



SMSU STUDENT CAREER GUIDE



SMSUCAREERSERVICES

WHAT'S INSIDE

WELCOME!

Career Services knows that SMSU students and alumni are ready to meet the complex challenges of this century as engaged citizens in their local and global communities. This guide highlights the many services available to you during your time as a student at SMSU, as well as an alumnus. We look forward to helping you meet your academic, career and employment goals. We're happy you're a part of the Mustang Family and wish you great success in your life and career!

SERVICES AVAILABLE:

Appointment Types:

- Career Exploration and Development
- Career Assessments
- Job and Internship Search Assistance
- Resume and Cover Letter Development
- LinkedIn Assistance
- Graduate School Preparation
- Practice Interviewing (including phone and virtual interviews)

Events:

- Job, Career, and Internship Fairs
 - Part-Time Job Fair (August), Agriculture Career Fair (Fall Semester), Mustangs Meetup (Spring Semester)*
- Employer Hosted On-Campus Interviews and Information Sessions
- Seminars, Workshops and Presentations
 - Pre-Professional Series (Academic Year)*

Resources:

- Online Job Listings- Handshake
- Job Search and Career Exploration Videos

**Visit Handshake or our website for exact dates/times and to view regional career fairs*

SMSU STUDENT CAREER GUIDE AND PLANNING WORKBOOK

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CAREER READINESS COMPETENCIES

“Career readiness is the attainment and demonstration of requisite competencies that broadly prepare college graduates for a successful transition into the workplace.”

– from the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE)

In 2014, NACE launched a national survey of employers that utilize university recruiting efforts for hiring new employees. This survey, led to the creation of NACE’s Career Readiness Competencies outlined below.

SMSU Career Services knows that your work in the classroom and in co-curricular endeavors already creates opportunities for you to achieve these competencies. Our office supports those current activities, identifies ways to partner in those endeavors, assists you in sharing these competencies with potential employers/graduate/professional schools and encourages you to seek assistance in your lifelong career management process.

CAREER READINESS COMPETENCIES*

1. **Critical Thinking/Problem Solving:** Exercise sound reasoning to analyze issues, make decisions, and overcome problems. The individual is able to obtain, interpret, and use knowledge, facts, and data in this process, and may demonstrate originality and inventiveness.
2. **Oral/Written Communications:** Articulate thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively in written and oral forms to persons inside and outside of the organization. The individual has public speaking skills; is able to express ideas to others; and can write/edit memos, letters, and complex technical reports clearly and effectively.
3. **Teamwork/Collaboration:** Build collaborative relationships with colleagues and customers representing diverse cultures, races, ages, genders, religions, lifestyles, and viewpoints. The individual is able to work within a team structure, and can negotiate and manage conflict.
4. **Digital Technology:** Leverage existing digital technologies ethically and efficiently to solve problems, complete tasks, and accomplish goals. The individual demonstrates effective adaptability to new and emerging technologies.
5. **Leadership:** Leverage the strengths of others to achieve common goals, and use interpersonal skills to coach and develop others. The individual is able to assess and manage his/her emotions and those of others; use empathetic skills to guide and motivate; and organize, prioritize, and delegate work.
6. **Professionalism/Work Ethic:** Demonstrate personal accountability and effective work habits, e.g., punctuality, working productively with others, and time workload management, and understand the impact of non-verbal communication on professional work image. The individual demonstrates integrity and ethical behavior, acts responsibly with the interests of the larger community in mind, and is able to learn from his/her mistakes.
7. **Career Management:** Identify and articulate one’s skills, strengths, knowledge, and experiences relevant to the position desired and career goals, and identify areas necessary for professional growth. The individual is able to navigate and explore job options, understands and can take the steps necessary to pursue opportunities, and understands how to self-advocate for opportunities in the workplace.
8. **Global/Intercultural Fluency:** Value, respect, and learn from diverse cultures, races, ages, genders, sexual orientations, and religions. The individual demonstrates, openness, inclusiveness, sensitivity, and the ability to interact respectfully with all people and understand individuals’ differences.

**Used with permission from the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE)*

CAREER PLANNING



Make the most of your college career by setting goals and planning activities for your time at SMSU. To be marketable and competitive after graduation, for employment and further education, there are some key things you need to be doing. The following is an outline intended to guide you in effective career and academic planning. Visit Career Services or talk with your advisor to develop a plan that is unique to you.

1 (First year) – ASSESS

- Visit Career Services to explore career materials and make an appointment to take interest, personality and value assessments.
- Select LEP courses to gain exposure to a variety of academic disciplines.
- Participate in extracurricular and residence hall activities to build team work skills.
- Get to know the faculty, begin building relationships, and seek out an academic mentor.
- Create a resume and LinkedIn profile.
- Choose part-time and summer jobs related to your career interests. Attend the Part-Time Job Fair during fall semester.
- Check us out on Facebook and Twitter or explore Handshake to search for positions any time.
- Develop and expand computer skills.

2 (Second year) – EXPLORE

- Make an appointment with Career Services for help in choosing a major.
- Declare a major and meet with your advisor to create an academic plan.
- Join an organization or club related to your major and career interest.
- Research the job market in your field.
- Conduct informational interviews or job shadow with professionals who are working in fields that interest you.
- Investigate opportunities for internships. Visit Handshake. Watch for on-campus interviews, attend career fairs, and meet with employers hiring interns.
- Volunteer with an organization that will give you experience related to your major or career. View opportunities in the Mustangs Volunteer portal online at www.SMSU.edu/volunteer.
- Begin to gather projects and assignments from your major courses to assist in your resume, portfolio, or LinkedIn profile.

3 (Third year) – FOCUS

- Enroll in courses that will complement your major.
- Gain leadership skills by working through a campus or professional organization or as a teaching assistant.
- Continue your career exploration with Career Services and research employers, salaries, and employment trends.
- Attend job fairs to network with employers for potential jobs or internships.
- Conduct informational interviews to help you focus your career goals, obtain real world information and NETWORK!
- Fine-tune your resume and have it critiqued by Career Services.
- Relate course projects and papers to your field.
- Connect with your advisor to discuss how to incorporate internships and/or study abroad opportunities into your academic plan.
- Take part in research projects and present at the SMSU Undergraduate Research Conference.
- If you are considering graduate school, take steps to prepare yourself. Attend Pre-Professional Series programming or meet with Career Services or a professor. Attend a graduate/professional school fair or open house.
- Check job, internship, and on-campus interview schedules on Handshake.
- Watch career videos for resume, cover letter, and interviewing development.

4 (Fourth year) – IMPLEMENT

- Register with Handshake if you haven't already done so.
- Attend career fairs, organize your job search, and explore job opportunities.
- Step up your job search:
 - Finalize your resume and LinkedIn profile and have them both critiqued.
 - Identify 3-5 professional individuals for references.
 - Research companies utilizing Career Services.
 - Take advantage of on-campus interviews. See Career Services for more information or view schedules in Handshake.
 - Network, Network, Network!
 - Practice your interviewing skills and schedule a mock interview.
- Polish your hands-on experience through internships or volunteer opportunities.
- If you intend to go to graduate school, complete the application process and take appropriate exams. See Career Services for assistance.
- Complete the Graduate Follow-up Survey about your employment or continuing education status.
- Become an active and engaged SMSU Alumnus. Find out how to stay connected at www.SMSUALumni.com



DECIDING ON A MAJOR

THE STUDENT SUCCESS AND ADVISING CENTER

The Student Success and Advising Center at SMSU was created as a home for all new students and, more specifically, for undeclared students. Advisors and other resources are available to guide you toward a field(s) of study that will best prepare you for a rewarding and challenging career. Each undeclared student is assigned to the Director of the Advising or to a faculty advisor who advises undeclared students. Your advisor or the staff at the Student Success and Advising Center will help you choose courses appropriate to the Liberal Education Program and to any particular major you may be considering. The Student Success and Advising Center was also established to act as a resource center for all students. If you should have any questions, concerns or just need information, stop in the Student Success and Advising Center located in IL 224, and they will assist you.

ASKING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS

The following questions may help you seek information about various majors as you continue the process of deciding on a major.

- What are the requirements of the major? (prerequisites, academic preparation, GPA, entrance exams)
- How many credits in this major must I earn to graduate?
- How many semesters will it take for me to finish this major if I start now?
- Are there any recommendations for minors or related fields?
- What internships, field experiences, or other opportunities are available to me in this major?
- What career opportunities are there for me if I major in this field?

CURRICULUM

Entering students sometimes think that if they don't begin a program of study their freshman year they won't be able to finish in four years. Each major differs in the required number of credits to complete. Check the current Academic Catalog for the number of credits required for each major/minor.

SMSU has over 50 major fields of study. Pre-professional programs are offered in 16 areas including pre-medicine, pre-dentistry, pre-law, pre-physical therapy, and pre-veterinary medicine. Students may also design their own Individualized Interdisciplinary major.

All students, regardless of major, must complete the Liberal Education Program, which is comprised of the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum (MTC), and associated Graduation Requirements (a total of 45 credits). These curricula offer students the opportunity to obtain a sound general education in fundamental areas of human knowledge. That is what makes us a liberal arts college. When empowered with this knowledge, students can understand, appreciate, and more effectively participate in the affairs of the community, nation, and the world. In these 45 credits, students choose from areas such as communication skills, humanities and fine arts, mathematical/logical reasoning, social sciences, and sciences. With the numerous courses offered that meet the Liberal Education requirements, students have many opportunities to sample from a diversity of fields.

A bachelor's degree at SMSU requires 120 semester credit hours. A typical course offers three credits and meets three times a week for one hour or two times a week for an hour and fifteen minutes. Most students take an average of 15 to 17 credits per semester. If a student wishes to graduate in four years (8 semesters), he/she will have to average 15 credits a semester.

CAREER SERVICES

Choosing a course of study and deciding on future career goals are two of the most important decisions that students make during their undergraduate years. SMSU's Career Services is committed to helping you meet your academic, career and employment goals. To begin, Career Services suggests that you:

- Check out "What Can I Co With This Major?" on the Career Services website.
- Read through the SMSU online Academic Catalog to determine the courses and majors that attract your attention.
- Complete career assessments - free to current students. Contact Career Services for assessments.
- Meet with Career Services to discuss strategies for determining your career/major goals.

ASSESSMENTS



SMSU Career Services offers individual career counseling appointments to help direct your search for potential majors and careers. If you have not chosen a major or potential career path, you can start the process by identifying your interests, skills, personality, and values. There are several assessments available to assist you in this process. You can take the Strong Interest Inventory, Myers-Briggs Type Indicator or StrengthsQuest or utilize FOCUS for career planning. There is no cost to you to take these inventories.

You can also research majors to see what type of careers people go into by using the What Can I Do With This Major? and Candid Career resources on the SMSU Career Services website. In addition to these resources, experiential learning opportunities (internships, undergraduate research, study abroad and service learning) are important hands-on experiences that allow you to explore your field of interest. Career Services encourages SMSU students to learn about and take advantage of all options for experiential learning.

STRONG INTEREST INVENTORY

The Strong Interest Inventory is an assessment designed to highlight industries, occupations and majors that match your interests. The assessment is designed to match your responses to individuals in work environments that share similar interests and are successful in these areas. This instrument does not measure aptitude—only areas of interest.

The Strong will provide you with the following information:

- General Occupational Themes—overall orientation to work
- Basic Interest Scales—highlight interests to specific industries
- Occupational Scales—indicate potential occupations of interests
- Personal Style Scales—measure preferences in work, learning, leadership and risk
- Majors—highlights potential majors based on responses

MYERS-BRIGGS TYPE INDICATOR

The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) is one of the most widely used personality typing instrument. It is used by many corporations, universities, governmental agencies and military for career counseling and team/organizational development. The MBTI can help people select a career. Research has found that individuals with similar personality types tend to gravitate towards similar careers.

MBTI can:

- Provide information about your personality type preferences
- Identify how you make decisions and take in information

STRENGTHSQUEST

StrengthsQuest identifies a person's top 5 talents based on 34 possible themes. Individuals can learn to build these talents into strengths and see how these talents can help with selecting a career or academic major, studying, relationships, and extracurricular activities.

StrengthsQuest can help:

- Discover your natural talents
- Strategically determine a rewarding career path based on these talents
- Maximize your potential talents and build them into strengths

To take the Strong Interest Inventory, Myers-Briggs Type Indicator or StrengthsQuest assessments, be sure to request an appointment with Career Services.

FOCUS

FOCUS is a self-paced, online career education planning tool. FOCUS will enable you to explore your interests and skills and then suggest possible career/major options that are most compatible with your assessment results. Use FOCUS to help choose a major and verify your preferences for a career.



INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS/JOB SHADOW

Informational interviews and job shadowing experiences are ways to learn more about a particular career or profession. Depending on the field you are interested in one of these options may be used over the other. Though the purpose of these interactions is information gathering, you should put your best foot forward by following these tips to leave a positive impression with professional contacts.

- **Setup a Meeting or Job Shadow.** This can be done one of three ways. You can call your contact, send them an e-mail, or write an approach letter. In regards to job shadowing, some organizations have a formalized process so be sure to follow their protocol. If you are uncomfortable calling your contact initially, you may find it useful to send them an email or LinkedIn message first. Then, call to request an interview time. **DO NOT** expect your contact to call you or write you back. You must take the initiative to call them back. If you reach voicemail or a receptionist, make sure to leave a clear message with your name and contact information. The most effective way to conduct an informational interview is in person. Phone meetings can be used when you and your contact are long distances apart.
 - See our phone dialog tips and message samples on the next page.
- **Prepare for the Meeting or Job Shadow.** Decide what you are most interested in learning about. A great resource to review prior to your meeting is Candid Career found on SMSU Career Services' website. You can watch a number of recorded interviews with professionals in a variety of fields to help identify the types of information you might want to gather. Select a list of questions you would like to ask. Prepare your elevator pitch (brief introduction/purpose of meeting). Choose your attire. Business casual is typically most appropriate. For job shadowing experiences, be sure to ask what to wear as there may be requirements for certain settings.
- **Conducting the Informational Meeting.** Arrive 10-15 minutes prior to your scheduled meeting. Begin the meeting on time and keep it to the length you had promised. These are busy people, and you want to be considerate of their time. You should first introduce yourself and state your purpose. Then, move into talking about your background in a conversational way. You will want to practice both the introduction and background before the interview, but do not sound rehearsed.
 - See introduction and background examples on the next page.
- **Ask Questions During the Meeting.** Remember you requested the interview and are in control. You want to come prepared with a list of 10-15 concise questions, so you do not waste the person's time. Make sure to allow the person an opportunity to provide additional information. You will want to use a padfolio, a professional looking binder, when taking notes during the interview. If you have not seen or would like to see the work area, you can ask for a tour.
- **End the meeting.** The main objective of this portion of the meeting is to ask for referrals, obtain your contact's business card, and thank the individual for their time and advice. If you have had a significant amount of direct experience, you could ask the interviewer to review your resume and give you ideas for improvement.
 - See ending the meeting examples on the next page.
- **Thank You.** A thank you should be sent to the person within 24 hours of the interview. You can type a letter, send an email, or handwritten note on a "thank you card" or on professional appearing stationary.
 - See tips on the next page.

INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS/JOB SHADOW: SAMPLE MESSAGES

EXAMPLE INTRODUCTION MESSAGE:

Dear Mr. Douglas,

I found your name using Southwest Minnesota State University's networking resources. I was very excited to see a fellow Mustang marketing for ABCD Foundation. I was hoping to meet with you to ask your advice as I plan my next steps in my career path.

This May, I will graduate from SMSU with a Bachelor of Science in Marketing. As a student, I work for Southwest Marketing Advisory Council (SMAC) which is an organization on campus that pursues marketing research projects for various local governmental and commercial organizations. This job has given me hands on experience in the marketing research and analysis field. Last summer, I also interned at the Anywhere United Way. I was in charge of creating all the promotional materials for their annual WomenUnite philanthropy event. I really enjoyed this experience and would like to pursue work in the non-profit area. I would like to talk with you about your perspective on this field.

I understand you are very busy. I would appreciate 20-30 minutes of your time at your convenience. I will call you on Wednesday to see if we can arrange a meeting. If you would like to contact me before that time, I can be reached at 507-822-3456 or at jane.smith@smsu.edu.

Sincerely,

Jane Smith

EXAMPLE PHONE DIALOGUE HINTS AND SCRIPT TIPS:

Helpful Hints:

- Write your own script before you call because it will help you feel more comfortable and in control of the situation.
- Practice your script so that it does not sound scripted. You want it to sound positive and upbeat!
- Rehearse with someone who can give you constructive criticism about your performance.
- Always check to make sure the person has time to speak with you. If not, offer to call them back at a more convenient time and then call back!

Script Tips:

- Introduce yourself and explain how you got their name.
- Ask if they are free to talk for a few minutes.
- If they do not have time to talk, ask for the best time to call them back and remember to call them!
- Tell them you are RESEARCHING the _____ field or profession and would like to ask for their advice. Remember: You are NOT asking for a job.
- Ask for a 20-30 minute meeting at their convenience, at their worksite, and assure them you know they are busy and you will be brief.
- Be sure to get clear directions to their office and detailed parking instructions.

INTRODUCTION EXAMPLE:

"Hello. It is so nice to meet you, and I really appreciate you taking the time to meet with me. As I said in my (email, letter, phone call), I am interested in the area of _____. I will be graduating in _____, and am especially interested in the _____ field. I am not looking for a job at this point, but am researching the field."

OR

"I am researching possibilities for summer internships to gain experience in the _____ field, and would appreciate your perspective as someone working in the industry."

BACKGROUND EXAMPLE:

"I'd like to tell you a little bit about my background, so you can give me advice on how I might plan my next steps. I am looking at becoming a certified financial planner upon graduation and believe that my analytical, problem solving, and communication strengths will be beneficial in this field. My goal is to further my education and eventually teach at the collegiate level."

REFERRAL EXAMPLE:

"Again, I appreciate you taking the time to meet with me, and the information you have provided me with today has been very useful. You have given me many new ideas to explore. I have one last request. The jobs you mentioned that would be appropriate for someone with my skills, education, and background sound interesting and I would like to find out more information about them. Do you know anyone in these industries or positions that would be willing to meet with me to obtain additional advice?"

OR

"Do you know anyone in (market research, human resources, public affairs, etc.) at (ABC Company) who could give me additional advice or give me ideas on future contacts?"

OBTAINING BUSINESS CARD & SAYING THANK YOU EXAMPLE:

"Thanks again for taking the time to meet with me. I have enjoyed our meeting and it has been very useful to hear about someone's experience in the industry. I will let you know how I am doing." OR "This meeting has been very helpful; may I contact you in a few months when I have progressed in my search?"
THEN ASK FOR BUSINESS CARD.

THANK YOU NOTE TIPS:

- Make sure your note is legible (if handwritten) and that the interviewer's name is spelled correctly.
- Use blue or black ink.
- Sign your name at the bottom of your letter with a printed version directly below it to eliminate the guesswork of who the card came from.
- An email thank you note is also appropriate.
- Keep it simple and to the point.

LinkedIn is a professional social media that has a number of different purposes. It can be used for searching and applying for jobs, networking, professional development, and connecting with alumni. The following pages have information for how to create an effective LinkedIn profile and how to interact with alumni for networking and career exploration. You can find blank note pages at the end of this guide to brainstorm which experiences you'd like to include on your profile.

LinkedIn Profile Checklist

PHOTO: It doesn't have to be fancy - just use your cellphone camera in front of a plain background. Wear a nice shirt and don't forget to smile!

HEADLINE: Tell people what you're excited about now and the cool things you want to do in the future.

SUMMARY: Describe what motivates you, what you're skilled at, and what's next.

EXPERIENCE: List the jobs you held, even if they were part-time, along with what you accomplished at each. Even include photos and videos from your work.

ORGANIZATIONS: Have you joined any clubs at school or outside? Be sure to describe what you did with each organization.

The screenshot shows a LinkedIn profile for David Xiao. The profile header includes his name, title 'Econ Major and Aspiring Financial Analyst', location 'San Francisco Bay Area | Financial Services', and previous roles at Berkeley Ventures and University of California, Berkeley. The profile has 153 connections and options to 'Improve your profile' and 'Edit Profile'. The 'Background' section is expanded to show the 'Summary' and 'Experience' sections. The 'Summary' section contains a paragraph about his interests in economics and the financial industry. The 'Experience' section lists a 'Venture Capital Internship' at Berkeley Ventures from May 2013 to September 2013, with a description of his research and findings. Below this is a presentation titled 'INTRODUCTION TO VENTURE CAPITAL' with a description: 'A presentation I gave to my classmates, based on what I learned at Berkeley Ventures'. The 'Organizations' section lists 'Berkeley A Capella' as a 'Lead Singer' from March 2012 to the present, with a description of his role in the group.

LINKEDIN

EDUCATION: Starting with college, list all the educational experiences you've had - including summer programs.

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE & CAUSES: Even if you weren't paid for a job, be sure to list it. Admissions officers and employers often see volunteer experience as just as valuable as paid work.

SKILLS & EXPERTISE: Add at least 5 key skills - and then your connections can endorse you for the things you're best at.

HONORS & AWARDS: If you earned a prize in or out of school, don't be shy. Let the world know about it!

COURSES: List the classes that show off the skills and interests you're most excited about.

PROJECTS: Whether you led a team assignment in school or built an app on your own, talk about what you did and how you did it.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Ask managers, professors, or classmates who've worked with you closely to write a recommendation. This gives extra credibility to your strengths and skills.

Education

University of California, Berkeley
Economics, B.A.
2010 - 2014 (expected)



Volunteer Experience & Causes

Big Buddy

Skyline High School

September 2012 - May 2013 (9 months) | Education

Mentored an Oakland high school student through the college application process, helping him get into his dream school.

Skills & Expertise

Most endorsed for...

12 Economics

11 Start-ups

10 Due Diligence

10 Venture Capital

10 Management



Honors & Awards

The Achievement Award Program
UC Berkeley

Four-year scholarship awarded to community-minded students with a proven track record of academic success.

Courses

University of California, Berkeley

- Microeconomic Theory (Econ 101A)
- International Monetary Economics (182)
- Public Economics (230A)

Projects

Venture Capital Financing in India

May 2013

For our international Monetary Economics course, Paul and I decided to study the emerging venture capital industry in India. By looking at data from the World Bank, we were able to understand the challenges and opportunities facing this nascent sector. And we developed a series of recommendations for overcoming these challenges, which we delivered to our professor in a final term paper.

5 team members



David Xiao
Econ Major and Aspiring Financial Anal...



Paul Smith
Student at UC Berkeley

Recommendations

Received (2) -

Venture Capital Internship
Berkeley Ventures



Tim Lee
Partner

David spent the summer with us at Berkeley Ventures and made an immediate impact. He showed us a brand new technique for firm analysis that he had just learned in school and came through with recommendations that opened our eyes to a unique set of opportunities.

We don't normally hire undergrads as interns but after working with David, we will again!

November 13, 2013, Tim managed

The LinkedIn Alumni Tool



There's no better place to launch your career

And we can tell you where people who went to your school are and what they're up to. Whether you're a student or recent graduate, the Alumni Tool can help you make academic and career choices based on the actual paths of alumni.



Explore alumni career paths from more than



23k colleges and universities worldwide

A Career Planning Resource for Students Unlike Any Other

Gathered from the profiles of hundreds of millions of members, LinkedIn's Alumni Tool lets you explore alumni career paths from more than 23,000 colleges and universities worldwide - and build relationships that can help you along the way.

Explore Any Way You Want

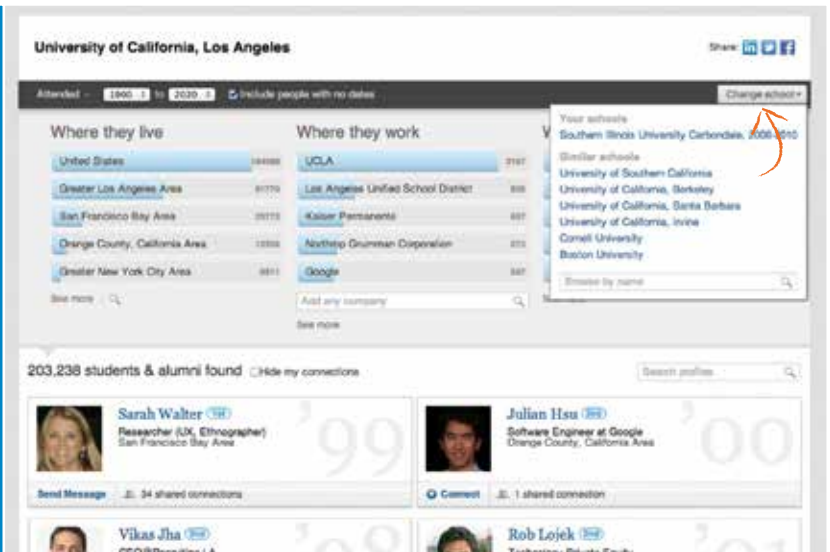
Explore your own school (or any other) to see where graduates live, the organizations they work for, and the types of jobs they've had. You can also narrow down by date range, what they studied, what they're skilled at, and how you're connected on LinkedIn. Just click on any bar in the Alumni Tool to drill down into specific careers, employers, locations, major, skills, or degree of connection.



1

Choosing a college or graduate program?

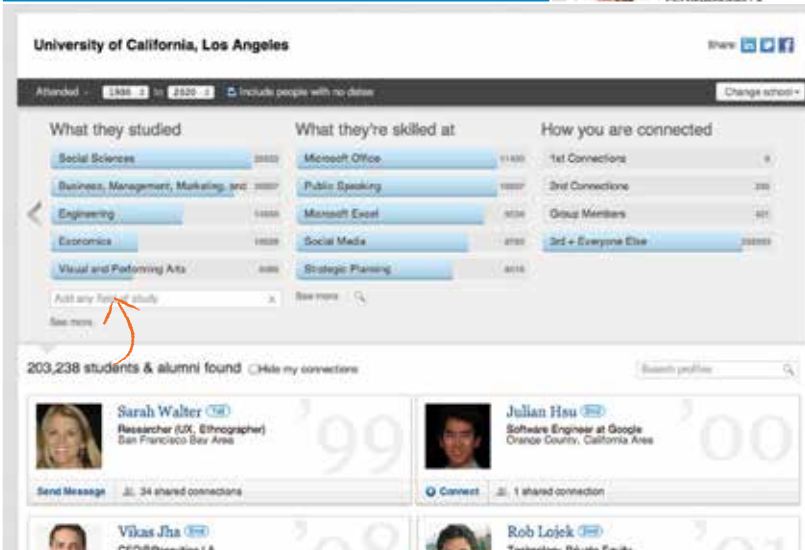
Use the Alumni Tool to see which schools place graduates in the types of jobs you want. Search for a school you're interested in, select a relevant field of study, and you'll get a top 25 list of employers that have hired graduates. Click on the names below that to see the paths they took from school to their current positions.



2

Planning your academic path?

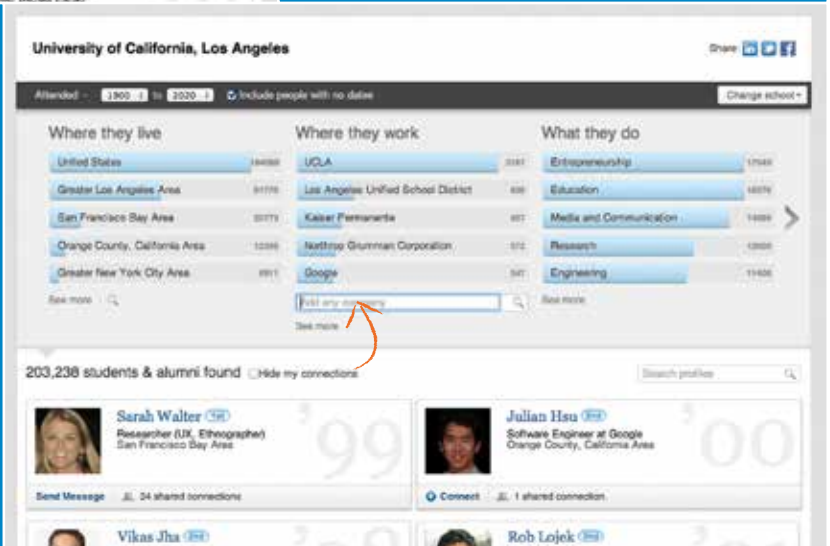
The Alumni Tool is a great resource for thinking through what to major (or minor) in, and skills and certifications that will help you in the working world. Check out 'What they studied' and 'What they're skilled at,' for example. Learn from those who have gone before you.



3

Starting your job hunt?

Let's say you have a specific company in mind you'd like to work for. Use the Alumni Tool to find graduates of your school - and with your major - who work there now. Compare their skills to your own and see where you might need to bulk up. Many alumni want to help current students - reach out to them for an insider's perspective. It's a great way to get your foot in the door.



Get exploring

Get going at www.linkedin.com/alumni



A resume is a brief, concise document that presents you to a prospective employer. It markets your skills, accomplishments and experiences for employment, admission to graduate school, and consideration for a scholarship or fellowship. There is no single model of a resume that is appropriate for all people in all circumstances. There are a number of styles and formats that you can consider before selecting the one that best fits you. It's a good idea to always have an up-to-date version ready so that fewer edits need to be made when a position you are interested in becomes available.

An employer will usually spend **15-30 seconds** reviewing your resume — make your time count! The content and format of your resume must be clear, concise, and marketed to the needs of the prospective employer. The resume is usually your first introduction to the employer and will motivate them to contact you. The resume will get you the interview; the interview is what will get you the job. The Resume Start-Up section is a great place to start creating or recreating your resume. Take time to complete this section and brainstorm about your experiences. You will also find the sample resumes beginning on page 36 in this guide helpful as you choose a style and format for your resume.

RESUME START-UP

WARNING! WARNING! Putting together an effective resume is hard work!

But don't let that stop you! When you accept the right job offer, you'll say it was worth it!

Begin by concentrating on the job you're going after. What does the employer want? Need? What are the requirements? Once you have figured that out, then ask yourself, "What qualities, experience, education/training do I have that matches what the employer is looking for?" That's what you want to put in your resume. You want to stand out from the hundreds of resumes that employers receive. Do you know what makes you stand out? You are an individual, unique in your own way.

STEPS TO CREATING AN EFFECTIVE RESUME

1. Analyze the available job opening, the company, the industry- What do they want? Need?
2. Look at yourself and determine what you're good at, what do you have to offer the employer, what have you done, what makes you unique?
3. Gather the information you need to complete this start up sheet.
4. Type the information in a Word document and find a layout/design that is consistent and easy to read. There are resume samples included in this guide or on the Career Services website for your reference.
5. Proof your resume over and over again. Ask others to look over it, not only for errors but also for things you might have omitted. Make sure some of these people know you well so they can spot those things. Parents, siblings, friends, can all help you with this.
6. Remember, you're going to get advice from many different people and some may be conflicting. The resume is yours! It's a reflection of who you are and what you have to offer. You are the ultimate decision maker as to what goes in it. After all, if you don't know yourself best, then who does?
7. Resume looking good? Be sure to have it reviewed in Career Services.
8. Make any revisions necessary.
9. Before applying online, save your resume as a PDF or follow the employer's directions for file type. If sharing at a career fair or interview, print your finished product on resume paper.

RESUMES

HEADING

Name: Use your name as you would sign your name. (Usually without middle name or initial).

Address (Optional): List your complete address and write out all words unless restricted by space. The state name is always abbreviated (MN, SD, IA) according to postal standards. Put the city and state on the same line with a comma between them.

Telephone Number: Always include it because very few employers write to you to invite you for an interview. Including the area code is important whether you live in the area or not. Do not use your employer's telephone number on your resume.

E-mail: Be sure that your email address is professional. Do not use your pet name or a "cute" name. Save that email for your family and friends. You can use your SMSU email address (firstname.lastname@my.smsu.edu) if you'd like.

First and Last Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City, State, Zip Code: _____

Phone Number: _____ Email Address: _____

JOB OBJECTIVE

Also called "Position Desired," "Objective," and "Career Goal," and all are optional. Write one or two sentences about the kind of position you want and what you can contribute to the company in return for such a job. These can appear at the top of a resume, as a headline attention grabber. Focus the objective on what you can do for the company and avoid mention of what you want in return.

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

You may decide to use a Summary of Qualifications section at the top of your resume. This section is also optional. Be sure to summarize the type of experience, skills, and personality traits most applicable to your career objectives. The summary may be arranged in either paragraph or bullet form and should entice the reader to continue reading the rest of the resume. For example:

Profit-oriented manager with strong record of improving:

- Financial Performance: Improved delinquency rates by as much as 45%, capturing more than \$1.5 million in "lost" revenue over career.
- Employee Productivity: Identified and capitalized on team members' strengths to accommodate a 3-fold increase in work volume without need for additional staff.
- Customer Relations: Advocated for a customer-focused orientation; frequently negotiated pay-out plans to maintain marginal customers in a salable position.

EDUCATION

If you are recently out of school, your educational credentials will appear near the beginning of your resume. As you gain experience, your academic credentials become less important and gradually slip towards the end of your resume. The exception to this is in certain professions where academic qualifications dominate a person's career – medicine, for example. Education is listed in reverse chronological order with the highest degree first. Once you've attended college, you no longer list your high school. (Ask about exceptions). It is acceptable to abbreviate educational degrees: B.S., B.A., M.A., and Ph.D.

Degree earned (B.A. or B.S.) and Major _____

Degree granting Institution's Name, City and State: _____

Minor(s) or Concentration(s) in _____

Graduation Month and Year: _____ GPA (3.0 or higher) _____

Specialized Courses: _____

Projects: _____

EXPERIENCE

Experience can include paid or unpaid (volunteer); part-time or full-time or internship experiences. List each most recent experience first. Work in reverse chronological order. Add other experiences as appropriate.

Job Titles or Role: The purpose of a job title is to provide a generic identification that will be understood by as many employers as possible. Use a name that is commonly used for the position such as Administrative Assistant instead of Secretary and Accountant Level II. Be sure that whatever title you use, it is not misleading.

Organization Name: The organization name should be included but not the street address or telephone. The city and state are helpful. It is okay to abbreviate words like Corporations (Corp.), Company (Co.), Limited (Ltd.), or Division (Div.) as long as you're consistent.

Experience Dates: Resume readers are often leery of resumes without dates. You can increase your odds of getting a response by including them in one form or another. Try to include months and years with each experience or consistently use months (numbers, spelled out, or abbreviated) and years or just years. If a position is current, list "Present" as the final date. (ex. May 2016-Present)

Description of Responsibilities: This is the body of the resume. It includes your responsibilities and what purpose they served, your special achievements and other contributions in this position. This is one key area that sets a great resume apart from the rest.

Use of Keywords: Organizations use screening and tracking systems to handle applications so it's important that you include keywords that are found in the job description and/or advertising for a position that you're interested in. The screener (person or computer) searches for keywords that describe the position and the professional skills needed.

Position Title: _____

Organization Name: _____ City, State: _____

Dates of Employment/Experience: _____ - _____

Description of Responsibilities: _____

Accomplishments: _____

Position Title: _____

Organization Name: _____ City, State: _____

Dates of Employment/Experience: _____ - _____

Description of Responsibilities: _____

Accomplishments: _____

Position Title: _____

Organization Name: _____ City, State: _____

Dates of Employment/Experience: _____ - _____

Description of Responsibilities: _____

Accomplishments: _____

RESUMES



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

As an intern, entry-level, or career-changing applicant, both your scholastic achievements and your campus involvement have increased importance. List your position on the school newspaper or student government, memberships in clubs, recognition for scholastic achievement, and role with athletics. Your accomplishments and extracurricular activities tell an employer about your skills, abilities, motivations and interests. This is a great section to demonstrate your leadership abilities and initiative to employers.

Professional Affiliations: This shows your dedication to your career. Membership is also important for networking so if you're not a member of your industry's professional associations, give serious consideration to joining. Ask Career Services about references to any religious, political, protected status, or personal information.

Languages: Having another language can give you an edge in the job market today. If you are fluent in a foreign language list it, but if you're not fluent, you can still mention it. Examples: Fluent in French; Read German; Read and write Serbo-Croatian; Understand Spanish.

Read through the following checklist and circle as many "yes" responses as you can. Then, come back and fill in the specifics in the notes sections. Don't worry about vocabulary or phrasing now, you can tackle this first then clean up phrasing and vocabulary later. If you find that you don't have much in the way of additional information, do some brainstorming around finding ways to gain additional experience. The additional experience is great for building your resume.

Yes No Language Abilities

Yes No Technology Skills

Yes No College Activities

Yes No Leadership Positions (Clubs, Athletics, etc.)

Yes No Volunteer/Community Activities

Yes No Honors/Awards/Scholarships

Yes No Conferences Attended

Yes No Study or Travel Abroad

Yes No Professional Memberships

Yes No Professional Development

Notes about Additional Information (*specific activities/skills*):

BRINGING IT TOGETHER

After you've completed the Resume Start-Up section, it's time to type out your experiences and start formatting. Here are some possible headings for your resume sections. These are just some ideas to get you started. This list is not exhaustive.

Possible Headings for Resume Sections

Objective
Career Objective
Career Focus
Summary
Profile

Qualifications
Highlights of Qualifications
Skills
Technical Skills
Education

Educational Background
Teaching Experience
Student Teaching
Practicum Experience
Internship Experience

Experience
Related Experience
Work Experience
Significant Projects
Related Projects



ACTION VERBS AND USE OF KEYWORDS

Be sure to describe your experiences using strong action verbs and keywords. A list of action verbs is included here to get you started. Try to use a variety of words to describe your experiences, not the same ones over and over. A helpful strategy for using these verbs in the position description:

- Go through the entire list and check off all the action verbs employers in your field look for.
- Go through the list a second time and check off all the verbs you have used in the experiences you are describing in your resume (i.e. work experiences, internships, etc).

Assisted	Delegated	Facilitated	Improvised	Obtained	Provided	Safeguarded	Tested
Able	Developed	Formulated	Influenced	Operated	Published	Secured	Trained
Action	Delivered	Fulfilled	Launched	Organized	Pursued	Selected	Transcended
Analysis	Designed	Forecasted	Lobbied	Originated	Quantified	Specified	Unified
Achievement	Defined	Generated	Maintained	Overhauled	Ranked	Spearheaded	Upgraded
Accomplished	Diversified	Gained	Managed	Oversaw	Received	Standardized	Utilized
Advanced	Devoted	Gathered	Marketed	Participated	Recommended	Strengthened	Validated
Conducted	Distinguished	Gave	Maximized	Performed	Redesigned	Structured	Valued
Consulted	Encouraged	Headed	Mediated	Pioneered	Reengineered	Suggested	Wrote
Committed	Earned	Hosted	Modernized	Planned	Reorganized	Superseded	
Conducted	Enhanced	Identified	Motivated	Prepared	Represented	Supervised	
Contributed	Evaluated	Implemented	Negotiated	Presented	Restructured	Targeted	
Coordinated	Examined	Improved	Observed	Promoted	Revised	Taught	

A FEW THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND

1. **Don't make the resume too long.** A resume is not an autobiography or an application. It does not have to tell your whole story. Very few hiring managers will read a lengthy resume. Focus on your accomplishments and skills to highlight how you would be a fit for the company. Highlight the major areas which will help get you the interview.
2. **Don't limit the information you provide on the resume.** Don't just list the job title, company, dates, extracurricular activities or clubs. Indicate your accomplishments and how you added value to the position or activity.
3. **If your experiences seem to break into distinct categories, you can use them to highlight your experiences to the employer.** There are several ways you can approach this. For example, if you have accounting experience from an internship, part-time job or class project, you can have an Accounting Experience heading. If you worked in the business field you can have a Business Experience heading or Related Experience heading. These different headings allow you to market your experiences to the employer in a more direct way. You might include a mixture of paid employment, volunteer work, and extracurricular leadership positions in one section.
4. **Rule of thumb—list your experiences in reverse chronological order within each section.**
5. **If you have not had related experiences, you should still list your employment background.** This shows the employer that you have learned transferable skills (i.e. communication, customer service, time management, etc.) that are important to any work environment.
6. **Don't use complete sentences.** This is one time in your life that you don't have to use complete sentences. Omit "I," "Me," and "They" statements. Start each section or bullet with an Action Verb. For example, Managed, Created, Analyzed, etc.
7. **Don't make formatting or grammar mistakes.** Proofread your resume for typos. Your resume is your first introduction to an employer. You want to make it a good one. It is easy to miss your own typos. Use spell check but don't rely on it completely. Have Career Services critique your resume.
8. **Don't be negative.** All of us have had positive and negative experiences. Always focus on the positive. Think about what you have learned that is applicable to the position. What relevant or transferrable skills can you offer the employer based on those experiences?
9. **Do not include salary information (unless in a government resume).** If it's requested, give it in the cover letter. This will give you flexibility in discussing your salary requirement.
10. **Don't list references on your resume.** If employers want your references, they will request them. Typically this happens later in the hiring process. References should be listed on a separate page.
11. **Don't use a photograph (unless you are in theatre or TV).** Don't give an employer the chance to make an employment decision about you based on your appearance.
12. **When listing organizations use the complete name instead of the abbreviation.** If the purpose of the organization isn't clear from the name, provide a brief one line explanation.

COVER LETTERS



Anytime you send your resume, you also want to include a cover letter. If this is your first connection to the employer or even if you've had several conversations with them, don't assume that they know who you are, remember who you are or know why you are sending the resume. Employers are extremely busy and work with multiple candidates at one time. Make their jobs easier and send a cover letter.

The purpose of a cover letter, sometimes called letter of application, is to introduce yourself and briefly explain how you can benefit a potential employer. The goal is to have your letter and resume read, convincing the reader that you should be interviewed. The letter should be clear, brief, and well-written, highlighting your most notable accomplishments and relating them to the position opening. A sample cover letter is included on the next page for your reference.

WRITING AN EFFECTIVE COVER LETTER

- **Keep the letter concise and to the point.** A recruiter on average will spend between 10-30 seconds "scanning" a cover letter. Remember that the letter layout impacts the first impression.
- **Keep it to one page.** The purpose of a cover letter is to get the employer interested in reading your resume. A couple of well-crafted paragraphs are sufficient to get your point across.
- **Focus on the employer's needs, NOT YOURS.** Make your qualifications clear and emphasize how you can use them to help their organization. Try to keep sentences that begin with "I" to a minimum.
- **Address your letter to the department head or hiring manager.** Avoid sending it "To Whom It May Concern." Use Ms., Mr., Dr., or another title to formally address the reader. If you cannot get a name, try "Dear Hiring Manager," "Dear Human Resource Manager," or "Dear Search Committee."
- **Proofread.** Your letters and resumes must be accurate and without error. Your cover letter demonstrates your writing skills to the employer. Be sure all grammar, punctuation, spelling and contact information are correct. Don't only rely on spell check.
- **Formatting.** Use the same contact information heading as is used on your resume. List the current month, day and year at the top of the page. Followed by the employer's name and address. Use block style paragraphs and do not indent. Close formally with 'Sincerely' and your full name.
- **Avoid sending out duplicated form cover letters.** Employers are not impressed by a cover letter they know has been mass mailed to other employers. After you have developed a cover letter structure, use it but personalize it and target the content to the specific job opening.
- **Focus on your accomplishments and skills and how you can be of benefit to the organization.** Choose your words carefully, sharing with the employer how your education, employment history, internships and other experiences relate to their opening.
- **Keep a copy of each cover letter for your records.** Mark your calendar and follow up with the employer as appropriate.

A FEW THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND

- **Don't** send your resume without a cover letter, unless an employer specifically asks you not to send one.
- **Do** address your letter to the appropriate person (e.g. the hiring manager.)
- **Do** send a unique letter to each employer.
- **Don't** have any typos, misspellings, incorrect grammar or punctuation.
- **Do** keep the cover letter brief—one page maximum (typically 3-4 paragraphs.)
- **Do** tell the employer how you can be of benefit to the organization.
- **Don't** rehash your resume—use your cover letter to highlight the aspects of your resume that are relevant to the position.
- **Do** use action verbs.
- **Do** use emailed cover letters—keep them shorter and more concise.
- **Do** contact Career Services for assistance in writing your cover letter.

FirstName LastName

101 South Main Street • Marshall, MN 56258 • firstname.lastname@my.smsu.edu • 507-111-1111

January 20, 20xx

Jane Jones
Human Resources Director
ABC Company
1111 Any Street
Marshall, MN 56258

Dear Ms. Jones:

I am writing to apply for the position of Media Relations Specialist. ABC is a fast-moving global company and an outstanding communications leader influencing many aspects of print journalism. I enjoyed meeting with you at the career fair hosted at SMSU in the fall semester and was excited to see the Media Relations Specialist posted this spring.

As a recent graduate of Southwest Minnesota State University with significant experience in finance, business and communications, I bring the energy and commitment to excellence necessary to thrive in ABC's innovative environment. As the current Media Relations Intern of the XYZ Company, I am a practiced business liaison. These strengths, combined with my employment and other internship experiences as a journalist and media consultant, prepare me to make a strong and immediate impact at ABC.

In my Leadership and Management class, my service learning group planned, publicized, and successfully fundraised \$350 for baby formula. Along with fundraising, we were required to recruit and manage volunteers and plan programs for the children's activities. Through my work as a senator on the Student Association, I served as chairperson of multiple committees. These experiences have strengthened my teamwork, interpersonal, leadership, public speaking, and event planning skills. I would be excited to bring these assets to ABC Company.

I am excited about the opportunity to join the ABC team. I would welcome the opportunity to further discuss my qualifications with you and how I might be of benefit to your company. I can be reached at 507-111-1111 or by email at firstname.lastname@gmail.com. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

FirstName LastName

REFERENCES



Unless an application indicates otherwise, it is recommended to list 3-5 professional references. References can be from professors, employers, internships, supervisors, or volunteer managers. These people should be able to verify the information on your resume and say positive things about you.

On a resume. It is not necessary to list “references available upon request.” Most employers assume this and will request references as they want them. Prepare a reference page separate from your resume.

On Curriculum Vitae. References are typically listed. Some graduate students and some career fields (mostly in academia) ask for references at the time of application. If you are developing a CV, it is common to include references.

FORMATTING THE REFERENCE SHEET

- Your contact information should look like your resume and cover letter contact information. Copy and paste into a new document to create your reference page.
- You can list your reference information in many ways.
 1. Flush left
 2. Centered down the page
 3. Listed in columns

TIPS FOR REQUESTING REFERENCES

- Ask people who have a strong understanding of your professional experience. If the person seems hesitant to serve as your reference, consider asking someone else.
- Ask early and be respectful. Ask individuals to serve as references and/or write letters of recommendation for you well in advance. Ask for reference letters as you leave positions or finish courses.
- To assist your references in giving a strong recommendation, make sure to give them a copy of your resume, description of the position(s) you’re applying for, current career goals as they relate to the positions/programs you are applying for, and skills you possess.
- Notify your references when you have included them in an application. As you move forward in the interview process, let your references know.
- If you are requesting the reference to write a letter of recommendation, you should provide a stamped and addressed envelope or clear details for where the letter needs to be submitted.
- Be sure to follow-up and thank references as you are offered positions/accept offers for graduate school.
- Be sure to stay in touch! You might also be called upon to serve as their reference and it is good to be familiar with their professional goals as well.

FirstName LastName

101 South Main Street ▪ Marshall, MN 56258 ▪ firstname.lastname@my.smsu.edu ▪ 507-111-1111

References:

Dr. Jan Johnson

Professor of Psychology
Southwest Minnesota State University
1501 State Street
Marshall, MN 56258
507.537.5555
Jan.Johnson@smsu.edu

Mr. /Ms./Dr. Name

Title
Organization
Address
City, State, Zip Code
Phone Number
Email Address

Mr. /Ms. /Dr. Name

Title
Organization
Address
City, State, Zip Code
Phone Number
Email Address

Mr. /Ms. /Dr. Name

Title
Organization
Address
City, State, Zip Code
Phone Number
Email Address

PROFESSIONAL DRESS



First impressions are important! Whether you are going to a career fair or interview, you never get a second opportunity to make a great first impression. For every industry the level of appropriate dress is different, so dress conservatively for an interview. Remember it is better to be overdressed than underdressed. You want to be remembered for what you say and not for what you were wearing. Not sure what to wear? Check out the Career Services' Pinterest boards for more ideas and tips. The suggestions below are guidelines for interviews and career fairs and may not cover all situations. Make an appointment with Career Services to discuss your upcoming interview and specific questions about professional dress.

SUITS AND SHIRTS

- Two-piece business suit (navy or dark/neutral colors)
- Consistent look: avoid wearing a business suit with sandals or sneakers
- Suits should fit well and neither be too tight-fitting or too baggy
- Suit with a skirt or pants is acceptable
 - Avoid ill-fitting (short, tight, clingy, or slit) skirts; no higher than one to two inches above knee when standing
- White, off-white, or neutral-colored shirt, blouse, or long-sleeved Oxford with a high neckline

SHOES

- Closed-toe leather pumps with low to medium heels; avoid open-toe, strappy high heels, sandals, or shoes with decorations
- Business-style leather shoes
- Coordinate shoe and belt color
- If wearing socks, match or coordinate to suit color

ACCESSORIES

- Conservative necktie in color and pattern; avoid cartoon characters, less-than-serious graphics, or theme ties
- Be mindful of visible body piercings and tattoos
- No more than one ring on each hand
- Briefcase or padfolio in place of a handbag or purse or backpack
- Small stud earrings instead of dangling or oversized earrings
- Follow the Rule of 13
 - If you can count more than 13 accessories including bracelets, rings, earrings, and a wristwatch, you are overdoing it. During an interview, the applicant's personality and accomplishments should shine through; not jewelry or other distractors.

HAIR AND MAKEUP

- Well-groomed hairstyle
- Long hair can be pulled back in a neat, simple style
- Neutral nail polish; avoid unusual colors, e.g. green, blue, lavender
- Understated make-up

MISCELLANEOUS

- Minimal cologne or perfume
- Breath mints; use one before greeting recruiter
- Turn phone off



CAREER FAIRS AND NETWORKING

Career fairs are an excellent opportunity to learn more about careers, identify job and internship opportunities and most importantly: talk with recruiters in person. The employers participating in campus career fairs are interested in recruiting SMSU students and alumni. Visit the Career Services website to view upcoming career fairs and networking events.

PREPARATION AND GENERAL INFORMATION

- Identify your reason for attending a fair. Are you searching for a job or internship? Learning more about careers and majors? Researching organizations and positions?
- Research the organizations that are attending before you attend the event.
- Prepare your introduction and brief discussion points to have with the recruiters if you are particularly interested in certain organizations, so you may reflect your interest and knowledge of the company in your conversation.
- Attend prep events or schedule appointments with Career Services to prepare.
- Bring extra copies of your resume with you to the event along with a pen or pencil to write notes.
- Dress professionally (i.e.: suit, dress shirt, dress shoes, professional bag or padfolio). Do not wear jeans, sweatpants, t-shirts, khakis, or anything with holes or frayed edges.

COMMUNICATING WITH EMPLOYERS

- Develop an action plan before communicating with employers. Identify the registered employers who you want to visit and in what order. Depending on your comfort level, you may decide to visit your first choice employer at the beginning of the event so you are fresh or you may decide to visit your first choice employers after you have spoken with others to “warm up.”
- Approach tables by yourself, not with friends. Be polite to everyone at the fair.
- Greet the employer with a firm handshake, good eye contact and a smile, ask pertinent questions, and express your interest in opportunities with their organization.
- Tell the company/organization about yourself, ask the representative questions, leave your resume, and make sure you collect their business cards as you interact with the employers. Do not take it personally if an employer cannot, due to their organization’s policies, accept your resume. Be sure to follow-up as directed.
- Don’t interrupt representatives or fellow job candidates. Make eye contact with the representative to signal that you want to speak with him or her. If that doesn’t work, move onto the next table and come back later.
- Pick up information from each employer you visit.
- Do not exclude employers. Visit all organizations even if you are not familiar with the company. You never know if your experiences might fit with a current or future opening they might have.

AFTER THE CAREER FAIR

- Send a thank-you email within 48 hours; following-up with the employer will help you stand out from the rest of the candidates.
- Follow-up and submit any additional or amended information as discussed during your meeting.
- Update notes from your conversations. Continue to research employers of interest.
- Utilize SMSU Career Services resources such as mock interviews, workshops and resume reviews to help you continue with your information gathering and search process.
- Evaluate your experience at the fair. What went well? What did not go well? What did you learn? What improvements can be made for next time?

PREPARING YOUR INTRODUCTION

- It is critical that you prepare your introduction to employers you will be speaking with at a career fair. Some people call this your 30 second commercial or elevator pitch. To develop your introduction, think about your strong points, your goals, the company and where you want to go within the company. Make sure you practice this introduction to ensure that you make an excellent first impression.
- Include your name, major, year in school, relevant skills and goals.
- Follow-up with a question to get the conversation started.
- Rehearse your introduction out loud prior to the fair; you can even practice with Career Services staff when you check-in to the event.
- Remember to give a firm handshake, good eye contact and smile. Look like you are happy to be at the event!

Sample Introductions:

Hi, my name is Jane Doe. I am a junior majoring in Marketing. I have extensive marketing coursework as well as 2 years of experience in a professional setting working as an office manager assistant. I also have been involved with Southwest Marketing Advisory Center which has given me marketing research experience. This summer I hope to secure a related internship. I was wondering if you could tell me a little more about the marketing internship posted on your website.

Hi my name is John Smith. I am a senior double majoring in finance and accounting. I'm really interested in working for your company because it's been ranked as a leader in the finance industry for innovation. I've completed a corporate finance internship and would like to find out more about the opportunities you have within your finance department.

NETWORKING

Networking is connecting with individuals who are in a certain industry, profession, service or geographical area and building relationships. You might initially network during your job or internship search, but by building relationships your network will become stronger over time. Connecting with individuals is a great way to gather information about careers.

BENEFITS OF NETWORKING

- **Learning.** By speaking with professionals you will receive first-hand knowledge and the latest information about the particular industry or organization you are interested in. This allows you to learn what happens in this position beyond what it says in the textbook.
- **Beyond Job Titles.** You are able to see what skills are required for the position and how you might fit in the work environment. Job titles alone do not provide you with this important information.
- **Low-Stress Meetings.** Informational meetings are low stress compared to job interviews because you are “in control” of the interview. You are able to determine the direction of the meeting by the questions you ask.
- **Create Contacts.** By meeting people in various jobs, you are exposed to different kinds of industries. This will help you build your network of contacts for the future. These contacts could potentially lead you to a job. Eighty percent of jobs are found in the “hidden market,” which means these jobs are not even posted on the company’s website or other job sites. Networking will allow you to hear about these positions.
- **Who could I include in “My Network?”**
 - SMSU Alumni can provide you with a wealth of knowledge and there are multiple ways to connect with them. One way is to connect through LinkedIn.
 - Professors and academic advisors can be other helpful resources. They have knowledge about specific disciplines because of research projects, former students, and community involvement.
 - Friends, family, co-workers, coaches, and acquaintances. Casually talking with people could open a lot of doors. Most people enjoy talking about what they do and you never know what could happen.
 - People you have heard about. Lecturers, employers, and prominent people in the community are all other great people to add to your network.

NETWORKING DOS AND DON'TS

DO:

- Assess your own interests, skills, knowledge areas and personal attributes before contacting, so you can talk about them.
- Research your contact, their company, and their field.
- Decide what information you would like to obtain before you interview.
- Give a brief introduction about yourself when contacting: you are an SMSU student graduating in _____, how you found their name, why you are writing them.
- Keep your contact’s information for follow-up.
- Keep in touch. Show your contact that you are willing to help them in any way and hopefully they will return the favor.

DON'T:

- Ask for a job or internship. (Ask for advice, information, and referrals.)
- Spam with multiple e-mails or stalk with multiple phone calls.
- Act unprofessionally or negatively.
- Ask your contact to mass distribute your resume.
- Share alumni or referral contact information with others unless they say it would be all right.
- Do not use slang when writing, typing, or speaking. Use complete sentences with proper grammar.
- Do not just network when you need something.

JOB AND INTERNSHIP SEARCH



JOB AND INTERNSHIP BASICS

Searching for a job or internship can be daunting. A typical job or internship search lasts about 4-6 months. Putting in the work upfront to be prepared and organized can make the process go much smoother. Though searching for a job or internship is a lot of work, this section of the guide offers tips and suggestions to make the search process easier for you.

JOB AND INTERNSHIP CHECKLIST

- **Get organized.** Identify career and life values, goals and objectives. Realistically assess your strengths, weaknesses, skills, and abilities. Research your online presence by searching your name.
- **Research industries, organizations and current openings.** Identify and rank information on organizations. Look at largest, fastest growing and most profitable companies. Research annual reports (found online) and look at current market conditions and job trends. LinkedIn and other resources like Glassdoor.com can be helpful with this process. Be open-minded about potential opportunities.
- **Prepare your application materials and marketing tools.** While you will want to target your resumes and cover letters to the specific position you are applying to, you can get a jump start by creating a resume and cover letter that are geared toward the industry you are most interested. This will cut down on your application time when the perfect position becomes open. You will also want to connect with your references and prepare your reference sheet. If using a portfolio, ensure that it is as updated as possible. Visit with Career Services to review your documents and schedule a mock interview. You don't have to have a position ready to apply for to do a mock interview. A practice interview is a great way to get a baseline for what you'll want to practice when you do have a big interview coming up.
- **Network and target your search.** Be sure that your LinkedIn profile is updated following the profile checklist and that it is geared toward your targeted industry and current career goals. This is a great place to capture recommendations. You might also reach out to your references and ask if they would be willing to recommend you on LinkedIn in addition to serving as a reference for your search. Networking is a great way to learn about potential openings and gain referrals.
- **Take advantage of Handshake.** SMSU Career Services sponsors our online employment system: Handshake. This is where employers searching for SMSU students and alumni post their positions, list campus interviews, and register for events. In addition, the Career Services website has a number of job and internship resources available and upcoming networking events for you to attend.
- **There are a lot of job search resources.** Keep yourself safe in the search, especially while applying online. A good rule of thumb is if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.
- **Apply for positions.** You've prepared materials, started searching for open positions, and are ready to start applying. Before applying, review the application directions for preferred methods of submitting. Some employers prefer the resume to be emailed directly to them, uploaded on their website, or sent as a hard copy through the mail. Remember the employer's impression of you is important. If they can't open your document or would prefer it received in a different manner, you might be placing yourself at a disadvantage. A good rule of thumb is to save documents as PDFs before submitting, but be sure to see if another format is preferred. If emailing the documents directly to the employer, be sure to formally address the email and share a brief, professional note in the body of the email.
- **Track applications.** You might want to use an Excel spreadsheet, your calendar, or an app. Whatever method you use to organize your search, be sure to keep it updated, include when you applied, what organization and position, and any contacts that you had for the application. By tracking this information, you'll be better prepared when you start receiving requests for screening interviews (typically by phone or video conference) and in-person interviews. As your search continues, list if you were interviewed, on what date, and any feedback you received.
- **Follow-up.** Reach out to the employer within 1-2 weeks of applying (or after the application deadline has passed) to see if any additional information is needed and confirm that your application has been received.
- **Interview, negotiate, and accept offers.** Schedule another mock interview with Career Services once an interview offer has been extended. Review the interviewing section of this guide for interviewing tips. Always send a thank you letter after an interview, preferably within 24 hours. Follow directions and send any additional information that the employer requests. Negotiating and accepting offers is covered in more detail in the pages that follow.

APPLYING TO GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Applying to graduate or professional school can be time consuming. Some people compare the application process to having a part-time job. There are limited spots which lead to high standards and fierce competition. So start early! A thorough approach to the application process will increase your chances of being accepted.

SHOULD I APPLY?

Good Reasons to Apply

- You need an advanced degree for your career of choice
- An advanced degree will create additional career opportunities
- You enjoy learning and it would provide personal satisfaction
- You like to do research

Reasons Not to Apply

- You're trying to postpone making a career decision
- You're trying to avoid the job market
- You're going to graduate school to please someone else
- You don't want to leave the familiar atmosphere of school

PAYING FOR GRADUATE SCHOOL

Not many people have the financial ability to pay for the entire expense of graduate or professional school. Some financing options are:

- Teaching Assistantships, Research Assistantships, Fellowships, Grants, Tuition Waivers and Loans*

** Some fields/industries offer loan forgiveness programs.*

TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIPS.

Requires you to teach undergraduate courses or labs. Tuition is usually waived and a stipend is often granted. A teaching assistantship is very prestigious but the workload is heavy.

RESEARCH ASSISTANTSHIPS.

Linked to a research project conducted by a specific professor. The best way to earn a research assistantship is to learn as much as you can about the research going on in the university.

FELLOWSHIPS.

Large awards given to a student with great academic promise. There are two forms of fellowships:

- Internal Fellowships- given by the graduate program
- External Fellowships-granted from outside sources.
-

GRANTS.

Smaller than fellowships, ranging from a few hundred to a few thousand dollars. Grants work exactly the same way as fellowships.

TUITION WAIVERS.

More common for Ph.D. candidates and for candidates in the laboratory sciences. They are less common for master's degree candidates in the humanities or for professional programs.

LOANS.

Students use loans to fund the gap between what hasn't been received through other means. Plan on preparing a FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid). Most of your undergraduate student loans will be deferred while you're in a full-time graduate school program.

RESEARCHING A PROGRAM

Research the programs of interest online or request information directly from the school. Find out the application of admission, financial aid information, and specific information about the program. Not sure where to start? Here's how to build your list of potential schools and programs:

- Peterson's Guide—available in print form in Career Services or online
- Use professional association websites for your field; most will include reputable programs in your area of study
- Professors and advisors
- Alumni
- Practicing professionals
- Career Services

THINK ABOUT THE FOLLOWING WHEN DECIDING ON A PROGRAM

- What is the reputation of the school? Is the program accredited?
- How long will the program take?
- Do you like the focus of the program?
- Are there professors with expertise in my area of interest?
- Are there adequate academic resources at the institution (e.g. library, laboratory, technology, updated equipment)?
- Are you willing to live in this area for 2-7 years?
- What is the professional placement rate of the graduates or pass rates for licensing exams?
- What kinds of financial aid are offered?
- What is the cost of the school? Cost of living in the area around the school?
- What kind of social life can the school or community offer?

APPLICATION TIMELINE

The following timeline is designed to provide a brief overview of the application process. It assumes you are applying for fall admission and that you plan to attend right after graduation. This process can be extended or abbreviated based on your circumstances and field of study. Please keep in mind that not all of the steps will be included. Check each school for specific entrance requirements, even if there is a standard application for all of your programs.

Junior Year

- Research programs; narrow down schools.
- Talk with faculty members in your field about your graduate study goals.
- Meet with the professors and references from whom you'll request letters of recommendation.
- Talk with Career Services about application requirements.
- Prepare for graduate admission tests; review required exams for your program.
- Investigate fellowships, grants and graduate assistantships.

Summer before Senior Year

- Read school catalogs online or through requested materials.
- Organize the application process. Buy inexpensive colored folders—one for each program. Attach the application checklist to the folder.
 - Checklists can typically be found on the school's website. You can use it to create a spreadsheet.
- Take practice exams or test prep courses for required admissions test.
- Register for graduate admissions exams.
- Collect the necessary applications and forms for financial aid, fellowships and grants.
- Decide which programs you will apply to.
 - One of the biggest mistakes people make is only applying to the best schools. Consider personal and professional fit and not just ranking. To increase your chances of being accepted choose 2 schools that fit into each of the categories below. Expect to apply to a least 6 programs if your career choice requires an advanced degree.
 - Rank all the graduate programs you have been researching in order of interest. Divide the schools into:
 - Schools you are pretty sure you can get admitted.
 - Schools you probably can get admitted.
 - Schools which would be difficult to be admitted.

Fall of Senior Year

- Complete applications—typically done online.
- Arrange for official transcripts to be sent.
- Take required graduate admissions exams; ensure that the scores have been sent to the appropriate schools.
- Write your personal statement—have Career Services, your advisor or professor critique it.
- Ask for letters of recommendation to be written- share a copy of your resume/CV, personal statement, where and how to submit (or envelope for mailing) and a deadline for sending the letter.
- As appropriate, complete financial aid paperwork—remember that this information needs to be sent in EARLY.
- Determine the application deadline. Highlight the date so you don't miss the deadline. Does the school use a rolling admission process (evaluating applications as they arrive)? Or does the school have a traditional deadline (all applications are evaluated after a set date)? Plan to apply as early as possible or at least 2-3 weeks prior to the stated deadline. Leave yourself and letter writers as much time as possible to submit materials.
- Establish a timeline for completion.
- Double check that all the application materials have been received by the school.
- Send thank you letters to people who wrote your recommendations.

Spring of Senior Year

- Develop a "Plan B" in case you are not admitted to your program(s).
- If you are accepted to more than one program, weigh your options and compare each program revisiting your initial criteria for applying. Have any of your career goals or personal circumstances changed since you applied?
- Visit universities that accept you.
- If you plan to live in university housing, apply for space.
- Send a deposit to the university of choice.
- Notify other universities that have accepted you of your decision to attend another institution.

BACKUP PLANS

It's always a good idea to develop a backup plan in case you are not admitted to the programs you apply to. Selection for graduate and professional school is very competitive and there is a chance that you might not be selected. Having a plan in place can lessen the anxiety of the process. You might conduct a job search in tandem with your graduate and professional school application by attending career fairs or learning more about year-of-service programs, like AmeriCorps.

If you are not accepted to your programs, make an appointment to discuss your search with Career Services or an advisor/professor. Some common next steps include:

- Putting your backup plan into action.
- Reviewing program requirements for GPA and admission exam scores to identify areas you can strengthen.
- Reviewing the number of programs you applied to in order to see if expanding your search could lead to a successful second round of applications.
- Talking with the programs about your application and looking for ways to strengthen a second application.

PERSONAL STATEMENTS



YOUR PERSONAL STATEMENT

Most graduate and professional school programs require a personal statement as part of the application. Some may even require more than one essay depending on the application process. Although there is not a set formula, the following tips may help you develop your personal statement.

- Research your programs—tailor your statement to each school. Show that you are a good fit for their program and the field.
- If one statement of purpose is used for a multi-program application, you will be focusing on your fit for that profession.
- Prepare an outline.
- Write a rough draft using your outline. Your answers should reflect the points requested by each program.
- Avoid unnecessary duplication—information included in other parts of your application (i.e. resume/CV, transcript, application form) should not be repeated here.
- Avoid lengthy personal or philosophical discussions.
- Avoid cliché statements. For example, when asked why you are interested in your career goal don't say something like "I want to be a counselor because I like to help people." Everyone that goes into counseling wants to help people. Be more thoughtful and specific with your response.
- Re-Write. Re-Write. Re-Write. The statement should be perfect and a good personal statement won't be written in one sitting.
- Ask Career Services, your advisor or professor to critique your statement.

GUIDELINES FOR THE CONTENT

Introduction: Begin with a distinctive opening to gain the reader's attention. Faculty are reviewing hundreds of applications, make sure your statement stands out. Connect your experiences and career objective to the program.

Supporting Paragraphs: Address the specific questions from the application. Use your outline to convince the committee of your qualifications and compatibility with the program. Highlight your accomplishments and experiences as it relates to your career goals and the program. Remember you need to show that you are a "fit."

Conclusion: Link all your qualifications presented in earlier paragraphs—tie everything together. Show how you will "fit" the program and how the program will direct you in your long term goals.



CURRICULUM VITAE (CV)

CURRICULUM VITAE (CV)

A Curriculum Vitae (also called a CV or vitae) is a detailed document of professional and academic accomplishments. In the United States, the CV is mostly used for individuals with graduate education in pursuing positions in research or academic settings. It can be used for the following purposes:

- Teaching, research or administrative positions in higher education
- Research or consulting positions
- Admission to graduate school—part of the application process
- Academic or department tenure reviews
- Grant applications, publishing and editorial review boards
- Leadership positions in professional associations
- School administrative positions

The CV reflects the accomplishments of a scholar and teacher and for this reason is updated frequently. Overseas, the CV is commonly used in place of a resume.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A CV AND RESUME

The most notable difference between the CV and resume is the length. The CV is at least two pages whereas a resume is typically one page—two maximum. Although the CV is longer than a resume, it should still be written in a succinct manner that is clear and easy to read. The CV is a detailed synopsis of one's background and skills. The goal of a CV is to construct a scholarly identity. For this reason, the CV focuses on an individual's teaching, research, publishing and scholarly experiences. Many of the suggestions about formatting and descriptions shared in the resume section are applicable to creating your CV.

Some areas to include:

- Education—including dissertation or master's thesis
- Teaching experience
- Research experience
- Publications and professional papers
- Grants received
- Consulting experience
- Fieldwork, internships, or graduate practicum experiences
- Leadership positions, committees, professional associations
- Certificates and licensure
- Special training
- Fellowships, awards and scholarships

CV RESOURCES

There are many resources available for developing your CV. Career Services is available to answer any questions and critique your CV. You should also check with the faculty in your department for suggestions and guidelines.

CURRICULUM VITAE (CV) SAMPLE

Claire Standish

1501 State Street • Anytown, MN 56258 • 507-111-1111 • Claire.Standish@my.smsu.edu

Education

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| State University , Anytown, MN
<i>Master of Social Work</i>
<i>Thesis: Impact of food scarcity programs on ending hunger in MN</i> | Graduation: May 2018
GPA: 3.92 |
| Southwest Minnesota State University , Marshall, MN
<i>Bachelor of Arts in Social Work</i>
<i>Minor: Psychology</i> | May 2016
GPA: 3.73 |

Relevant Coursework:

- Marriage and Family, Abnormal Psychology, Developmental Psychology, Substance Abuse
- Diverse and At Risk Populations, Basic Interviewing Skills

Practicum Experience

- | | |
|--|---------------------|
| County Services , Anytown, MN
<i>Practicum Social Worker</i> | August 2017-Present |
|--|---------------------|
- Work under direct supervision of clinical practicum supervisor
 - Supervise on-going visits between parents and their children; use reflective parenting, intervention, feedback, and redirection
 - Manage referrals for supervised visitations and coordinate on-going visitation arrangements
 - Complete supervised visitation observation forms during supervised visits
 - Document visitation session and share information with assigned Child Protection Social Worker and/or Child Social Worker
 - Assist in requesting court orders for Child Protection Social Worker and/or Child Social Worker
 - Contact social service providers to arrange meeting for clients
 - Maintain records pertaining to client progress including requesting birth and medical records, assisting with social histories, school records, social security cards, and other necessary paperwork

Teaching Experience

- | | |
|---|---------------------|
| State University , Anytown, MN
<i>Teaching Assistant: Course: Introduction to Social Work</i> | August 2017-Present |
|---|---------------------|
- Teach introductory concepts of social work as a Social Work Program requirement
 - Prepare lesson plans and grade all submitted assignments

Research Experience and Conferences

Reed, L. & Standish, C. (2017). Families' perceptions of experience of case management. Poster accepted for presentation at Social Work Conference 2018, San Diego, CA.

Volunteer Experience

- | | |
|---|-------------------------|
| Crisis Center - Marshall, MN
<i>Volunteer</i> | September 2012-May 2016 |
|---|-------------------------|
- Completed crisis management training consisting of listening to speakers, watching videos, and reading books about crime and other crisis situations
 - Received calls from victims of crime seeking services provided by the Crisis Center
 - Conducted informal intakes and determines appropriate resources for referrals
 - Managed calls for the Crisis Center before and after regular office hours
 - Determined appropriate resources and provide advocacy to victims of crime and their families
 - Provided crisis management for individuals presenting with issues of abuse, sexual assault, custodial concerns and victims of crime
 - Maintained strict confidentiality

CURRICULUM VITAE (CV) SAMPLE

Claire Standish, CV Page 2/2

Memberships

Social Work Society of America- Student Affiliate August 2012-Present

SMSU Social Work Club- Member August 2012-May 2016

- Active member who participated in community service events. Assisted with fundraising, food drives, meals on wheels and highway clean up.

SMSU Breakfast Club- Member August 2012-May 2016

- Consulted with other clubs and organizations to promote campus involvement
- Volunteered in organizing the George McGovern speech on "Ending World Hunger in Our Time" at the SMSU campus

Work Experience

SMSU Career Services and Counseling & Testing Services- Marshall, MN October 2012-May 2016

Work Study

- Provided excellent customer service to students by troubleshooting issues and answering questions.
- Maintained strict confidentiality
- Developed brochures and presentations

Honors and Awards

- Academic Dean's List December 2012-May 2016
- Endowed Scholarship August 2014-May 2016
- Alliss Scholarship August 2014-May 2016
- SMSU Faculty/Student Mentor Program August 2012-May 2013
- Schwan's Academic Scholarship August 2012-May 2013

Technical Skills

Proficiencies in: Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint; SPSS; Prezi

References

Dr. Lynn Reed, Ph.D.

Professor
State University
Address
Phone
Email

Fred Smith, MSW, LCSW
Clinical Supervisor
Mental Health
Address
Phone
Email

Joan Johnson, MSW, LCSW
Clinical Supervisor
Crisis Center
Address
Phone
Email

INTERVIEWING



You've just been invited to an interview. Congratulations! This section will give helpful tips to help you feel prepared and confident for your interviews. The best way to get ready for an interview is with a mock interview. Schedule one with Career Services.

10 STEPS TO A SUCCESSFUL INTERVIEW

- **Do Your Research:** Understand as much as you can about the organization or program. This will give you an edge in selling yourself and sharing your skills with the interviewer.
- **Be Prepared:** Bring along a padfolio containing extra copies of your resume/CV, a copy of your references and paper to take notes. Have questions prepared to ask at the end of the interview.
- **Dress Professionally:** Before the interview, select your outfit. Overdress rather than under dress. Wear a suit and polished shoes. Dress for confidence. If you feel good, others will respond to you accordingly.
- **Arrive on Time:** Never arrive late to an interview. Allow extra time to find the building. Plan to arrive 10-15 minutes ahead of the scheduled interview.
- **Show Enthusiasm:** A firm handshake and good eye contact demonstrate confidence. Smile, nod, and give nonverbal feedback. Interviewers want candidates that are enthusiastic and interested in the position or program. Remember to speak in a confident voice, even though you may feel nervous.
- **Listen:** One of the most neglected interviewing skills is listening. Make sure you are not only listening, but also reading between the lines. Sometimes what is not said is just as important as what is said.
- **Give Specific Examples:** Interviewers often ask behavioral questions. Your past behavior can indicate your future performance. When answering questions give examples that highlight your successes and uniqueness. One specific example is worth more to the interviewer than a lot of vague stories.
- **Answer the Question Asked:** Candidates often don't think about whether or not they are answering the questions asked by their interviewers. Make sure you understand what is being asked, and get further clarification if you are unsure.
- **Ask Questions:** Your questions indicate your interest in the organization or program. Many interviewees don't ask questions and miss the opportunity to find out valuable information.
- **Send a Thank You:** Make sure to send a thank you within 24 hours of the interview. You can email or mail a thank you letter to interviewers.

PREPARING FOR THE INTERVIEW

Research Them:

- What skills are required?
- What knowledge will the interviewers be looking for?
- What is the job description-the responsibilities of the position? Or information you should know about the graduate/professional school program you are applying for?
- Find out the mission statement of the company or program.
- Read press releases and news articles on the organization/program.
- View their website to explore their expectations for employees or graduate/professional students.
- Talk with people you know who work for the company or attended that school.

Research Yourself:

- What are your strengths?
- What are your opportunities for improvement?
- How does your education support the position/program you are seeking?
- What are your short and long term goals?
- What are your interests?
- What awards/recognition have you previously received?
- How will your skills make you successful in this position/program?
- How do your short- and long-term goals relate to that of the company or field you are trying to enter?

PRACTICE FOR THE INTERVIEW:

- Conduct a mock interview with Career Services
- Review the Interview Questions To Ask Interviewers section on the next page and write out at least three to five questions for the interviewer

BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEWING

What is it? Behavioral interviewing is a style of interviewing that many interviewers use. It offers a more objective approach for interviewers to determine a candidate's fit for a position or program. The philosophy behind behavioral interviewing is that past performance is an accurate predictor of future performance.

PREPARING FOR THE BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEW

The difficult part of the behavioral interview is preparing for it. To determine which skills the interviewer is seeking, read the job description. Become familiar with the skills interviewers may be seeking. Some of these are:

Communications Skills	Integrity	Motivation	Computer Skills
Teamwork	Decision Making	Interpersonal Skills	Flexibility/Adaptability
Analytical Skills	Creativity	Leadership Skills	Organizational Skills

Formulate examples from work, internships, classes, team involvement, research projects, and community service. Pick examples that demonstrate skills the job will require. Like many new graduates, you may not have much paid work experience. However, your group projects provide excellent opportunities to demonstrate skills the interviewers are seeking. The process of answering behavioral questions is extremely important.

Follow the STAR process by briefly giving the: Situation | Task | Action | Result

SAMPLE BEHAVIORAL QUESTIONS

- Give me an example of an important goal you had to set and tell me about your process in reaching that goal.
- Describe a situation when you were able to have a positive influence on the actions of others.
- Give me an example of a time when you went above and beyond the call of duty.
- Describe a situation where others you were working with on a project disagreed with your ideas. What did you do?
- Give me an example when your schedule has been suddenly interrupted. What did you do?
- We can sometimes identify a small problem and fix it before it becomes a major problem. Give an example of how you have done this.
- What has been your experience in giving presentations to small or large groups? What has been your most successful experience in public speaking?
- Describe a situation in which you found that your results were not up to your professor or supervisor's expectations. What happened? What action did you take?
- Tell me about a time when you had multiple projects due at the same time. How did you handle it?

ADVICE ON ANSWERING THE MOST COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

What kind of salary do you need? Are you applying for other jobs? Why should we hire you? These are some difficult questions to answer because your answer may prevent you from getting the job. Review these typical interview questions and think about how you would answer them. After the questions are listed, you'll find some strategy suggestions. Practice answering these questions using your own experiences. For those difficult questions, see the Career Services office.

Tell me about yourself.

The most often asked question in interviews. You need to have a short statement prepared in your mind. Be careful that it does not sound too rehearsed. Limit it to work or school related items unless instructed otherwise. Talk about things that you have done and jobs you have held that relate to the position or program you are interviewing for. Think about the positions and accomplishments you have listed on your resume.

What experience do you have in this field?

Speak about specifics that relate to the position or program you are applying for. If you do not have specific experience, get as close as you can.

What have you done to improve your knowledge in the last year?

Try to include improvement activities that relate to the position or program. A wide variety of activities can be mentioned as positive self-improvement. Have some good ones handy to mention.

What are some of your strengths?

Numerous answers are good, just stay positive and match the strength to the position you are seeking. Share two to four strengths and then a brief example for each. The brief stories will help you stand out. A few good examples:

- Your ability to prioritize
- Your problem-solving skills
- Your ability to work under pressure
- Your ability to focus on projects
- Your professional expertise
- Your leadership skills
- Your positive attitude

INTERVIEWING



Tell me about a time when you helped resolve a dispute between others.

Pick a specific incident. Concentrate on your problem solving technique and not the dispute you settled.

Tell me about your ability to work under pressure.

You may say that you thrive under certain types of pressure. Give an example that relates to the position applied for.

Do you have any questions for me?

Always have some questions prepared. See the following section for more ideas.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS TO ASK INTERVIEWERS

Candidates need to do two things well. They need to answer interviewers questions and ask good questions of the interviewer.

Two rules also apply when asking interviewer questions. They are to ask questions that say something about your ability to fit in, do the job, and ability to meet the organization/program objectives. The other is to hold off asking about salary and benefits until after the first interview. When an offer is made, you'll have more negotiating power.

Below are some different questions to ask. If the interviewer has answered these questions, don't ask them. Choose those that would be appropriate for the situation. You may want to re-word the questions so that you can feel comfortable asking them. Remember, if you've done your homework and researched the organization and position or program and school, you may already know the answers and may want to ask more in-depth questions.

JOB OR INTERNSHIP: End-of-Interview Questions

- What specific duties and responsibilities are most important to getting the job done as part of a team?
- Could you talk a little bit about what a typical work week would be like for _____ at _____ Company?
- What's the normal path and time frame for advancement within the company?
- What are some of the strengths you believe the ideal candidate for this position should have?
- How does your organization measure employee performance? How often is this done?
- What do you feel is the best aspect of working for this organization?
- If I were hired, how many others would there be in my department?
- What is your management style?
 - This question is great because it tells the employer that you are truly interested in a good personality match.
- When will you be making a decision? Or, What's the next step in the process?
 - You may want to save this for the final question.

GRADUATE/PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL: End-of-Interview Questions

- Could you tell me more about the research that Dr. _____ and Dr. _____ are conducting?
- How are research assistants assigned to advisors?
- What criteria are used to evaluate clinical experiences? How frequently are students evaluated?
- What traits do successful students in this program possess?
- How is the success of this program measured? What was last year's pass rate for licensure?
- When will you be making a decision? Or, What's the next step in the process?
 - You may want to save this for the final question.

Ask a few questions, but be sure to read the interviewer and don't prolong the interview if it seems as though your time is up.

When they say "we'll be in touch," you say all of the following:

- Thank you for taking the time with me, Mr. /Ms./Dr., etc. _____.
- I'm really interested in the position/program and working for the organization/joining your program.
- I would appreciate the opportunity to follow up with you if I have any additional questions. Could I have your business card?

SCREENING INTERVIEWS

Interviewers often screen candidates by phone or video conference before requesting an in-person interview. The interview tips outlined on the previous pages are great tips to follow no matter the situation, but there are a few differences to consider about interviewing on the phone or by video conference.

PHONE INTERVIEW TIPS

- Be sure that the location that you plan to interview in is quiet and that you have a good phone connection.
- The interviewer will typically let you know how much time and how many questions will be asked at the beginning of the interview. If there are others on the call, you will also wait for introductions before they begin asking questions.
- Remember that this is a screening interview. It will likely be shorter than a follow-up interview so be sure to be concise with your responses.
- You may want to have a few notes out, but just a few keywords rather than prepared examples. They should serve as a reminder to key topics you want to cover. Interviewers will be able to hear you moving around so don't shuffle papers or go searching for something.
- Don't eat or chew gum while you are on the phone. This will also be heard on the other end.
- Consider dressing in interview attire for the phone interview. It will help you feel more professional and your responses and phone demeanor will reflect it.
- Be sure to smile (it can also be heard through the phone) and be positive!
- Take notes when you ask the interviewers questions. Or if information is shared while you are interviewing.

VIDEO/VIRTUAL INTERVIEW TIPS

- Be sure that the location that you plan to interview in is quiet and that you have a good internet connection. Be aware of your background and surroundings since the interviewers will also see them.
- The interviewer will typically let you know how much time and how many questions will be asked at the beginning of the interview. If there are others on the video conference, you will also wait for introductions before they begin asking questions.
- Remember that this is a screening interview. It will likely be shorter than a follow-up interview so be sure to be concise with your responses.
- Unlike a phone interview, you might only want to have your application materials out in front of you and maybe the position/program description.
- Be sure to know where to look to maintain eye contact with the interviewers. Don't look at yourself.
- Dress in interview attire as you will be seen on their screen.
- Be sure to smile and be positive!
- Take notes when you ask the interviewers questions. Or if information is shared while you are interviewing.

DINING INTERVIEWS

Interviews can often happen over a meal. This section provides a few tips, but not all that you will need to know about dining etiquette.

Before a Meal:

- Try to find out where you will dine so you have an idea of the type of establishment it is. If you haven't been to the formal interview yet, be sure to ask if there is a dress code for the restaurant that you should be aware of.
- Look at the menu ahead of time so you can have a few options in mind before the interview. If you have any dietary restrictions, identify which options might work for you and what substitutions you might need to make.

During the Meal:

- When ordering, let the host order first. Do not order the most expensive or least expensive item or anything messy.
- Remember that you are always on an interview.
- Let the interviewer set the tone of the conversation: casual vs. all business.
- Maintain a professional presentation.
- Remember that the main purpose of the meal is the interview and not the meal. Enjoy the meal, but don't fill up and don't ask for a to-go box.

After the Meal:

- Thank the interviewer for the meal (they are likely paying).
- Continue the interview process if the meal was in the beginning or middle of the interview. Discuss next steps if it was at the end of the process.

THANK YOU NOTES

Few candidates take the time to send an interviewer a thank you. You want the interviewer to take special notice of you and look at you in a favorable light. A thank you letter will help to draw positive attention to your candidacy. Write a thank you letter within 24 hours of an interview.

USES FOR THANK YOU LETTERS

- Express your appreciation for being granted an interview.
- Reemphasize your potential value to the employer/program.
- Correct miscommunications, but do not sound defensive.
- Add any points about yourself or your experience you forgot to address in your interview.
- Reaffirm your interest in the position or program for which you interviewed.
- Confirm any follow-up instructions given to you by the interviewer.

APPROACHES

There are two different formats to sending a thank you letter. The first is by email and the second is by stationary thank you note. You can chose which format you prefer.

- Emailing a thank you is very appropriate and the fastest way to reconnect with the interviewer.
- Stationary thank you note is another form of a thank you. Stationary thank you letters can be handwritten or typed. If you handwrite the letter, make sure it is legible and neat.

TIPS FOR WRITING YOUR THANK YOU

- Thank the interviewer(s) by name.
- Spell interviewer's name correctly; write to interviewers that met with you.
- Use either a "thank you card" or professional appearing stationary.
- Make sure to sign your name at the bottom of the letter, but also include a printed version directly below it to eliminate the possible guess work by the employer when determining who the card is from. Use blue or black ink.
- Keep it simple and to the point.
- Request the opportunity to follow up.
- Restate thank you.

EXAMPLE EMAIL THANK YOU

From: Lance.Griggs@my.smsu.edu
To: Charles_lexon@abcdcompany.com
Subject: Interview Thank You

Dear Mr. Lexon,

It was a pleasure to meet you today. I appreciate you granting me the opportunity to interview for the assistant human resources position.

My involvement in SMSU's Human Resource Club has provided me with many opportunities to apply my coursework and to help five local businesses develop their orientation materials. These experiences will be very beneficial for a person in this position, and I feel that my personality is a great fit for your company's environment. I am very excited to hear what your decision is and am available for additional interviewing.

Thank you again for your time.

Sincerely,

Lance Griggs

JOB OFFERS & SALARY NEGOTIATION

You've just been offered a job! Congratulations! Now what? Do you immediately accept? Negotiate? Decline?

NEGOTIATION

- **Evaluate the offer.** Is the position aligned with your career goals and objectives? Can you picture yourself working in the organization and with the team? Is your total compensation appropriate? Ask the employer if you may have the offer in writing. This reduces the potential for future misunderstandings and allows for you to be clear about salary, benefits, start date, etc.
- **Ask for time to review the offer.** You have the right to ask the employer for a period of time to reflect on the job offer and do not have to accept a position immediately after it is offered. Communicate with the employer about how much time you need to make an informed decision, but remember that you do not want to keep the employer waiting.
- **Do your research.** You need to justify why you warrant an increase in your offered salary and tie that to the value you will bring to the organization. Utilize salary websites to help you identify an appropriate salary range. Be prepared with this information early in your job search process because you may be asked by the employer for your salary history or expectations early in the interview process. Use salary resources like Glassdoor.com and salary.com and others available in Career Services.
- **Understand the negotiation process.** The purpose of the negotiation process is to reach a mutual agreement with the employer. You do not want the negotiation process to be a confrontation. Remember, you will be working on the same team as the individual(s) with whom you are negotiating in a few weeks. ALWAYS REMAIN PROFESSIONAL! You do not want to seem like you are not worth the hassle or difficult to manage.
- **It is not always just about salary, benefits add up too.** When individuals add the benefits the organization is offering to the base salary, they are often surprised that they are making more than they would at another organization offering a higher base salary. Benefits such as health insurance, retirement savings plan, vacation plans, opportunities to grow professionally, travel, overtime pay, and compensation time all quickly add up.

ACCEPTING THE OFFER

- **Accept the job in good faith.** After you have verbally accepted a position, you are committed to the employer and position even if a better offer comes along in a few days. Your honor, professionalism and reputation are valuable in your industry and hard to rebuild. Before you accept the position, be sure to spend the time to make a well-informed decision.
- **Withdraw your candidacy from other positions once you accept the offer.** Informing employers that you are out of the job market will demonstrate your professionalism. Also, it will help others who may be interested in the job(s) for which you were applying during your search and rule out a tempting offer that may present itself after you've already committed to another organization.
- **Provide additional information.** Follow-up with the employer to make sure they have all of the information they need to finalize the offer (i.e. transcripts, reference letters, and other correspondence).
- **Follow-up with your network.** Don't forget to thank and notify your references and professional network of your new professional position.

DECLINING THE OFFER

If after evaluating the offer and your career goals, the position/organization/timing do not fit; you may choose to decline the offer. If this is the case, be sure to consult with friends, family, advisors, Career Services, before making your final decision and discuss professional ways to appropriately decline the offer.

Ray Kinsella

123 Anystreet • Marshall, MN 56258 • 507-888-5545 • Ray.Kinsella@my.smsu.edu

OBJECTIVE- To obtain an Agronomist position with Anywhere Cooperative

Dedicated, driven, and highly motivated individual with a strong work ethic with great potential to help an agribusiness maximize profitability to the best of their ability. Strong time management, organization, and multi-tasking skills used to complete all projects and orders on a tight deadline. Proficient in Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Outlook.

EDUCATION

Southwest Minnesota State University, Marshall, MN Expected Graduation: May 2018
Bachelor of Science - Agronomy GPA: 3.41

AGRONOMY EXPERIENCE

Anywhere Company, Marshall, MN Summers 2016 & 2017

Southwest Minnesota Branch Intern

- Scouted client's fields for weed, insect, disease, and plant health problems
- Recommended products based on clients' current pest-management strategies
- Used precision-agriculture software, increasing soil sampling accuracy for clients
- Created sales brochures and marketing information to increase awareness of different agronomy products and services

XYZ Cooperative, Brookings, SD Summer 2015

Scouting Intern

- Learned proper scouting techniques for various plant, insect, and disease pests
- Soil and tissue sampled on a daily basis as directed by supervisor
- Assisted with daily agronomy retail operations

CERTIFICATIONS

Associate Certified Crop Advisor

- Member of the American Society of Agronomy and will be eligible to sit for the CCA exam and become fully certified in 2018

ACTIVITIES

SMSU Ag Club, Marshall, MN 2014-Present

President, 2015-2016

Activities Chairman, 2014-2015

Lyon County 4-H Club, Marshall, MN 2014-Present

Volunteer Leader

SMSU Student Association, Marshall, MN 2016-2017

Senator

ACHIEVEMENT

Post-secondary Agriculture Students' Competition, Marshall, MN 2016

Received 1st Place in the area of Employment Interview

Computer S. Resume

Current: 1501 State Street • Marshall, MN 56172 • 507-537-6221
 Permanent: 1501 Robin Street • Stillwater, MN • computersample@my.smsu.edu

INTERNSHIP IN SYSTEMS ANALYSIS • PROGRAMMING

QUALIFICATIONS

- Excellent program debugging and problem analysis skills
- Proven ability to assess problems and troubleshoot issues
- Capacity to interpret and communicate technical concepts to non-technical users
- Demonstrated ability to provide technical assistance and training to computer users
- Directs students and staff members in the operation of peripheral equipment

Commented [MS1]: --- Font Size and Color

General rule of thumb is 10-12 font for Times New Roman, 9-11 font for Arial, and 11-12 font for Calibri. Use a conservative color for font- black and grays are typically the easiest to read.

TECHNOLOGY

Languages: Java, C, C++, Visual Basic, Oracle, SQL, HTML

Operating Systems: Windows 7, 10, ME, 2000, XP; Mac OS; MS-DOS, Unix

Software: Microsoft Office Suite, Microsoft FrontPage, Norton, McAfee, Photoshop, Dreamweaver, Adobe

Hardware: Pentium and equivalent systems, Macintosh, scanners, Zip drives, Hewlett Packard and Lexmark printers

Commented [MS2]: --- Margins

Your margins should be at least one half inch. You really don't need more than one inch. Make sure your "white space" is appropriate for the layout you've chosen.

EDUCATION

Southwest Minnesota State University, Marshall, MN

Bachelor of Science in Computer Science

Minor: Mathematics

May 2019

GPA 3.65

Commented [MS3]: Certifications and Licensures

If you have a certification or licensure which is relevant to your career objective, include a "Certifications" or "Licensure" section or combine with your education section.

Relevant Coursework:

- Programming Languages • Software Engineering • Information and Knowledge Management
- Operating Systems and Networks

Commented [MS4]: --- Layout and Dates

You want your layout to be clean and easy to read. Don't use templates. You want to stand out in both content and quality of layout. Stay away from the "canned" resume. List dates on the right side of the page so they are easy to find.

COMPUTER EXPERIENCE

Computer Tech

August 2017-Present

SMSU Technology Resource Center, Marshall, MN

- Offered technical assistance to students and faculty using the systems and programs in computer labs
- Fielded questions about Microsoft Office productivity software, email application and Internet browsers
- Aided students and faculty in using peripheral equipment, like scanners, modems and printers

Commented [MS5]: Your experiences do not have to be paid to be relevant. This gives you the opportunity to include any experiences in which you demonstrated skills, knowledge or abilities that relate to the position or industry you are seeking.

Programming Intern

May 2016-August 2017

Sample Company, Location, MN

- Reviewed existing programs to determine compliance and changed code as needed
- Created documentation for system applications
- Utilized Visual Basic

Commented [MS6]: --- Descriptions

Use action verbs and quantitative examples.

ACTIVITIES

SMSU Math and Computer Science Club

September 2016-Present

Students Today-Alumni Tomorrow (STAT)

September 2016-Present

Commented [MS7]: --- Length

Most resumes are generally one page. Two page resumes are acceptable if your experiences relate to the position and industry you are applying to.

SAMPLE RESUMES

Bill Lumbergh

1718 26th Street • Anywhere, MN 56258
507.555.1111 • Bill.Lumbergh@my.smsu.edu

OBJECTIVE

Seeking an MBA internship in Business, Supply Chain Management or Marketing

EDUCATION

Southwest Minnesota State University, Marshall, MN

Master of Business Administration

Anticipated: December 2018

Bachelor of Science: Management

May 2014

Concentration: Supply Chain Management

MBA GPA: 3.73

Minor: Marketing

Undergrad GPA: 3.62

Relevant Coursework: Human Resource Management, Professional Selling, Project Management, Computer Concepts/Applications

MARKET RESEARCH

Advertising Campaign Research Project – Created a marketing plan for Martinez Meat and Grocery by utilizing different strategies and budgets to help the business push into different markets and sustain a larger profit margin

Six Step Selling Process Project - Approach various sales scenarios by determining social styles and effectively adapting to each set of social styles

SEWearable Designs Production Efficiency Project - Develop a strategy for SEWearable Design's production line to be able to produce high quality custom products in an efficient matter and ensuring the needs and wants of the client are fulfilled

EXPERIENCE

Retail Sales Specialist

July 2016-Present

Auto Parts, Marshall, MN

- Cultivate and maintain relationships with more than 20 professional businesses
- Recognized for achieving second highest related sales in the district
- Recognized for achieving highest seasonal related sales in the district from January-February 2017
- Develop adaptive sales techniques as a full-time employee while maintaining full-time student status

Manager

May 2014-June 2016

IniTech, Marshall, MN

- Supervised internship program for software programmers
- Maintained relationships with various suppliers
- Updated employers on TPS reporting changes

LEADERSHIP

SMSU American Marketing Association

August 2010-May 2014

- Participated in activities that involve interaction with the school and community, educational outings to advertising agencies in surrounding communities, and attended biweekly meetings
- Served as Vice President, Secretary and Public Relations Chair

SMSU Enactus

August 2010-May 2014

- Engaged in projects to improve communities by using educational experiences, local business advisory boards, and institutional resources to implement programs that create real economic opportunities for members of the community
- Active on the Green Team

MONICA ROSALITA

1310 12TH STREET • MADEUP TOWN, HH 02020 • MONICA.ROSALITA@MY.SMSU.EDU • 507.333.8888

OBJECTIVE: To obtain an ESL Student Teaching Position

QUALIFICATIONS

- *Diversity:* Knowledgeable and considerate of peoples' beliefs and heritage
- *Leadership:* Consistently gains increased responsibility throughout employment history and academic work
- *Communication:* Effectively motivates and communicates with diverse age groups and people of differing backgrounds
- *Technology:* Proficient in Microsoft Office, SmartBoards, Prezi, and Adobe Illustrator

EDUCATION

Southwest Minnesota State University (SMSU), Marshall, MN Graduation: Dec. 2018
Bachelor of Science: Teaching English as a Second Language K-12 GPA: 4.0
Minor: Special Education

MN West Community & Technical College, Worthington, MN May 2016
Associate of Arts in Education GPA: 3.95

PRACTICUM EXPERIENCE

Montevideo Public School, Montevideo, MN Jan. 2017-May 2017

- Observed 9th-12th Special Education classroom for 25 hours
- Viewed and analyzed multiple cooperative group learning methods
- Identified ways to incorporate a think-pair-share cooperative learning method to promote team building

Lynd Public School, Lynd, MN Aug. 2015-Dec. 2015

- Observed 25 hours in 9th & 10th grade Spanish classroom
- Suggested two interactive activities that taught students about Spanish foods

EDUCATION ACTIVITIES

Tutor, SMSU Academic Commons, Marshall, MN Nov. 2016-Present

- Assist students with varying levels of Spanish
- Answer a variety of questions about the Spanish language; explain conjugating verbs process
- Develop sample exam questions to gauge students' level of understanding
- Motivate and encourage students to complete assignments on time

Public Relations Officer, SMSU Family and Child Educators (FACE), Marshall, MN Aug. 2016-Present

- Elected Dec. 2016-Present
- Design and distribute all promotional materials for educational events
- Create, format, and write monthly newsletters and update bulletin boards
- Recruit new members through classroom presentations and student organization fairs

Member, SMSU Education Minnesota Student Program (EMSP), Marshall, MN Aug. 2016-Present

- Promote organization and inform students of organization benefits

Program Lead, Summer Diversity Program, Madeup Town, HH May 2014-Aug. 2014

- Identified and implemented activities that allowed participants to showcase their heritage
- Informed the 40 participants of different cultures through presentations, songs, crafts, and stories
- Planned and organized a day trip to local museums; recruited chaperones and drivers

SAMPLE RESUMES

Remy Ratatouille

Permanent Address: 378 196th Street • Solton, IA 57145 • (780) 3265241 • Remy.Ratatouille@my.smsu.edu

Current Address: 1000 Village Drive, Apt. 308 • Marshall, MN 56258 • (219) 886-6000

Profile	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Direct restaurant experience offering unique culinary management skills• Strong leadership, active listening, and problem solving skills gained through supervisory positions• Effective communication abilities gained through extensive work with the public• Demonstrated excellent time management
Education	<p>Bachelor of Science, Culinology and Hospitality Management Anticipated: 5/2018 <i>Southwest Minnesota State University, Marshall, MN</i> GPA: 3.87</p> <p><u>Significant Coursework:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Management Principles • Human Resource Management • Food Sanitation and Safety• Menu Design and Service Management • Quality Assurance of Food Products• Marketing Principles • Diversity Management
Restaurant Experience	<p>Assistant Manager, Landmark Bistro, Marshall, MN 1/2016-Present</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promoted to Assistant Manager in February 2017• Manage and supervise 15 wait staff and 5 cooks• Resolve customer complaints quickly and efficiently• Observe and evaluate employee performance to ensure quality service• Researched, created, and planned new menu <p>Cook, Sully's Bar and Grill, Solton, IA 3/2015-12/2016</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Trained, supervised, and advised 2 new cooks on food prep policies• Inspected food preparation areas to ensure safe and sanitary food handling practices• Standardized recipes through weighing, measuring, and recording ingredients• Assisted head cook during high demand times
Leadership Experience	<p>Vice President, SMSU Student Hospitality Organization 10/2016-Present</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Organized 10 catering fundraisers• Designed recruitment plan that increased membership by 80% <p>Student Senator, SMSU Student Association 9/2016-Present</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Approve student organization budgets, allocated student fee dollars <p>Built 2 Serve Project Manager, SMSU Enactus 11/2015-Present</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Organize secret shopping, facilitated customer service seminar

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CONTACTUS

LOCATION/PHONE:

SMSU Career Services
Bellows Academic 156
1501 State Street
Marshall, MN 56258
507-537-6221

WEB/EMAIL:

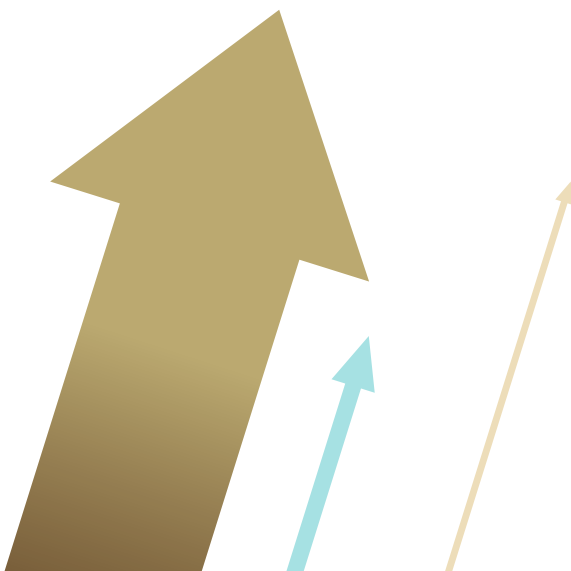
www.SMSU.edu/go/CareerServices
Careers@SMSU.edu

OFFICE HOURS:

Monday-Friday
8:00am-12:00pm; 1:00pm-4:30pm

SOCIAL MEDIA:

Follow SMSU Career Services
on Facebook, Twitter, and Pinterest





CAREER SERVICES

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MINNESOTA STATE

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