direct experience in the fields they wish to work in; therefore, employers are interested in the skill sets that can be transferred from one industry or field to another. These are called "transferable skills" because they are associated with professional success in any industry.

### Attributes Employers Look For On A Résumé



Source: Job Outlook 2017, National Association of Colleges and Employers

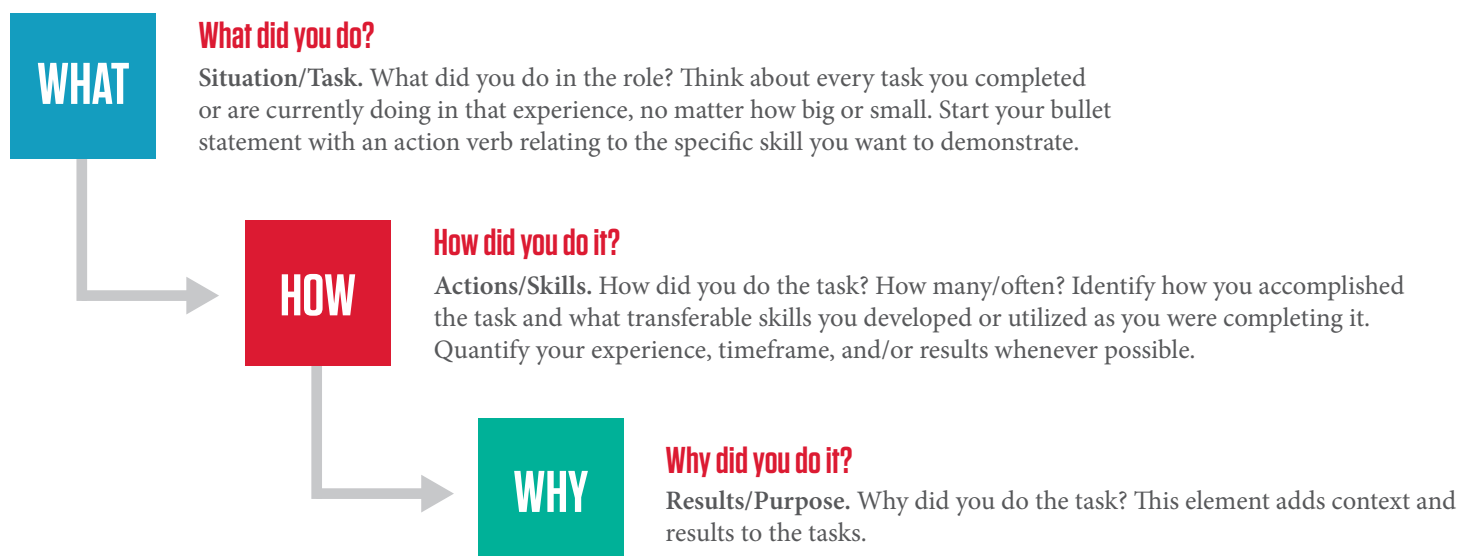
## Writing Résumé Bullet Statements

Bullet statements describe your tasks, skills, and results for your experiences, which could include jobs, activities, volunteer opportunities, honors/awards, and/or academic courses. This allows the person reading your résumé to understand your past experiences and what skills you bring to the opportunity. Effective bullet statements answer "what," "how," and "why" questions about your experience.

### 3 RULES FOR BULLET POINTS

- 1 Start with an action verb
- 2 Describe what, how, why
- 3 Use numbers

## Sell It, Don't Tell It



## Using Action Verbs

Start your bullet statements with a strong action verb related to the skills the job, field, or industry desire. Below are a few examples of verbs to consider.

### Leadership/Initiative

Accomplished, Achieved, Chaired, Coached, Coordinated, Directed, Influenced, Initiated, Led, Oversaw, Managed, Mentored, Motivated, Supervised, Trained

### Teamwork/Interpersonal

Collaborated, Consulted, Cooperated, Contributed, Encouraged, Engaged, Ensured, Guided, Helped, Interacted, Networked, Partnered, Related, Resolved, Supported

### Written Communication

Authored, Briefed, Composed, Corresponded, Critiqued, Described, Documented, Drafted, Edited, Proposed, Reported, Reviewed, Summarized, Translated, Wrote

### Problem Solving

Adjusted, Concluded, Converted, Enhanced, Formulated, Identified, Improved, Increased, Mediated, Reconciled, Reduced, Resolved, Restructured, Solved, Streamlined

### Verbal Communication

Advised, Advocated, Convinced, Discussed, Expressed, Facilitated, Instructed, Negotiated, Persuaded, Presented, Promoted, Publicized, Reasoned, Sold, Taught

### Analytical

Analyzed, Assessed, Compared, Confirmed, Determined, Estimated, Evaluated, Examined, Investigated, Projected, Recommended, Researched, Synthesized, Validated

### Technical

Applied, Assembled, Audited, Built, Calculated, Converted, Demonstrated, Designed, Implemented, Installed, Maintained, Modified, Operated, Resolved, Systematized, Tested

### Organized/Detailed

Arranged, Compiled, Consolidated, Coordinated, Distributed, Executed, Implemented, Inspected, Monitored, Organized, Planned, Prioritized, Processed, Revised, Scheduled

### Creativity

Brainstormed, Built, Created, Designed, Developed, Displayed, Envisioned, Generated, Illustrated, Invented, Launched, Marketed, Produced, Shaped, Strategized

## Create Your Bullet Statements

What did you do? (situation/task)	How did you do it? How many/often? How does it relate to transferable skills? (action/skills)	Why did you do it? How does it relate to the job? (results/purpose)	Build your Bullet
<i>Example:</i> Answered phones	<i>Example:</i> Communicated with 100+ customers daily over the phone through individualized attention and service	<i>Example:</i> To enhance the customer experience	<i>Example:</i> Communicated with 100+ customers daily over the phone through individualized attention and service to enhance the customer experience

## Résumé Example 1: Getting Involved

Targeted toward students applying for scholarships, study abroad, or part-time jobs.

### RILEY GREENE

860 North 17<sup>th</sup> Street #304 | Abel Residence Hall | Lincoln, NE 68508  
402-555-5555 | riley.green16@gmail.com

#### OBJECTIVE

To obtain a scholarship based on academics and financial need for study abroad in New Zealand

#### EDUCATION

**University of Nebraska–Lincoln**, Lincoln, NE

Bachelor of Arts

Major: Undeclared

Graduation: May 20XX (anticipated)

GPA: ###/4.00

**Lincoln North Star High School**, Lincoln, NE

High School Diploma

Graduation: May 20XX

#### WORK EXPERIENCE

**Subway**, Lincoln, NE

*Sandwich Artist*, June 20XX – Present

- Perform informal oral satisfaction survey at checkout to show care for customers' experience
- Complete financial transactions with attention to detail and accuracy
- Communicate with customers to determine their needs and create custom sandwiches to specifications

**Private Families**, Lincoln, NE

*Babysitter*, October 20XX – May 20XX

- Supervised the safety of three elementary school age children twice-weekly
- Created age-appropriate educational opportunities to support creative and academic growth

#### LEADERSHIP/VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

**Center for People in Need**, Lincoln, NE

*Volunteer*, June 20XX – Present

- Prepare food for events of up to 100 people, emphasizing attention to known food allergens
- Coordinate "Teen for a Day" events in which young women in grades 6-12 may shop for new clothes for the upcoming school year for free to start the year off successfully

**Orchestra & Marching Band**, Lincoln North Star High School, Lincoln, NE

*First Chair Trumpet*, September 20XX – May 20XX; *Member*, October 20XX – May 20XX

- Earned first chair position out of 20 other students based on performance ability and leadership skills
- Practiced 2 hours daily while balancing academics and other activities

#### HONORS

*James Canfield Scholarship*, University of Nebraska–Lincoln, Lincoln, NE, August 20XX – Present

#### SKILLS

*Computer*: Microsoft Word and PowerPoint

*Languages*: Basic written and conversational Spanish

TIP: If you are still deciding on your major, list it as "Undeclared" with a degree in Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science. Remember to change this to the correct degree and major once you declare your major.

TIP: Include your GPA or major GPA if it is 3.0 or above.

TIP: You may include your high school education and experiences on your résumé initially but this information should be removed by your junior year.

TIP: Start with a strong action verb in present tense if you are still working in the role.

TIP: Start with a strong action verb in past tense if you are no longer working in the role.

TIP: If you have held more than one position at an organization, show the progression and save space by listing the organization first.

TIP: In the "Skills" section, focus on "hard" or "technical" skills relevant to your field. Integrate into bullet statements if possible (see sample on p. 21).



## Résumé Example 2: Gaining Experience

Targeted toward students applying for internships, research opportunities, or major-related experiences.

### RILEY GREENE

1234 Kennedy Drive | Lincoln, NE 68512 | 402-555-5555 | riley.greene16@gmail.com  
www.linkedin.com/in/rileygreene

#### OBJECTIVE

To obtain the Executive Store Intern position at Target utilizing analytical, communication, and teamwork skills

#### EDUCATION

**University of Nebraska–Lincoln**, Lincoln, NE

Bachelor of Arts, May 20XX (anticipated)

Major: Psychology; GPA: ###/4.00

*Scholarships:* James Canfield Scholarship and Global Gateway Scholarship

**Lincoln University**, Christ Church, New Zealand

New Zealand Study Tour (6 credits of history), Summer 20XX

#### WORK EXPERIENCE

**University of Nebraska Foundation**, Lincoln, NE

*Phonathon Caller*, September 20XX – Present

- Persuade alumni and friends of the University to make financial contributions totaling more than \$200,000 in pledges within first three months
- Analyze potential donor information prior to call to identify specific resources for targeted sales approach

**Subway**, Lincoln, NE

*Sandwich Artist*, June 20XX – August 20XX

- Completed financial transactions with attention to detail and accuracy ensuring positive customer experience

#### ACTIVITIES

**Undergraduate Psychology Organization**, University of Nebraska–Lincoln, Lincoln, NE

*Member*, October 20XX – Present

- Learn more about the field of psychology from peers and faculty

**University Program Council (UPC)**, University of Nebraska–Lincoln, Lincoln, NE

*Member*, January 20XX – Present

- Collaborate in a team to coordinate and promote entertaining educational events to the campus community

#### VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

**Alternative Service Break**, Pine Ridge, SD

*Participant*, March 20XX

- Volunteered in the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, tribal headquarters of the Oglala Sioux Tribe
- Tutored elementary school students to provide mentorship toward higher education goals

**Center for People in Need**, Lincoln, NE

*Volunteer*, June 20XX – October 20XX

- Coordinated events to support families and individuals in need with donations from the community
- Provided supplemental nutrition assistance to approximately 100 individuals monthly

#### SKILLS

*Computer:* Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, Excel

*Language:* Basic written and conversational Spanish

TIP: Include a URL to your LinkedIn profile, professional website, or blog for networking purposes and to share additional information with employers.

TIP: If including an “Objective” section when applying to a specific position, include the job title and organization name.

TIP: Make sure your degree, major, and GPA (if included) are listed accurately.

TIP: At the internship level, employers do not expect a significant amount of related experience. For positions that seem unrelated to your career goals, highlight duties and responsibilities that are transferable.

TIP: Along with duties and responsibilities, focus on specific achievements or results.

TIP: Use quantities in your experience descriptions to communicate results and your level of responsibility.

## Résumé Example 3: Getting the Job

Targeted toward candidates seeking full-time career opportunities.

### RILEY GREENE

1234 Kennedy Drive | Lincoln, NE 68512 | 402-555-5555 | riley.greene16@gmail.com  
www.linkedin.com/in/rileygreene

#### EDUCATION

**University of Nebraska–Lincoln**, Lincoln, NE  
**Bachelor of Arts**, May 20XX (anticipated)  
Major: Psychology; GPA: #.##/4.00

**Lincoln University**, Christ Church, New Zealand  
New Zealand Study Tour (6 credits of history), Summer 20XX

#### RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

**University of Nebraska Foundation**, Lincoln, NE

*Phonathon Caller*, September 20XX – Present

- Persuade alumni and others to make financial contributions using acute speaking and listening skills
- Earned top 10% fundraiser status within first three months by generating more than \$200,000 in pledges

**Target**, Kansas City, MO

*Executive Store Intern*, May 20XX – August 20XX

- Interacted with 50+ **customers** daily using effective customer service, organization, and multi-tasking abilities to ensure a positive experience and **resolve any problems**
- Cross-trained in all departments, including electronics, to appropriately support **customers' individual needs**

**Department of Psychology**, University of Nebraska–Lincoln, Lincoln, NE

*Research Methods and Data Analysis Research Project Participant*, August 20XX – December 20XX

- Analyzed **complex** statistical **data** using **Microsoft Excel** and SPSS to test research project hypotheses
- Used **critical thinking** skills to evaluate appropriateness of research conclusions based on data
- Demonstrated **technical writing** ability by presenting research project in a concise yet detailed poster format

#### ACTIVITIES

**Undergraduate Psychology Organization**, University of Nebraska–Lincoln, Lincoln, NE

*Vice-President*, January 20XX – Present

- Recruit potential new members through social media announcements, classroom visits, and flyers increasing overall membership by 5%

*Member*, January 20XX–Present

- Build relationships** with peers and faculty while learning more about the psychology field

**University Program Council (UPC)**, University of Nebraska–Lincoln, Lincoln, NE

*Member*, January 20XX – December 20XX

- Researched and **conducted outreach** to entertainment speakers and groups **following up** as needed
- Coordinated and promoted entertaining educational speakers to the campus community in a 5-person **team**

#### VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

**Alternative Service Break**, Pine Ridge, SD

*Participant*, March 20XX

- Tutored elementary school students on the Pine Ridge Reservation and encouraged participation in extracurricular activities

#### SELECTED HONORS

**Psi Chi** (academic honorary in psychology), October 20XX–Present

**James Canfield Scholarship** (based on academic achievement), August 20XX–May 20XX

#### ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE

**Subway**, *Sandwich Artist*, Lincoln, NE, June 20XX–August 20XX

TIP: Incorporate words or phrases directly from the job description that pertain to your skills and experience (shown in red for demonstration purposes only—do not use red in your résumé or cover letter).

TIP: Emphasize significant experience, paid or unpaid, by creating a “Relevant Experience” section.

TIP: Related coursework can highlight achievement, knowledge, or skills in areas of interest to the employer.

TIP: If you have held more than one position at an organization, show the progression and save space by listing the organization first.

TIP: See the red words as they relate to the sample job description on p. 28.

TIP: Additional, non-related experience may be listed simply to show work longevity and ability to manage time, handle money, work with the public, etc.

## REFERENCE PAGE

Employers are likely to ask for a list of individuals who are willing to provide information about your qualifications, work habits, character, and skills.

### Reference Page Submission

You do not need to send a list of references automatically with every job application. Rather, you may be asked sometime during the hiring process (application submission, before the interview, after the interview, etc.) to provide the names and contact information for these individuals.

### Selecting References

Generally, you will be asked to provide 3-5 references. If a job description asks for a specific number of references, submit exactly that number. Supervisors, professors, student/volunteer organization advisors, academic advisors, and other professional contacts able to positively attest to your skills, abilities, and work ethic are good choices.

Always ask potential references for permission prior to listing them if they would be willing to serve as a “positive” reference for you to eliminate those unwilling or unable to give positive feedback. Keep your references up-to-date on your job search, and be sure they have the most current version of your résumé so that they may better prepare for an inquiry.

*Note:* After you have concluded your job search, always send a thank-you note to your references to show your appreciation of their time and thoughtful comments about your skills and experiences.

### Reference Page Format

Your references should be listed on a sheet separate from your résumé but reflect a similar look with the same header, format, and appearance on both documents. Under the heading “References,” list each contact’s name, title, organization, work address, work phone number, email address, and relationship to you.

#### RILEY GREENE

1234 Kennedy Drive | Lincoln, NE 68512 | 402-555-5555 | riley.greene16@gmail.com  
www.linkedin.com/in/rileygreene

#### REFERENCES

Dr. Barbara Huxley  
Professor of Psychology  
University of Nebraska–Lincoln  
123 Burnett Hall  
P.O. Box 880055  
Lincoln, NE 68588-0055  
402-472-9874  
bhuxley2@unl.edu  
*Former Professor*

Ms. Susan Peters  
Store Manager  
Target  
8509 State Line Road  
Kansas City, MO 64114  
816-562-5987  
susan.peters@target.com  
*Former Supervisor*

Mr. Ken Smith  
Director of Phonathon Campaigns  
University of Nebraska Foundation  
1010 Lincoln Mall Suite 300  
Lincoln, NE 68508  
402-458-7272  
kensmith@nufoundation.com  
*Current Supervisor*

TIP: Use the same contact information heading and format as your résumé.

TIP: Choose professional references who can speak to your work ethic, skills, and character. Do not include family or friends.

## COVER LETTER

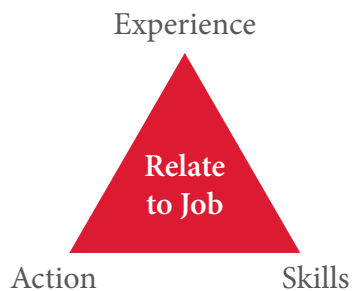
A cover letter (also called a letter of application) is used to apply for a specific part-time job, internship, or full-time position. It will be sent with your résumé and provides an overview to your background and qualifications. A good cover letter connects the information on your résumé to the job description. Some employers will read the cover letter first to determine if it is compelling enough to also read the résumé.

### Tailor Each Letter to the Position

A strong cover letter takes time, planning, and effort. Write a new letter for each position rather than creating a general “template” to adjust each time. To do so:

- Research the industry/field/employer.
- Study the job description and highlight important keywords.
- Target your content to a specific position and organization.
- Review your résumé to see which parts you would like to highlight but not repeat in the letter.
- Describe your strengths relating to the employer’s needs.
- Express confidence and a professional tone.

### Build Your Cover Letter Content



The most common mistake people make when writing a cover letter is paraphrasing their résumé. Take time to think about the specifics of why you are qualified for this position and what contributions you will make if hired.

To know specifically what to write about, brainstorm by using the chart below to jot down experiences you have had that closely relate to the position, the action(s) you took in the situation, the skills developed or utilized, and how this will help you succeed in the position for which you are applying.

JOB QUALIFICATIONS	EXPERIENCE	ACTION	SKILLS	RELATIONSHIP TO THE JOB
<i>Example:</i> Excellent verbal and interpersonal communication skills	<i>Example:</i> Executive Store Intern at Target	<i>Example:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoted products</li> <li>• Built relationships</li> <li>• Resolved customer complaints</li> </ul>	<i>Example:</i> Communication, Sales, and Problem Solving Skills	<i>Example:</i> Will help me to build relationships with and relate to clients at YYY Company

## Cover Letter Tips

### Focus

Explain the skills and experiences that qualify you for the position rather than simply repeating each experience or listing generic "soft" skills. Avoid repeating the information already on your résumé in your cover letter.

### Keyword Approach

Study the job description carefully to identify important words/phrases from both the responsibilities and qualifications of the job. Incorporate these words and phrases in your cover letter.

### Proof/Edit

Every cover letter should be proofread several times, not only by you, but also by at least two other readers. The employer will expect perfection in grammar, spelling, and content development.

### Send

The cover letter may be the text of your email to which you attach a résumé or it may be attached separately. If attached, write a brief message in the email referencing the position for which you are applying. This message must be proofread as thoroughly as the cover letter.

### Letter of Inquiry

A letter of inquiry is sent to an employer when a specific position is not posted. It allows you to inquire about a possible job/internship and shows your interest in the organization. Include details about your education, experience, and other qualifications that would suggest to the employer that you would make a good potential employee. Develop the content in a similar structure to that of the cover letter.

## Cover Letter Description

Your Address  
Your City, State ZIP  
Date

Mr./Ms. First and Last Name of Organization Contact  
Contact's Title  
Organization Name  
Address  
City, State ZIP

Dear Mr./Ms. Last Name:

In the first paragraph, establish the purpose of the letter and indicate the position for which you are applying. Follow this with a specific statement about your qualifications. Make sure your first sentence immediately engages the reader and makes them want to read the entire cover letter.

The next paragraph(s) should emphasize the skills and experience that qualify you for the position. Relate your background to the individual job description. Include any special training or experience that might set you apart from your competition. Use factual terms rather than feeling terms. Focus on the benefits that your qualifications offer to the organization.

In the final paragraph, restate your interest in the position and refer to your included résumé. State your next action, how to contact you, and thank the reader for considering your application.

Sincerely,

*Your Signature*

Your Name

Attachment

- Use standard business letter format with left-justified, block formatting.

- Include your contact information, date, and the organization's contact information.

- Address each letter to a specific person. If you are not sure of the gender of the addressee, use the full name (e.g. Pat Smith) rather than Mr. Smith or Ms. Smith. Do not address the person by his/her first name only. If you cannot obtain the name, address the letter to the position of the recruiter (e.g. Dear Human Resources Director). End your salutation line with a colon.

- Conclude with "Sincerely," or "Respectfully," followed by your signature and full name.

- If you are attaching your résumé to an email or uploading it to a website, the last line should say "Attachment." If you are mailing your cover letter and résumé, use "Enclosure" because you will be enclosing your résumé with your cover letter PDF.



## Sample Job Description

### Technical Sales Representative

YYY Company, named a “Best Place to Work” five years in a row, is seeking **ambitious** candidates for our technical sales representative position. At YYY Company, we embrace **working as a team** to meet our **clients’ needs** and driving industry leading results. Our goal is to make a **positive impact** for our clients and on the world.

This entry level sales role will **build relationships** with internal and external **clients** managing the entire sales process including regular **outreach and follow-up**, maintain a **deep understanding** of the product, and **ability to identify the unique needs** of the client to provide appropriate products. When our clients win, we win.

#### Preferred Qualifications:

- **Bachelor degree** in related field.
- **Written and verbal communication** skills to appropriately **explain complex concepts** to peers/clients.
- Ability to **work independently** and as part of a **team**.
- Strong **problem-solving** and **critical thinking** skills.
- A **self-motivated** individual who is able to get results.
- Knowledge of **Microsoft Office** programs.

## Sample Cover Letter

### RILEY GREENE

1234 Kennedy Drive | Lincoln, NE 68512 | 402-555-5555 | riley.greene16@gmail.com  
www.linkedin.com/in/rileygreene

October 7, 20XX

Ms. Kathy Beck  
Human Resources Director  
YYY Company  
4444 Old Cheney Road  
Lincoln, NE 68516

Dear Ms. Beck:

My psychology major combined with my **sales** experience and interest in **technology** has prepared me for the Technical Sales Representative position at YYY Company. I found this opportunity on Handshake YYY’s strong reputation in the industry, earning a **Best Places to Work** award based on your staff development and customer service focus, fits my work style. I am eager to apply the skills I developed from my relevant academic and work experiences to the role to make a **positive impact** on your organization.

I gained strong **sales** and customer service experience this past summer when I worked as an Executive Store Intern at Target and in my current role as a Phonathon Caller with the University of Nebraska Foundation. From these experiences I gained a good understanding of how to **build relationships** with a diverse **clientele**. Therefore, I will be comfortable creating an individualized sales approach when working with YYY’s various **clients** to provide **technical** options that meet their **unique needs**. In addition, both positions required me to **work independently** and in a **team** daily, so I can apply the necessary organizational, **communication**, and prioritization skills needed to achieve the best possible **results** for YYY Company and your **clients**.

**Problem-solving** and **critical thinking** are skills I gained and used in every psychology class. Specifically, in my Research Methods and Data Analysis course, I regularly reviewed research reports to evaluate the validity of their methods and conclusions based on data and **explained complex concepts** in both **verbal and written** form to **peers** and the professor. In addition, I learned SPSS and taught myself **Microsoft Excel** in order to conduct detailed analysis of **complex** issues, which also sparked my interest in **technology**. Therefore, I am eager to learn more about YYY’s **products** and am confident in my ability to **communicate** them in a simple and effective way to your **clients** in the Technical Sales Representative position. I understand what might be motivating people’s thoughts and actions which will allow me to find a **sales** approach that will resonate with the individual. In short, I want to help your **clients win**.

Thank you for your time and consideration of my qualifications for the Technical Sales Representative position at YYY Company. As you can see from my attached résumé, the **communication, problem solving, and critical thinking skills** I gained from my **sales** and academic experience will help me succeed in this role. I will contact you in two weeks regarding my application and the possibility of meeting to further discuss the position. My contact information can be found in the letterhead above. I am excited for this opportunity.

Sincerely,

*Riley Greene*

Riley Greene

Attachment

TIP: Instead of your contact information in standard business format, you could use your **résumé** contact information heading.

TIP: Incorporate words and phrases directly from the job description that pertain to your skills and experience (shown in red for demonstration purposes only—do not use red in your **résumé** or cover letter).

## Tailored Cover Letter Email Sample

In some cases, you may be asked to apply via email. In this case, use a condensed version of your cover letter as the body of the email.

The screenshot shows an email client window titled "Technical Sales Representative position application - Riley Greene". The email is from "Uni (Kayla Ott)" to "kbeck@yyycompany.com". The subject is "Technical Sales Representative position application - Riley Greene". An attachment is listed as "RileyGreeneResume.pdf (15.5 KB)".

**Dear Ms. Beck:**

As a psychology major with sales experience and an interest in technology, I was pleased to see the Technical Sales Representative position at YYY Company posted on Handshake. I am eager to apply the skills I developed from my relevant sales experience to the role to make a positive impact on your client-focused organization.

I gained strong sales experience as an Executive Store Intern at Target and a Phonathon Caller with the University of Nebraska Foundation. From these experiences I developed a good understanding of how to interact and communicate with a diverse clientele and will be comfortable creating an individualized sales approach when working with YYY's various clients. These customer-facing roles allowed me to demonstrate my problem solving and critical thinking skills to resolve concerns and explain my decisions effectively to customers to achieve mutual satisfaction. In addition, both positions required me to work independently and in a team daily, so I can apply the necessary organizational, communication, and prioritization skills needed to achieve the best possible results for YYY Company and your clients.

Thank you for your time and consideration of my qualifications for the Technical Sales Representative position at YYY Company. My attached résumé will further detail the communication, problem solving, and critical thinking skills I can bring to this role. I will contact you in two weeks regarding my application and the possibility of meeting to further discuss the position.

Sincerely,

Riley Greene  
402-555-5555  
[riley.greene16@gmail.com](mailto:riley.greene16@gmail.com)

**TIP:** Attach your résumé saved as a PDF and titled with your name (e.g. RileyGreeneResume.pdf).

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**Jessica M. Mechanical, Senior Analyst**



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## SECTION 5

# TAKE IT ONLINE

### Transitioning Your Résumé to LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a great marketing tool to strengthen your professional brand. It is important to create a LinkedIn profile that is positioned to where you want to go, i.e. industry, career fields, and jobs.

LinkedIn is an online professional networking platform that can be one of the best resources for finding professionals who can provide insight into organizations, industries, and opportunities. Recruiters are spending more time searching for qualified candidates through LinkedIn and some job advertisements allow you to apply directly through LinkedIn. Therefore, a LinkedIn profile is becoming as important in the job search process as a résumé. The good news? You can complete much of your LinkedIn profile using the same content as your résumé. This section will focus on the basics of creating a LinkedIn profile. For more information about using LinkedIn as a networking tool, go to p. 12 or review resources at [university.linkedin.com](http://university.linkedin.com).

### LinkedIn Is a Player



Gains 2 new members every second



Over 546 million users




95% of recruiters use it



122,000+ UNL Alumni On LinkedIn



## LinkedIn Sample Profile



**Riley Greene**  
 Psychology Major | Relationship Builder | Interested in Technical Sales  
 Lincoln, Nebraska Area

[Add profile section](#) [More...](#)

University of Nebraska Foundation  
 University of Nebraska-Lincoln  
[See contact info](#)  
[See connections \(3\)](#)

I enjoy understanding how people think and make decisions. Armed with a psychology degree, combined with my interests in technology, research, and data, I am eager to dive into the world of technical sales while building meaningful relationships.

My past experiences include interning with Target and serving in leadership positions in student organizations where I have gained strong communication, team-building, and problem solving skills which I look forward to bringing to my next position.


I'm eager to build my network on LinkedIn while learning about opportunities in sales.

### Experience

**Phonathon Caller**  
 University of Nebraska Foundation  
 Sep 2017 – Present • 10 mos  
 Lincoln, Nebraska Area

- Persuaded alumni and friends of the University to make financial contributions, totaling more than \$200,000 in pledges within first three months

**Media (1)**



University of Nebraska Foundation

**Executive Store Intern**  
 Target  
 May 2017 – Aug 2017 • 4 mos  
 Kansas City, Missouri Area

- Interacted with 50+ customers daily using effective customer service, organization, and multi-tasking abilities to ensure a positive experience and resolve any problems
- Cross-trained in all departments, including electronics, to appropriately support customers' individual needs

☐ **Headline:** Write a headline with key facts and attributes about yourself that can capture the attention of your intended audience.

☐ **Photo:** Select a photo that clearly shows your face only and does not have a distracting background.


☐ **Contact Information:** Create a custom LinkedIn URL for your profile via the "Edit public profile & URL" link to be used on your résumé and your email signature.

☐ **Summary:** Develop a summary that briefly shares your story. Write it toward your desired audience and industry.

☐ **Experience:** Copy the same bullets listed on your résumé for branding and consistency. You can include additional bullets if space was limited on the résumé.

Continued »»

Sandwich Artist



Subway


Jun 2012 – Aug 2015 • 3 yrs 3 mos

Lincoln, Nebraska Area

- Completed financial transactions with attention to detail and efficiency

- Performed informal oral satisfaction survey at checkout to show care for customers' experience

Education



University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Bachelor of Arts, Psychology

2016 – 2020

Skills & Endorsements

Add a new skill

Communication

Customer Service

Public Speaking

Show more

Recommendations

Ask for a recommendation

Received (0)

Given (0)

You haven't received any recommendations

Accomplishments

2

Organizations

Undergraduate Psychology Organization • University Program Council (UPC)

1

Honor & Award


James Canfield Scholarship

1

Project

Research Methods and Data Analysis Research Project

Interests



The Official University of Nebras...

19,094 members

☐ **Education:** List your exact degree and major on your profile. For some majors, you may have to type your degree/ major rather than selecting from the automatically populated list.

☐ **Skills & Endorsements:** Add skills based on your industry or careers of interest. Remember, choosing the right skills that demonstrate your abilities help recruiters find you. Secondly, ask appropriate connections for an endorsement on a skill or an actual written recommendation.”

☐ **Accomplishments:** Add organizations, honors, projects, etc. to your profile to highlight other experiences and to tell your story.

Click the “Add profile section” to find these sections as well as others.

☐ **Interests:** Follow influencers, companies, groups, and schools. Be strategic in your approach to connect and learn from alumni or professionals in your industry of interest.

We recommend joining “The Official University of Nebraska–Lincoln Alumni Association” group where you can then search alumni vonnected to this group.

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## DRAFTING A LINKEDIN HEADLINE & SUMMARY

Writing a good headline and summary takes time. These items are typically not on a résumé, but important on a LinkedIn profile because they are some of the first pieces of information someone will see. Below are formulas and ideas to get you started, and make sure you take the time to reflect on your skills and experiences to describe your self accurately.

### Headline:

- Be clear in what you specialize in.
- Think about keywords that are used in an industry of interest or in job postings.
- Get inspiration from people and colleagues you admire.
- Use punctuation and spaces to break up information: • + / , . |
- Reflect where you are today and where you want to be tomorrow.

### Formula Recommendations:

Major at University | Skill | What You Are Seeking

Psychology Major | Relationship Builder and Team Leader | Seeking Sales or Technical Sales Internship

Position and Company | Skill • Skill

Operations Intern at Scoular Company | Experience in Managing Grain Facilities

Now Draft Your LinkedIn Headline

### Summary:

- Your summary is another version of your elevator pitch; think about your brand and promote yourself.
- The first 2 sentences are what someone reads, so make sure they stand out.
- There is no need to state that you are studying at Nebraska, this information is already displayed on your profile.
- Reflect on the following three questions below, to help your audience get to know you.

### A Simple Summary Formula:



Now Draft Your LinkedIn Summary

## LINKEDIN JOB SEARCH STRATEGIES

LinkedIn is useful for networking but it also gives you the ability to apply and search for jobs and internships. We still recommend utilizing Handshake, but there may be opportunities posted on one site, but not the other.

To start, click on the “Jobs” icon located at the top of the site. Whether you are looking for a particular job responsibility or a career in a specific city, use the “Search jobs” and “Search location” fields to begin.

- *Note: Use different combinations of keywords, job titles, organization names, and locations as this may yield a wider range of opportunities.*

The “All filters” button allows you to break down a large number of postings to focus on what is most relevant to you. Look to use these filters to save time and refine your search.


### Tips and Tricks

#### Easy Apply

Some LinkedIn postings may allow you to “Easy Apply” for a job, which creates a quicker application process. In this case, you will want to ensure an updated profile, as the reviewer will have access to it even if you are not connected. We still encourage you to include a tailored résumé when submitting to display your interest in the position and to include information your profile may have not been able to highlight as clearly.

- *Note: You cannot withdraw or modify your application once you have submitted it.*

Apply to Kidwell



Riley Greene

Upcoming college graduate interested in technical sales

Lincoln, Nebraska Area

[Review profile](#)

Email

riley.greene16@gmail.com

Phone

123-456-7890

Resume (optional)

DOC

Riley.Greene Resume\_Kidwell.docx

Uploaded on May 14, 2018

We include a copy of your full profile with your application

[Learn](#) what we do with your resume

☒ Follow Kidwell

Cancel

Submit application

### Search Alerts

Setting search alerts can notify you when relevant jobs are posted based on your criteria and can help you stay focused during the job search. On LinkedIn, select the “Create search alert” button to get started.

- *Note: You can have multiple search alerts using different filters to make it easy to find what you are looking for; for example, you can set an alert for specific locations, job types/functions, industries, etc.*

Create search alert

Jobs in Lincoln, Nebraska

Receive alert

Daily

Get notified via

☒ Email
 ☒ Mobile and desktop notification ⓘ

Cancel

Save

### Career Interests

It can be difficult to talk about searching for a new job if you are currently employed. “Career Interests” makes it easy to share with recruiters that you are actively seeking or just open to potential offers. From your profile page, in your dashboard, click “Career interests” to adjust your settings. Letting recruiters know you are open to new opportunities allows you to set and communicate what it is you might be looking for.

Your Dashboard

Private to you

All Star

2

Who viewed your profile

0

Post views

4

Search appearances

Career Advice

Participate in the career advice platform: Off

Get career advice by conversing with other LinkedIn users who are leaders in their fields

Career interests

Let recruiters know you're open: On

Choose the types of opportunities you'd like to be connected with

Salary insights

See how your salary compares to others in the community

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## LINKEDIN ENGAGEMENT TIPS & RESOURCES

Ultimately, LinkedIn can be a very effective tool for your professional and career development when you fully engaged with it. The best strategy is to use it continuously to support your networking, personal branding, ability to stay up-to-date on trends, and job search. Consider the following advice to make this easy on yourself:

### LinkedIn in 15 Minutes a Week<sup>1</sup>



**6 Minutes:** Engage with other humans. Like posts. Write comments. Endorse skills.

Hint: Make a list of 20 or so people to stay in touch with on a recurring basis

**5 Minutes:** Spot-check. Make quick edits and updates to your profile. Make a list of major updates and save them for later.

**2 Minutes:** Share an article you've read with a thought about why your audience will find it valuable.

**2 Minutes:** Clean up your list of connections. Consider older connections that you may have little or no interaction with.

### Connecting With Alumni and Utilizing the Career Insight Tool



Reaching out and connecting with alumni is another great engagement strategy on LinkedIn.

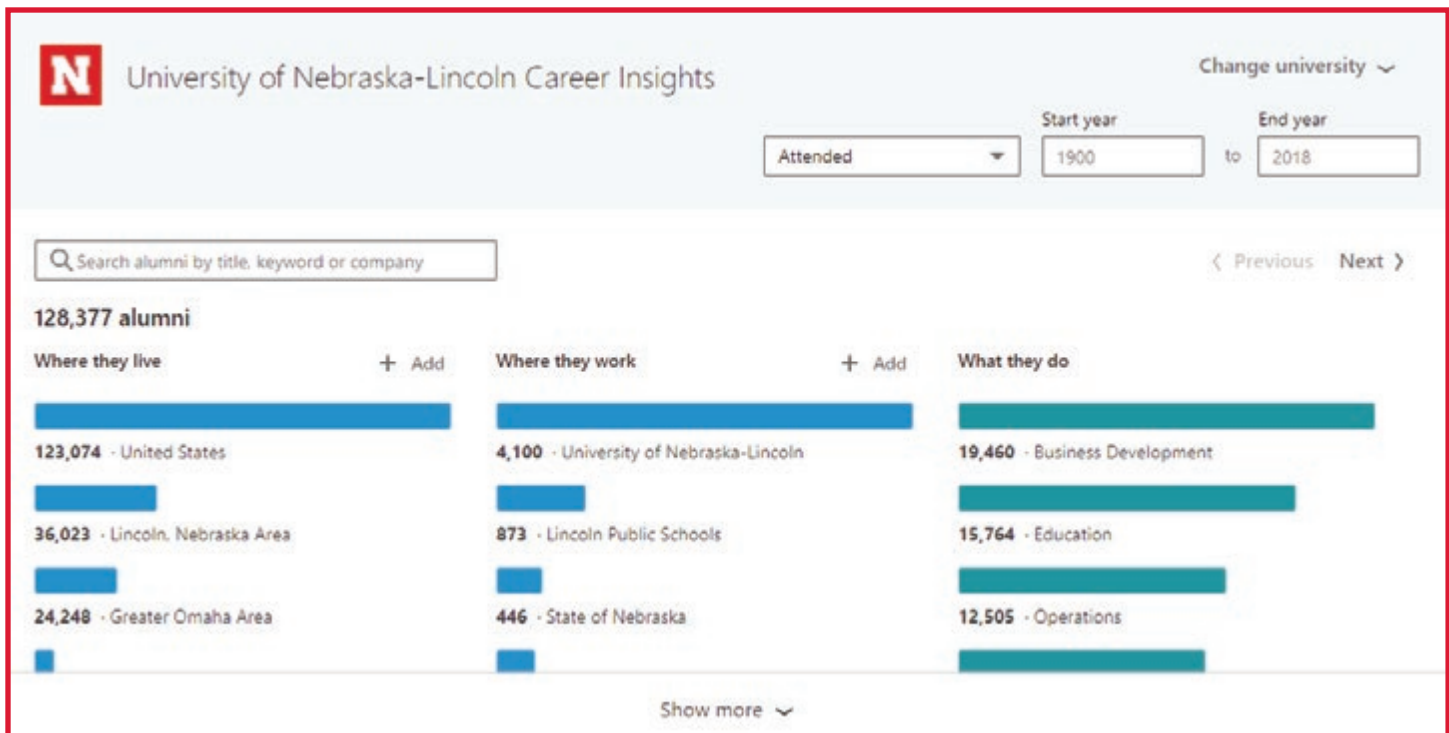
They may be able to provide insight, suggestions, or information about how they came into their career.

To find alumni, search for the University of Nebraska–Lincoln. Then, click the university's page and select "See alumni".

This will take you to "Career Insights", where you can filter alums based on where they live, work, and what they do.

Research alums' profiles to learn more about career paths and find individuals for informational interviews.

See the networking section for further information on how to construct these messages.



<sup>1</sup> The Muse, "Here's How to Make Yourself Look Active on LinkedIn in Just 15 Minutes a Week", July 4, 2016

# Handshake

Handshake is a student centered job search system provided to you by Career Services. Search for part-time and full-time jobs and internships and make your profile available to employers. The more information you add to your profile, the easier it will be for employers to find you. As you follow jobs and employers, Handshake generates recommendations and content for you. To start:

## First Steps:

- Login to Handshake at [my.unl.edu](https://my.unl.edu)
- Upload your résumé to autofill your profile
- Double check your profile and make sure all of the information from your résumé transferred, and add more as necessary
- Fill out the Career Interests section to begin tailoring your jobs feed
- Customize your Notification settings to make sure you are getting the right information to your email

## Next Steps:

- Make sure to access Settings & Privacy to make your profile public to employers and other students
- Try to get your Profile Level to 100% by adding information on organizations, courses, documents, and projects
- Upload additional documentation such as cover letters and transcripts; you can make the private or public if according to your personal preferences

## Other Information:

- Your tailored job feed will appear under the For You tab, but you can look for any job, employer, or interview under the Jobs tab, even if it does not fit your current preferences
- Sign up for Mock Interviews, Husker Suit Up, and all University of Nebraska-Lincoln Career Fairs under the events tab! RSVP-ing allows you to preview employers and get prepared ahead of time
- Utilize the Career Center tab to report and track any Experiential Learning you participate in and to access resources for Study Abroad, Internships, Career Assessments, and more!

## Finally:

- Make sure to download the Handshake App for iOS for easy access!
- Still having trouble? There are lots of Handshake resources online at <https://support.joinhandshake.com>, or stop by Career Services for one-on-one help!

## SECTION 6

# PREP FOR YOUR INTERVIEW

## THE INTERVIEW

An interview is a chance for the employer and the candidate to get to know each other. It is a two-way process. The employer is trying to gauge the candidate's interest level, motivations, personality, and qualifications. The candidate should be using the interview to identify whether this employer fits their individual needs, interests, and work environment preferences.

### 1 Identify and Articulate What Makes You Stand Out

- In an interview, generic responses do not help candidates stand out from the crowd.
- The employer wants to get to know you as an individual.
- Identify and develop examples of important skills and experiences.
- Be prepared to articulate what is important to you and why.

### 2 Research Organizations

Once you know your skills and what is important to you, identify which are most important to the organization where you are interviewing.

- Every organization has its own culture, organizational structure, communication methods, and collaboration styles.
- In addition to understanding the specifics of the opportunity you are interviewing for, prepare by understanding the organization itself.

See how impactful research can be in the interview process below:

*Interviewer: "Why are you interested in our organization?"*

*Interviewee A: "I'm particularly interested in you because the position you have available aligns with my major and career interests."*

*Interviewee B: "I love the team-oriented environment of your company. This industry is fast-paced and your team consistently pulls together to create the highest quality product for your clients. I thrive in both fast-paced and team settings. As you can see from my résumé, community service is something I care deeply about and I loved seeing that you allow a personal day each year for your employees to engage with a community service project of their choice. I want to work for an organization, like yours, that makes giving back to the community a high priority."*

Interviewee A shows that they know nothing of the organization other than they had a job opening. Interviewee B takes organization research and connects it with their own individual skills and values.

#### How can you find this information?

Search organization websites, Chamber of Commerce, trade magazines, and websites such as Glassdoor.com for insights. Making a personal contact who can provide you insights into the organization and position prior to the interview can be your most valuable research tool of all.

**Things to research include:**

- Organization mission
- Primary service or product of an employer
- Industry trends and current events
- Typical customers and clients
- Location(s)
- Competitors

**Remember, you are interviewing the organization as well, so research items that are important to you.** See the example below to learn how to personalize your research:

*Interviewer: "What do you know about our organization?"*

*Interviewee A: "I know you were founded in 1965, had over 4.5 million in profits last year, and were recently named a 'Best Place to Work.' All of these are quite impressive facts."*

*Interviewee B: "I have seen family members and friends lose their jobs as companies have gone out of business. Therefore, the fact that you have been in business since 1965 and had over 4.5 million in profits last year proves that you are a stable organization who is doing things right. I am looking for an organization that I feel confident about growing with who will be here for the long haul. In addition, I want to enjoy where I work and was quite impressed with your recent "Best Place to Work" award. In fact, I have a question about that. Can you share with me one or two examples of something your organization has done recently to create that 'Best Place to Work' culture?"*

Interviewee A did research, but just recited facts from a website. Interviewee B took those facts and applied it to their own goals and values and asked questions to help further understand the organization. The more you can show you "fit" the organization, the more confident they will be about your potential for success.

### 3 Practice, Practice, Practice

Interviewing is not natural for most people, so practice your interview skills ahead of time.

**Ways to Practice:**

**Mock interviewing** with a career advisor (or an employer if available) to gain experience answering typical interview questions. You can receive feedback on both your verbal and your non-verbal skills to improve your interview performance.



**Big Interview** is an online tool available through University of Nebraska–Lincoln Career Services that allows you to simulate job interviews, respond to pre-recorded questions, and practice your verbal and non-verbal communication skills via webcam. Log in to Handshake on the Career Services website to access the system. Current students use organization code 4024. Alumni use code 7211.

## Interview Formats

Many interviews are conducted in-person between the candidate and one interviewer. Prepare your research and examples of your experiences the same as for an in-person interview, for these formats. Other formats are described below.

**Testing**

You may be required to complete an online or phone assessment before you reach the interview process. This can be a formal assessment that tests your math or English skills or it could be a personality assessment to gauge your work style and gain other insights into who you are.

**On-Campus Interview**

An on-campus interview gives students a chance to connect with employers without leaving campus. Interviews are typically held in Career Services at the Nebraska Union (City Campus), the Business Career Center, and the Nebraska East Union (East Campus).

## Interview Formats Continued



### Phone

A telephone interview is one of the most common first interview formats for organizations that have multiple steps in the hiring process. This cost-effective way allows them to narrow down who they would like to continue in the interview process.

- Ensure your room will be quiet and free of disruptions.
- Use a landline if possible to avoid poor connections.
- Have your résumé, questions, and organization research handy, but avoid rustling papers.
- Sit up straight or stand up to make your voice stronger.
- Have your calendar/schedule available if you are asked to schedule another interview.
- Smile as you interview, which is reflected in your voice, showing energy and enthusiasm.
- Dress professionally as if it were an in-person interview. Studies show language is influenced by how we are dressed.



### Video

Video is another option that allows for an interview despite a distance between parties.

- Utilize an appropriate username.
- Become familiar with the technology and allow plenty of time to set up and test it.
- Dress professionally as if it were an in-person interview.
- Review the background that can be seen and avoid any inappropriate or distracting items.
- Check on the lighting of the room to make sure there are no dark shadows or excessive brightness.
- Look at the camera, not the screen, to maintain proper eye contact.



### Group/Panel

A group or panel interview can include multiple interviewers or multiple interviewees. This can help employers gauge your ability to interact with others and how quickly you can react to problems on the spot.

#### *Multiple Interviewers*

- Try to find out who will be on the panel ahead of time, if possible, to brainstorm questions each individual might ask.
- Start speaking to the individual who asked the question, but make eye contact with all panel members during each answer.
- Follow-up with a thank-you note to all panelists.

#### *Multiple Interview Candidates:*

- Introduce yourself to other interview candidates and engage with them in a positive manner.
- Listen to other candidates' answers and build on their responses, but don't repeat anything that has already been said.
- Stay confident. Employers are looking to see how you may react to uncomfortable situations on the job.
- Strike a balance between talking and letting others talk.



### On-Site Visit

The on-site visit is usually the final step in an interview process. This is often a full day of interviews and related activities at the employment site. It allows many in the organization to get to know the interview candidate and allows the interview candidate to learn more about the organization and its culture.

- Have questions prepared for people at different levels in the organization.
- Ensure you know how to get there and prepare for delays or heavy traffic on the day of the interview.
- Treat everyone, from the receptionist to CEO, with respect and courtesy.
- Maintain high energy throughout the day as you want to make the same positive impression with all you meet.
- Be prepared to answer the same question multiple times throughout the day. Pay attention as it provides insight into what everyone thinks is important for that position.
- Dress professionally as appropriate for each unique employer.



## INTERVIEW & PROFESSIONAL DRESS

Did you know that a hiring decision can take place within the first few minutes of your interview? This means that dressing appropriately and making a great first impression is very important.

### BUSINESS FORMAL



Business Formal is the standard dress code for a job or internship interview. Here are some attire tips and suggestions:

- Skirt suit (preferably a dark color), which includes knee-length skirt, tailored jacket, and solid (or subtle patterned) blouse/top.
- Pant suit (preferably a dark color), which includes tailored pants and a jacket.
- Two-piece, single-breasted suit (preferably a dark color and solid and/or conservative pinstripes).
- White dress shirt with a white undershirt underneath and a conservative tie.
- Solid (or subtle-patterned) blouse or top.
- Dark, polished shoes and matching socks.
- Closed-toed shoes with no more than 1-2 inch heels.
- Conservative and minimal jewelry.
- Small to medium size purse.
- Subtle make-up.
- Conservative, clean haircut and style.
- Trimmed facial hair.
- Avoid colognes, perfumes, and body sprays.
- Bring your portfolio, pen, and extra copies of your résumé.

#### TIP:

Your culture, religion, and gender identity might influence your choice of business attire. We encourage you to incorporate those elements into your business wardrobe.

### BUSINESS CASUAL



Business Casual is often the dress code in many offices. While this type of attire is too casual for the formal job interview, you may want to wear business casual to a dinner, on the airplane or it may also be the work attire for the organization's environment once you've landed the job or internship. Every work environment is different so be sure to observe and inquire about the dress code. Business casual may include:

- Jacket, blouse, cardigan, or conservative top with pants or a knee-length skirt.
- Simple, knee-length dress.
- Collared button up shirt with a white undershirt underneath or a collared knit polo shirt.
- Dark pants or khakis.
- Closed-toed shoes (no flip flops).
- Subtle make-up and avoid perfumes/body sprays.

Avoid the following attire:

- Jeans or casual sundresses, clothing with holes or rips, or athletic clothing or sneakers.
- Clothing too tight or revealing.
- Clothing with holes or rips, wrinkled or inappropriate images or athletic clothing or sneakers.

## INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

In order to best prepare you for your upcoming interviews, understand the types and styles of questions they may ask and what the employer is looking for when asking these types of questions as described below.

### Traditional Questions:

- Enables the interviewer and job candidate to establish rapport and get to know each other in a less pressurized conversation.

### Open-Ended Questions:

- Allows interviewees to respond how they wish, and to what length they wish.
- Are appropriate when the interviewer is interested in breadth and depth of reply.
- Should not be answered with personal information, keep it professional.

### Behavioral Questions:

- Requires you to provide specific examples of how you have developed the required skill set for the job.
- Start with “Tell me about a time,” “Give me an example,” “Describe a situation,” etc.
- May be best answered using the START (Situation/Task/Action/Result/Takeaway) Method (see below).

### START Method : the way to answer behavioral based interview questions.

<b>S</b> Situation <b>T</b> Task	Describe a specific event or situation, not a generalized sense of what you have done in the past. This situation can be from a previous job, volunteer experience, or any relevant setting.
<b>A</b> Action	Describe the action you took. Focus on you, even if you are discussing a group project or effort. Describe what you did, not the efforts of the team. Don't say what you would do, say what you did.
<b>R</b> Result <b>T</b> Takeaway	Explain what happened, what you accomplished, or what you learned or took away from the experience. Wherever you can, quantify your results.

### Case, Problem or Puzzle Questions:

- Evaluates how you might handle certain situations and how well you listen, think, use logic, and articulate your thoughts under pressure.
- Tests candidate's logical thinking skills, intelligence, and the ability to think on their feet.
- May have one of the following: a correct answer, no correct answer but a recommended approach, or with no correct answer that tests the imagination.
- May involve the employer asking you to perform a task.
- Are often used by management consulting, law, counseling, social work firms and organizations, as well as police departments.

## Common Interview Questions

While it is impossible to predict exactly what you will be asked, here are some common interview questions.

### Are You A Fit For Us?

- Tell me about yourself.
- Why did you choose your field of study/major?
- What are your long-term and short-term career goals? How are you preparing yourself to achieve them?
- What do you know about our organization?
- How would a professor or a former supervisor describe you?
- What are three words you would use to describe yourself?
- How do you determine or evaluate success?
- Can you tell us about a time when you had to work independently?
- Describe a time when you had a conflict with a classmate or a co-worker. How did you handle it?
- Please share a time when you went above and beyond what was expected.
- Tell us about a difficult decision you had to make this year.
- Tell us about a time when you had too many things to do and how you handled it.

### Are We A Fit For You?

- Why are you interested in this position?
- Where do you want to be in five/ten years?
- Are you willing to travel or relocate?
- What kind of salary are you looking for?
- Why do you want to work for us?
- What motivates you?
- How do you like to be managed?

### Can You Do the Job?

- Tell me about a time where you worked well on a team.
- What is a challenge or a conflict you've had to deal with lately? How did you address it?
- How will you add value and contribute to our organization?
- How do you manage stress in your daily work?
- What are your greatest strengths?
- What is a weakness or area for growth for you?
- Do you think your grades are a good indication of your academic achievement?
- Tell me about a time you failed.
- What are your key skills and how would they enrich this position?
- Give an example of when you set a goal and achieved it.

## "The 'Tell Me About Yourself' Magic Formula"



## PRESENT OR NEAR PAST + FUTURE

Include these elements in your answer:

- Brief introduction and some biographical info.
- Your major field of study and any concentrations/specializations.
- Experiences that have reinforced your strengths and interest in your field.
- Why you're interested in the position or organization.
- Your strengths as they relate to the position.
- A clear, positive summary statement.

### Example:

As a psychology major, I am fascinated by how people think and react in different situations. As a Phonathon Caller with the University of Nebraska Foundation, I asked probing questions to determine what causes the person might financially support. I quickly realized in sales you have to get to know the individual. During my internship at Target, I cross-trained in multiple departments. My favorite department was the electronics department and I found myself trying out the various technology options so I could better answer customers' questions.

I couldn't wait to open the boxes whenever a new item arrived to learn how it worked. My manager recognized me for going above and beyond to learn about our products to support our customers. These two experiences sparked my interest in technical sales as it combines my interest in people, how they make decisions, and technology. As I sought technical sales opportunities, YYY Company kept coming up as a leader based on your customer-focused approach. I am very excited to be interviewing today to learn more about your organization and to share my experiences and skills."

## Preparing Questions to Ask

### DO

Ask questions:

- With genuine interest which will help you make an informed decision.
- Demonstrating the depth of your research and preparation.
- Tailored to the interviewer (an HR representative may not be able to answer day-to-day functions).
- Throughout the interview, you don't have to wait until the end.
- Which clarifies the position or organization, and can spark more depth in discussion.
- That consider both a broad view of the organization and the specific details of the position.

*\*Prepare at least 5 good questions and have them prioritized. You can have these in your portfolio and review them so you don't forget.*

### AVOID

Don't ask questions:

- That can easily be answered on the organization's website or by reviewing the job description.
- About benefits (i.e. vacation) until you are offered a job.
- That may imply you see this as a short-term job/option.

## Potential Questions to Ask

REGARDING THE POSITION:	REGARDING THE ORGANIZATION:	QUESTIONS TO AVOID:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the primary challenges I will face in this position?</li> <li>• What kinds of assignments can I expect in the first six months?</li> <li>• Can you tell me about the primary people with whom I would be working?</li> <li>• Is this a newly created position? If not, how long did the previous person hold it?</li> <li>• Whom would I report to and how and when would my performance be evaluated?</li> <li>• What's the largest challenge facing your staff or department?</li> <li>• What improvements need to be made on how the job has been done?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are your organization's strengths and what major problems or challenges do you face?</li> <li>• What significant changes do you foresee in the near future for the organization?</li> <li>• Can you describe your organization's culture?</li> <li>• How does your organization recognize diversity, both in its workplace and with its customers?</li> <li>• Are training and development programs offered within your organization?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the salary for the position?</li> <li>• Can you describe the leave policy?</li> <li>• How quickly can I expect to be promoted?</li> <li>• Do you financially support staff in graduate studies (or other questions that may imply you see this as a short-term job/option)?</li> </ul>

## Following Up

After the interview

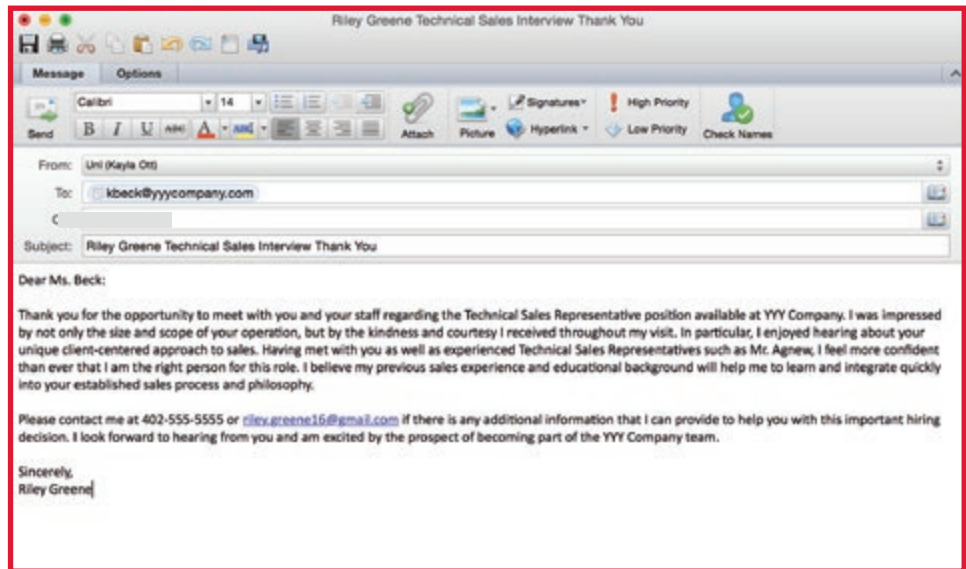
1. Send a thank you to each of your interviewers.
2. Call or email your primary contact if you have not heard from the employer within the time period indicated for a decision.

## Additional Written Professional Communication

### Interview Thank You Letters

Sending a timely and well-written thank you note to each of your interviewers is courteous and smart. Your note demonstrates that you are respectful and appreciative, while reminding the employer of your interest and qualifications. Saying thank you can go a long way. Always thank someone for their time. Follow the guidelines below to ensure your Thank You has a positive impact. A few tips:

- Send a thank you to each person who interviewed you within 24 hours of your interview.
- Send a thank you via the communication preference of the employer. How have you already been communicating? By email or phone? If by email, feel free to email a thank ou. Otherwise, send a handwritten thank you note. Do you need a quick turnaround or really want to impress the organization? Send both an email and a handwritten note.
- Individualize each thank you letter by referencing something specific from the interview.
- Be brief with the body of the text, writing less than half a page.
- Proofread thank you letters as carefully as application materials.



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## SECTION 7

# EVALUATE THE OFFER

When you receive an offer (or several) take some time to evaluate before you accept or decline.

### Receiving an Offer

- Employers may provide a formal offer letter and clarification of terms, potentially including but not limited to: start date, salary, title of position, supervisor's name, deadline for responding, etc. If not provided you may choose to request one.
- The employer may also make you aware if the offer is contingent upon passing a background check, credit check, and/or drug screening.
- Organizations may also include benefit information. If you do not receive this, you can ask for it before making your decision.



#### Background Checks

Many employers will conduct a background check to determine if you are a responsible person and good candidate for the position.



#### Criminal History

Always err on the side of honesty. It is better to put something on a violation report than to leave it off. In this regard, University Student Legal Services ([asun.unl.edu](http://asun.unl.edu)) offers the following advice:

- A ticket equals an arrest even if the student does pretrial diversion.
- A ticket (arrest) will appear on a record forever.



#### Credit Checks

For positions involving financial duties, the credit report may be used to measure your financial competence and potential risk. The Student Money Management Center ([unl.edu/smmc](http://unl.edu/smmc)) can help you establish a responsible approach to financial matters now, which will help you avoid issues in the employment process later.

### Evaluating an Offer

Offers will include one or more of the following to consider:

- |  |                                 |                             |
|--|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| • Compensation                         | • Signing bonuses               | • Flextime                  |
| • Health, vision, and dental insurance | • Relocation reimbursement      | • Daycare                   |
| • Retirement                           | • Personal days and sick days   | • Maternity/paternity leave |
| • Vacations and holidays               | • Performance and salary review | • Gym membership            |
| • Bonus and profit sharing             | • Travel reimbursement          | • Dress code                |

There will be trade-offs in every offer. Identify what is important to you and what parts of an offer are priorities.



## How to Ask for More Time

You can ask for more time to decide but understand this is part of your negotiation process and you will need to explain why and how much time is needed. Every organization is different, so they may not give you more time. In this case, respond graciously and tell them you will have an answer to them by the original deadline.

### Examples:

- “I am excited about the opportunity with YYY Company. This is a major decision and I would like more time to consider the offer. Is it possible to extend the deadline?”
- “I have a previously scheduled interview and it is important to me to honor my commitment, therefore I need more time to make a decision.”

## How to Balance Multiple Opportunities

It is possible to receive an offer from one organization before your preferred organization extends an offer. **Do not accept an offer and then withdraw your acceptance or accept multiple offers.** Let your preferred organization know you received an offer and your interest lies with their organization. If this employer is interested in you, they will speed up the process if at all possible. If your preferred organization is unable to change the timeline or if the organization that extended an offer is unable to change the offer deadline, you will need to make a thoughtful decision on what to do. Career Services’ Advisors and Coaches can help you think through your decision.

# OFFER NEGOTIATION

Conduct salary research to decide if your offer was fair. Understand many entry-level positions do not have a lot of room for negotiation. Many public organizations have pre-determined salary for all levels of employment. Private companies determine the salary depending on many factors including skills, experience, and education. Consider the following in your research:

- Location – what is the cost of living?
- Level – what level you will be in the organization?
- Industry – what is the salary range for the industry?

Glassdoor.com and Salary.com (along with many others) provide salary information. Although these sites are great resources, many times salaries are inflated so take this into consideration. Look at the average salary for University of Nebraska–Lincoln grads with your major via [careers.unl.edu](http://careers.unl.edu). Consult mentors/professionals in the field if possible.

### How to Negotiate

Approach the employer early in your decision-making process. Reinforce your interest and present an appropriate salary range based on your research. Provide reasons for your request including your research, experience, special skills, or current competing job offers. Remember salary is not the only thing you can negotiate.

### Other Elements You Could Negotiate

- |  |                            |
|--|----------------------------|
| • Start date                                 | • Professional development |
| • Performance bonus                          | • Relocation expenses      |
| • Early performance review and salary review | • Flex time                |
| • Vacation                                   | • Signing bonus            |

### Accepting and Declining Offers

Once you have an internship or job offer from an organization, you have a big decision to make. Should you accept or decline the offer? Do you want to negotiate? Career Services’ Advisors and Coaches can help you think through your decision.

Follow the guidelines below upon receiving an offer:

- Thank the employer for the offer and their confidence in your qualifications.
- Ask the employer by what date they need a final answer.
- Consider the whole compensation package (health and retirement benefits) provided, not salary alone.
- Propose a counter offer politely only if your qualifications and the industry, position, and location suggest a higher compensation package is appropriate (see “Offer Negotiation” above).
- Request a final offer in writing.
- Send a courteous letter of acceptance or decline after informing the employer of your decision over the phone (see page 50 for examples).

### ACCEPTING AN OFFER

Dear Ms. Beck:

It is with great pleasure that I accept your offer to work for YYY Company as a Technical Sales Representative. As I mentioned in my interview, I feel this position will be an excellent match of my skills and interests with your needs.

As discussed, I will plan to begin my employment on May 20, 20XX at an annual salary of \$38,000. In the meantime, if there is any paperwork that requires completion, please contact me at 402-555-5555 or riley.greene16@gmail.com.

I look forward to working at YYY Company and appreciate the opportunity.

Sincerely,  
Riley Greene

### DECLINING AN OFFER

Dear Ms. Beck:

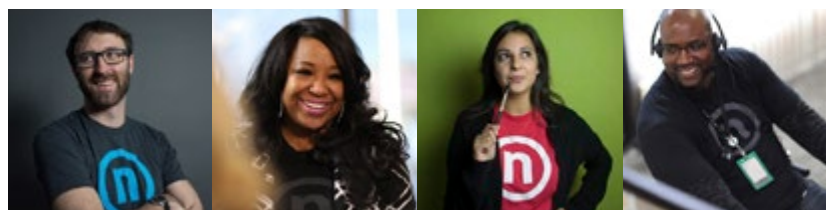
As I mentioned during our recent phone conversation, I regret to inform you that I am declining your offer of employment with YYY Company as a Technical Sales Representative. I have accepted another position that, at this time, is a better fit with my skills and interests.

Thank you for your offer and your confidence in my abilities. Please extend my appreciation to your entire team for the exceptional courtesy and helpfulness they demonstrated while I visited YYY Company. It made the interview process a pleasant experience.

Sincerely,  
Riley Greene

### A Final Note

- Job searching can be challenging and you may get discouraged.
- Remember that everyone has been through this at one point.
- If you don't hear from employers regarding your application status, make sure to follow up.
- Rejection is part of the process. Don't take it personally and move on to the next opportunity.
- Keep a positive attitude, and see your job hunt as an exciting challenge.



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