

**Resumes • Cover Letters • Interviews •
Job/Internship Resources**

A GUIDE TO THE JOB SEARCH PROCESS

The Career Guide





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INTRODUCTION

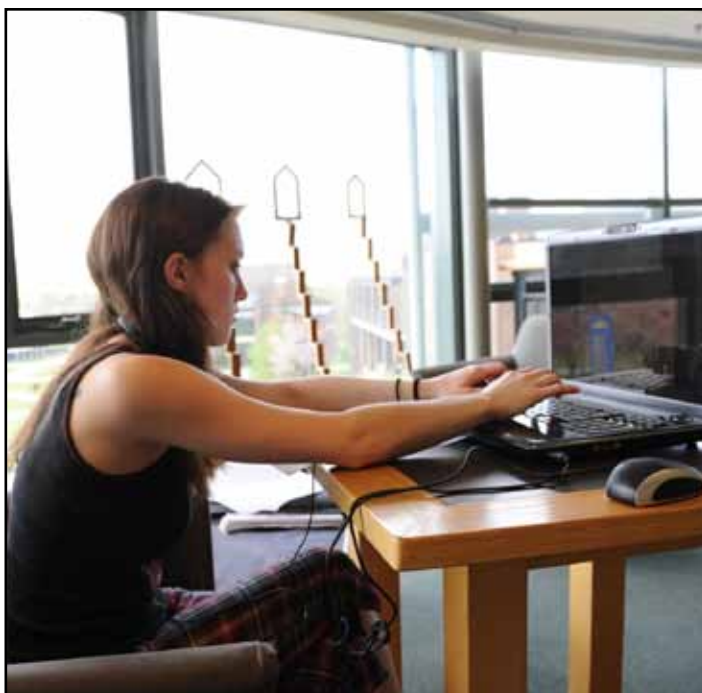
This guide is designed to provide you with some basic knowledge in how to craft a professional resume and cover letter, interview successfully, and launch your employment campaign. Additional resources are included to assist students who are seeking internships.

The Advising and Career Center at JSC provides free and comprehensive career services to all students - including distance learners and graduate students - and alumni of JSC. Services are provided by certified career counselors and include the following:

- Self-assessments
- Career counseling and advising
- Job/internship search assistance
- Resume/cover letter writing assistance
- Virtual career counseling and advising
- Graduate school advising
- Career workshops, information, and events
- Additional career resources

Remember, it is never too early or too late to begin planning for your future. Call, stop by, or e-mail the Advising and Career Center to schedule an appointment and begin taking a proactive approach to your career development.

Advising and Career Center
Dewey 164
Phone: (802) 635-1257
E-mail: JSCAdvising&Career@jsc.edu
Fax: (802) 635-1295



RESUME WRITING

The process of writing a resume is good preparation for a job search. It encourages you to review your accomplishments and identify experiences that are relevant to your job target. The purpose of a resume is to help you obtain a job interview. The resume is not a place to list everything you have ever done, but to highlight your main accomplishments relevant to the position you are applying for. The test of a good resume is whether or not you are getting interviews.

A resume serves as a marketing tool for internships, graduate schools, part-time/summer jobs, or full-time employment by highlighting your qualifications for a position. All students should begin to craft a resume before they need it so they are ready to apply for positions as they arise.

General Guidelines

- ▶ Resumes should be:
 - Focused – Tailor your resume to the position you’re applying for by including what’s relevant.
 - Concise – Use brief, strong statements, avoiding full sentences or paragraphs, i.e. view it as a billboard that lists your highlights.
 - Accomplishment-driven – Cite what you did to add value to the position as opposed to listing job duties/responsibilities.
- ▶ Appearance is critical. Be sure there are NO grammatical or spelling errors and the layout and organization is consistent, neat and professional looking.
- ▶ Resumes are skimmed. Use brief, powerful, and professional statements. If using more than one page, be sure that all information is relevant to the position you are applying for and that you use more than half of the second page. Most recent grads only need one page unless they have significant relevant experience.
- ▶ Use action words to begin each accomplishment and descriptive line, e.g. enhanced, influenced, reconciled, etc. (see power verb list for more ideas)
- ▶ Do not use personal pronouns, e.g. I, me, my.
- ▶ Avoid writing in narrative style, using full sentences; rather, write in telegraph style using short, powerful statements.
- ▶ Do not include unnecessary punctuation, e.g. periods at the end of descriptive lines, colons at the end of headings, parentheses around dates, etc.
- ▶ Use bullets for descriptive lines to aid reading.
- ▶ Do not include high school education, accomplishments or experience, unless directly relevant to the position you are applying for.
- ▶ If you choose to include “relevant coursework” as a section, list only courses that show breadth or depth (specialized or more in depth study) that is relevant to the position applying for.
- ▶ Avoid including experience that reflects areas that may be controversial or expose you to bias, e.g. religion, politics, sexual orientation, etc., unless relevant to the position you are applying for.
- ▶ Avoid using templates. They are inflexible to work with and do not look professional.
- ▶ ALWAYS include a cover letter when submitting a resume. Employers do not always request a cover letter but do expect one.



Experience History: Start with your most recent job and work backwards. List such information as the name, city, and state of your employer, job title, dates of employment, duties, skills developed and accomplishments. Experience includes paid and unpaid experience, e.g. volunteer/community, coaching, mentoring, internships, student teaching, etc.

Additional Data: List relevant hobbies, volunteer activities, special talents, or aptitudes (such as leadership skills or experiences, travel, foreign languages, computer skills, musical abilities, etc.).

- 2) Develop a rough draft. Concentrate on accomplishments and skills. Avoid using “I” statements — begin phrases with power verbs. Edit and type the rough draft. Avoid using templates because they are not original – your resume will look like everyone else’s and you won’t be able to customize it easily to your formatting needs.
- 3) Have your resume critiqued by someone in the Advising & Career Services office and/or someone working in your target profession – JSC faculty members can be a great resource for this.

Resume Don'ts

Never include the following information on a resume

- ▶ Personal characteristics, e.g. height, weight, age, date/place of birth, marital status, sex, race, health, or social security number
- ▶ Reasons for leaving previous employment and previous salaries
- ▶ Photo of yourself
- ▶ Salary information (only include in cover letter if requested)
- ▶ References (these belong on a separate piece of paper and are only submitted upon request)
- ▶ Title “Resume”

How To Get Started

- 1) Use a blank worksheet to generate information on your education, employment history, activities, and additional data. Once you have determined what to include on your resume, it will be easier to choose a format that best highlights your relevant skills and experiences.

Education: List schools attended, dates, courses taken, degrees, special projects, subjects, extra-curricular activities, special skills developed, and academic accomplishments.



RESUME SECTIONS

Contact info section

- ▶ Include your name, address, phone numbers, and e-mail address (be sure e-mail and voice mail message are professional)

Highlights of Qualifications section

- ▶ Using bullets, list three or four of your most relevant qualifications for the position in which you are applying for to catch their attention right away (use job posting to help you identify what you should highlight).

Education section

- ▶ Lead with your education by listing
 - Name of degree, e.g. Bachelor of Arts in Business Management
 - Name and location of institution
 - Year of graduation (anticipated or achieved)
 - Minor, concentration, or certificates
 - Academic awards
 - Relevant coursework/projects
 - Study abroad
 - GPA – ONLY if it is 3.5 or above (tip: You can list either cumulative or major GPA)

Experience section

- ▶ Experience includes paid and unpaid experience, e.g. employment, internships, student teaching, community/volunteer/coaching, etc.
- ▶ List experience in reverse chronological order (most recent first).
- ▶ List each experience with most important information first, e.g. position title, name of organization, location (town/state), and years involved (if less than one year, include month).
- ▶ For each experience use bulleted statements that describe:
 - Responsibilities that are not obvious from the position title;
 - Achievements/accomplishments, i.e. promotions, salary increases, employee of the month;
- DO NOT just list job duties and responsibilities.
- ▶ See “Writing Descriptive Lines” page for further assistance

Additional sections

- ▶ Include additional sections, depending on your experience. Some examples are as follows:
 - Additional Training/Professional Development, i.e. conferences, seminars, workshops
 - Language Competencies (fluent, conversant, etc.)
 - Licenses/Certifications
 - Special Skills/Talents
 - Technical Skills
 - Entrepreneurial Achievements
 - Campus Involvement and Service
 - Professional Memberships/Affiliations
 - Volunteer/Community Experience
 - International Experience
 - Interests – ONLY include if relevant to the position

Writing Descriptive Lines

Use effective language to convey to employers what you will bring to the position you're applying for.

Good: Wrote press releases

Better: Wrote press releases about upcoming events to enhance publicity and increase participation

Best: Wrote 15 press releases detailing upcoming events which were sent to 100 local media outlets to raise publicity and attract up to 2,000 community members to a movie preview

More examples of descriptive lines:

Organizational Skills

- Reconciled end-of-day receipts with cash and credit transactions to account for daily sales averaging \$1500
- Honed time management and planning skills by maintaining full-time academic status and employment
- Protected the integrity of confidential, privileged information, and large cash transactions
- Handled late accounts effectively, securing \$5000 in past-due accounts
- Organized database to track business contacts and was commended for attention to detail and accuracy

Teamwork Skills

- Gained a reputation for working well on a team, receiving "Team Player" award
- Entrusted to work and uphold protocol within corporate office among high-level executives
- Served as an office liaison, communicating employee concerns to management

Public Relations & Interpersonal Skills

- Established and maintained good rapport with over 20 colleagues and managers
- Broadened and maintained an extensive network of contacts and clients
- Interacted with diverse customers on a constant basis, promoting excellent communication and customer service skills
- Diffused situations with angry customers and efficiently resolved complaints

Fundraising/Project Development & Implementation

- Raised over \$10,000 at annual fundraiser, increasing attendance and media coverage from previous year
- Initiated redesign of office management systems resulting in easier access to information
- Entrusted with special projects that afforded the opportunity to work independently
- Exceeded fundraising goal, doubling the profit from the previous year
- Maintained internet site as it grew to over 2000 pages and images that generated 200 hits daily

Leadership & Supervisory Skills

- Developed strong communication/leadership skills supervising two other prep cooks
- Managed daily operations of upscale bar and restaurant including opening and closing operations, inventory management, new employee training, customer service, and sales
- Supervised lawn care maintenance team, including customer satisfaction, planning daily schedule and sales, maintenance of equipment, landscape construction and snow plowing and removal

Written & Oral Communication Skills

- Wrote feature articles for the Badger Herald, a student newspaper with a daily circulation of over 17,000
- Presented research findings to panel of eight faculty and students at undergraduate research symposium

Overview of Accomplishments

- Praised for the ability to solve difficult problems independently and efficiently
- Named "Sales Associate of the Month," September 2007

POWER VERBS

Begin each descriptive line with a power verb. The following is a sample list to get you started.

Management Skills

administered
analyzed
assigned
attained
chaired
contracted
consolidated
coordinated
delegated
developed
directed
evaluated
executed
improved
increased
organized
oversaw
planned
prioritized
produced
recommended
reviewed
scheduled
strengthened
supervised

Research Skills

clarified
collected
critiqued
diagnosed
evaluated
examined
extracted
identified
inspected
interpreted
interviewed
investigated
organized
reviewed
summarized
surveyed
systematized

Technical Skills

assembled
built
calculated
computed
designed
devised
engineered
fabricated
maintained
operated
overhauled
programmed
remodeled

repaired
solved
trained
upgraded

Teaching Skills

adapted
advised
clarified
coached
communicated
coordinated
developed
enabled
encouraged
evaluated
explained
facilitated
guided
informed
initiated
instructed
persuaded
set goals
stimulated

Financial Skills

administered
allocated
analyzed
appraised
audited
balanced

budgeted
calculated
computed
developed
forecasted
managed
marketed
planned
projected
researched

Helping Skills

assessed
assisted
clarified
coached
counseled
demonstrated
diagnosed
educated
expedited
facilitated
familiarized
guided
referred
rehabilitated
represented

Communication Skills

addressed
arbitrated
arranged
authored

corresponded
developed
directed
drafted
edited
enlisted
formulated
influenced
interpreted
lectured
mediated
moderated
motivated
negotiated
persuaded
promoted
publicized
reconciled
recruited
spoke
translated
wrote
acted

Creative Skills

conceptualized
created
designed
developed
directed
established
fashioned
founded

illustrated
instituted
integrated
introduced
invented
originated
performed

Detail Skills

approved
arranged
cataloged
classified
collected
compiled
dispatched
executed
generated
implemented
inspected
monitored
operated
organized
prepared
processed
purchased
recorded
retrieved
screened
specified
systematized

RESUME CRITIQUE

ASK YOURSELF...

Appearance:

At a glance, can you identify significant data, such as your degree, work experience and leadership qualities? How could the appearance be improved?

Length:

Could anything be deleted, shortened, or combined? One-page resumes are still preferred by employers; however, two-pages are acceptable as long as the information is relevant.

Action Orientation:

Do the phrases begin with power verbs? Do descriptions give an active impression?

Specificity:

Does the resume highlight specific skills, accomplishments, and areas of knowledge? Are accomplishments quantified wherever possible?

Effectiveness:

How well does the resume accomplish its purpose? Does the resume suggest a “fit” with the job tasks and requirements of your targeted area?



This is just one sample of a resume. For additional samples, the Advising & Career Center has many resources available to review. Different headings can be used that help highlight your experience and accomplishments.

John B. Smith
123 Railroad Street
Johnson, VT 05656
(802) 635-0000, John.Smith@jsc.edu

HIGHLIGHTS OF QUALIFICATIONS

- Agricultural business and agronomy/horticultural expertise
- Supervisory and training experience
- Strong academic and experiential background

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Science, Environmental Science
Concentration in Natural Resources
Johnson State College, Johnson, VT May, 2002
GPA 3.73/4.0, Dean's List
Received Departmental Award in Environmental Science

RELEVANT COURSEWORK/PROJECTS

- ▶ Land Use Planning • Water Resources • Energy & Mineral Resources • Toxic and Solid Waste Management • Fundamentals of Soil Science • Environmental Geology • Forest Ecology
- ▶ Initiated and organized a composting program at four local schools

RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

Intern, Morrisville Tree Farm, Morrisville, VT, 2000-Present

- ▶ Planted, cultivated, irrigated and sprayed over 300 evergreens for ornamental/Christmas tree use
- ▶ Properly maintained seedling stock to ensure future supplies
- ▶ Supervised 20 employees and created additional training opportunities to ensure quality work
- ▶ Commended for providing a positive work atmosphere, which increased employee motivation and output

Field Technician, Burlington Intervale, Burlington, VT, summers 1998-2000

- ▶ Increased the productivity of soil sampling and plant tissue sampling by 15%
- ▶ Efficiently managed weekly employee scheduling
- ▶ Trained volunteers and ensured that they handled procedures properly

Laborer, Deerfield Nursery, Deerfield, MA, 1995-1996

- ▶ Performed such tasks as tilling, cultivating, and harvesting horticultural crops
- ▶ Accurately installed, operated and maintained irrigation equipment which prevented loss of crops
- ▶ Supervised a harvesting crew consisting of ten employees from diverse backgrounds

TECHNICAL SKILLS

- ▶ Microsoft Office Suite, Access, Photoshop, HTML

ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE

Customer Service Representative, Friendly's Restaurant, Deerfield, MA, 1995-1997
Food Preparation Technician, Friendly's Restaurant, Deerfield, MA, 1994-1995

POSTING YOUR RESUME ONLINE

When employers request that you submit an electronic resume, follow their directions precisely. If the resume is included in the e-mail, follow directions below for an online resume (removing all formatting, etc.). If the resume is to be submitted as an attachment, label the attachment so it is clear what the attachment is, e.g. JohnSmithResume.docx. When employers give you options as to how you can submit your resume, submit both a hard copy and an electronic submission.



Online Posting Tips

Online resumes require changes in format and design to ensure it can be scanned and read. There are many tips available. The following are some of the key ones to follow:

- Use Plain Text (.rtf) to save document.
- Eliminate all formatting, e.g. bullets, underlining, bold, centering, columns, tabs, boxes and other graphics.
- Use a standard font in which letters do not touch, e.g. Times New Roman.
- Text lines should be 65 characters or less, including spaces.
- Justify all content to left margin.
- Use hard returns to make line breaks and avoid using word wrap.
- Place most important information at the top.
- Include keywords (either incorporating in the content of resume or adding a list of keywords at the bottom of resume). Keywords can be found in job postings. Use nouns rather than verbs that are keywords for your profession.
- If uploading to a website, avoid confidential information, e.g. address and phone number.
- Be descriptive in your titles. For example, don't just use "assistant"; use "legal office assistant".
- Mail a high-quality laser print or an excellent copy. Do not fold or use staples, as this might interfere with scanning. You may, however, use paper clips.
- Supplement your resume postings on job boards by publishing your resume -- formatted the way you feel best spotlights your qualifications -- on your Web page.

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WRITING EFFECTIVE COVER LETTERS

Cover letters are a very important part of an effective job search. Along with a resume, they serve as your first impression with potential employers. Always include a cover letter when submitting an application or resume. Cover letters reveal your communication skills, whether or not you've done your research on the company, and your motivation for applying. A well-written cover letter can be instrumental in getting that first interview. The best cover letters are written from the perspective of how you can help meet the needs of the employer, i.e. what value you would bring to their organization that will help them achieve their mission.

Use the cover letter as an opportunity to demonstrate through past successes that you will be an effective and productive employee.

Include in the cover letter wording that conveys knowledge of the organization and its products, services, business, or core mission.

LAYOUT/APPEARANCE

- Always type your letters using block style format (single-space with double-space between paragraphs; text flush to the left).
- Typos, misspellings and grammatical errors can cause your application to be rejected. Have someone else proofread to make sure your letter is error-free.

- Be sure to sign the letter.
- Cover letters should be concise and focused. DO NOT include information they already know (e.g. what they are looking for) or can be found on your resume. Keep the letter to one page.

WRITING STYLE

- Avoid beginning too many sentences with the word "I".
- Avoid the phrase "I am writing" in your opening paragraph, as this is understood in a letter.
- Use three or four paragraphs in the letter.
- Use transition phrases and topic sentences to improve the flow of the letter between paragraphs.
- Your cover letter should always convey confidence and a positive attitude. Avoid any statements or words that sound like you are unsure of your abilities or the contributions you can make. For instance, statements like, "If you think I am qualified", or "I hope you find my..." will not assure the reader that you are a confident individual.

OVERALL IMPRESSION/MARKETING EFFECTIVENESS OF CONTENT

- Address letter to a specific person or title, e.g. Director of Human Resources. If the job posting does not give you a name, it is okay to call the company to inquire to whom you should direct the letter. Be sure to include their title.
- Tailor the letter to the position and organization, emphasizing how your specific qualifications and interests match the employer's needs.
- Do not oversell yourself or appear too desperate. Phrases such as "I will work for free if you give me the chance," or "I will take any job you have available" are not effective. 13

COVER LETTER FORMAT:

The following is one sample of a cover letter. The Advising & Career Center has many more samples and resources available to assist you.

Your Name
Street Address/P.O. Box
City, State, Zip Code
Date

Ms. Jane Employer, Title
Organization
Street Address/P.O. Box
City, State, Zip Code

Re: Position title

Dear Ms. Employer:

First paragraph – Tell why you are writing; how you heard of the opening or organization, especially if you were referred by a mutual contact. DO NOT just restate the job posting information.

Second paragraph – Cite one or two examples of past experiences that are relevant to the position and convey to the employer what kind of an employee you will be. Tell why you are interested in the employer, location, or type of work. If you have related experience or specialized training, be sure to include that. Refer the reader to your resume for more detailed descriptions, but DO NOT use the cover letter to repeat what can be found in the resume.

Third paragraph – Close by making a request for an opportunity to talk with the employer so you can further discuss your qualifications. Thank the employer for their consideration of your application and that you look forward to hearing from them.

Sincerely,

Your signature

Your typed name

Enc.

Mary B. Jones
111 Main Street
Hyde Park, VT 05655
January 1, 2011

Sharon Smith, Director of Human Resources
Union Bank
111 Main Street
Morrisville, VT 05661

Re: Business Internship

Dear Ms. Smith:

I am writing to express an interest in the internship recently posted on the Johnson State College job bank. As a business management major, I am interested in learning more about the banking industry through practical application of my finance and business education.

As my resume reflects, I have a strong academic record, campus leadership experience, and employment history that demonstrates my organizational skills, dedicated work ethic, and desire to succeed in future career aspirations. Union Bank's excellent reputation as a community bank and supporter represents the type of organization that I would like to learn from and work with. I believe my personality, interests, and abilities would be a good match for your internship opportunity.

I look forward to hearing from you and arranging a convenient time to discuss further my qualifications as an intern and how they will meet your needs at the Union Bank. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Mary B. Jones

Enc.

INTERVIEWING

Interviewing is a mutual exchange of information between you and a prospective employer.

Aim to communicate information about your skills and qualifications clearly and accurately, and to relate this information to the requirements of the job for which you are interviewing.

In addition to providing the employer with information about you, it is important that you seek additional information about the position and employer. This process will benefit you in deciding whether the position is a good fit.

An interview gives the employer the opportunity to meet you in person and to evaluate the “total” you. This includes your attitude, appearance, personality, confidence, knowledge about yourself, knowledge about the company, and basic ability to do the job.

Preparing for the Interview

- ▶ Practice answering questions you may be asked during the interview. Rehearsing your responses in advance will help you communicate more effectively during the interview.
- ▶ Research the company before the interview and investigate the role of the position within the organization.
- ▶ Prepare questions to ask the interviewer that reflect your knowledge of the position and company.
- ▶ Write down the time and place of your appointment and the name of the person interviewing you. Get detailed directions and visit the site prior to the interview, if possible.
- ▶ Wear professional attire that is appropriate for the position. First impressions are important!
- ▶ Bring extra copies of your resume in a folder or briefcase and have your papers arranged for easy reference (resume, references, and transcripts).

Consider the employer’s perspective when preparing and presenting yourself to a prospective employer. Be prepared to address:

1. How your education and experience relate to the position

2. Why you really want to work for this company
3. Why you are interested in this kind of work
4. Whether or not you have a good work attitude
5. How you would fit into the company

To practice these skills go to
www.perfectinterview.com/jsc

Interviewing Techniques

- Be on time, preferably 10-15 minutes early. Know the interviewer’s name and how to pronounce it. Use a firm grip when shaking hands and smile. When concerned about whether to shake hands or sit, follow the interviewer’s lead. Sit up straight. Look the prospective employer in the eye; don’t gaze at the floor, ceiling, or papers on the desk. Your non-verbal communication sends a message. Maintain appropriate eye contact, posture, and voice tone. Try to avoid nervous mannerisms.
- Let the interviewer take the lead in the conversation. Expect to spend time developing rapport; personal chemistry is a main ingredient in the hiring process. Listen carefully to the interviewer’s questions. Don’t be afraid of pauses in the conversation; take time to think. Silence is okay! It aids reflection and thought.
- As soon as possible after the interview starts, tell the employer about skills, training, and experience you possess that would be useful for the job. Try to be very complete. Emphasize your qualifications – never say, “I need a job” or “I’ll do anything.” If you don’t tell the interviewer about your skills, no one else will. Avoid mention of your personal, domestic, or financial problems. Discuss only matters related to the job.
- Give specific examples to communicate your skills. Emphasize what you can do for the organization. Portray self-confidence and emphasize your positive traits. Do not undersell your qualifications but do not exaggerate or lie. Be businesslike and brief. Ask for clarification if you do not understand a question. Show the interviewer you are sincerely interested in the position and company.

- Ask the interviewer questions based on your research about the position and organization. Be prepared with a list of questions covering things you want to know about the job, company, policies,

and practices. You want to understand what is required of you before you are hired, and get a true sense of the organization's "climate." This will avoid later disappointment for you and your employer.

- Never slight a former employer, colleague, teacher, or institution. Avoid debating the interviewer. Arguing with the interviewer will shorten the interview and weaken your chances of getting the job.
- Don't apologize or offer excuses for shortcomings – we all have situations that challenge us. Neither avoid nor seek to emphasize the presence of a personal challenge or lack of experience. Strive to keep the focus positive.

Emphasize what you can do for the organization. This means outlining your transferable skills. Employers want to know what you can do for them. Focus on your ability to learn quickly and easily, your communication skills, interpersonal abilities, analytical thinking talents and other highly desirable skills and personal attributes. Don't try to give the answer "he or she wants." Most recruiters and employers know a "canned" answer when they hear one.

- Be alert to signals from the interviewer that it is time to end the session. Express a desire for the position and inquire about future contact. Thank the interviewer for his/her time and consideration and let him/her know that you are looking forward to hearing from him/her. If you are not good at closing conversations, don't linger. End quickly and courteously.
- Don't discuss salary until you have an offer.
- Send a follow-up thank you note/e-mail immediately after the interview. Make certain that you furnish your prospective employer with any additional information, work samples,

or recommendations that you indicated were available and/or were requested. A thank you note/e-mail also provides an opportunity to address any question you feel you didn't adequately answer.

A Few Tips for Answering Tough Interview Questions

"Tell me about yourself."

Talk briefly about your academic and work history. Identify the strengths and skills you possess that qualify you for the position.

"What is it about this job that interests you?"

Talk about which responsibilities of the job are attractive and how you would be an asset to the company.

"What are your weaknesses?"

Use this question as an opportunity to highlight effective strategies for overcoming a challenge, rather than emphasizing your shortcomings. Present an example of an area that you have identified and are improving upon. For example, "I have received feedback that I need to be more assertive when working on projects and I am asking more questions and requesting assistance when I need it." Again, an example can be very useful! Don't use examples that are very negative – being late for work, conflict with co-workers, etc.

"Tell me about a time when you had multiple tasks to complete and how you accomplished them."

Think about what skills and attributes the employer wants to see in a successful candidate. Can you prioritize? Do you meet deadlines? Can you work with other people and elicit help? Your research on which skills they are looking for will help you to prepare for questions like these.

"What motivates you at work?"

Review experiences that have motivated you in the past. These could include managing information, helping people, being creative, speaking publicly, etc. Then determine which of these would be useful in the job for which you are interviewing.

“Why do you want to work here?”

Articulate clearly what a good company it is, or that the work will be challenging and interesting or that you have a commitment to the type of work you wish to do. Do not emphasize the time off, fringe benefits or free employer tuition.

“Why did you leave (or wish to leave) your past (present) employer?”

There are many legitimate reasons to leave a job. You may have had a lack of promotional opportunities or you were looking for new challenges. During interviews, never speak badly of a present or previous employer. Even if your boss was awful or the company didn't treat you fairly, you do not want to tell a possible future employer about it in an interview. It will concern them that you may be a complainer or a difficult employee.

“What are your goals?”

Respond with goals appropriate to work and the company. For example, “I hope to begin in this position, demonstrate my abilities and do quality work. After a year (two, three) I would like to seek other appropriate challenges in the company with more responsibility.” Longer-term goals to continue your education or plan for management or advance positions are appropriate as well.

Learn the STARR Technique *Prove by Example!*

SITUATION: Describe the specific situation. Set up your story.

TASK: What was the task you were trying to accomplish? Tell who, what, when, where, and why (only include relevant details!)

ACTION: What did you do to solve the problem or meet the task?

RESULT: Specify results. What happened?

RELATE: Link the skills you were demonstrating in this example to the job for which you are interviewing. Tell how the employer is going to benefit from hiring you.

Questions for the Interviewer

The interviewer usually provides you with an opportunity to ask questions. Before the interview, think about some questions that are of real interest to you. A few guidelines:

- ▶ Ask questions that you are fairly sure the interviewer can answer (remember how you feel when you can't answer a question during an interview).
- ▶ Don't ask about salary information or fringe benefits during the first interview.
- ▶ Avoid asking your questions in a manner that seems like an interrogation i.e. don't pull out a list of questions and 'fire away'.

A few examples of questions you might ask:

- What does typical day on the job look like?
- What personal qualities, skills, or experience would help someone do well in this position?
- What do you see as the greatest challenge in this position?
- To whom would I report? May I meet my prospective supervisor?
- What, specifically, are you looking for in the candidate you hire for this position?

The interview is a mutual exchange of information between you and a prospective employer. You need to learn about the organization and the position to determine how well it fits you.

THANK-YOU NOTES

A note sent following an interview or informational interview is not only good manners, it is essential. It assists the employer in remembering you and your unique qualifications.

A recruiter may interview many candidates throughout the day. Letters serve as a reminder, and can also be considered as marketing tools. A thank-you letter also leaves the employer with a favorable impression. If the employer is having difficulty

deciding between you and another candidate, a well-written thank-you note could play an important role in the decision to hire you.

Send a thank-you note within 24 hours of your interview and keep it to two or three short paragraphs. A short statement about your qualifications and continued interest in the position may be added. Be sure to get the correct spelling of the person(s) who conducted the interview and try to send a thank-you note to each person who interviewed you. It's ok to send a handwritten thank-you note as long as it's on professional card stock and if the interview was not in a strictly formal setting. Use a type written letter if you have handwriting that is difficult to read or if the interview was very formal. It is also acceptable to send an e-mail thank you note. Proofread all correspondence, including e-mails.

THE JOB OFFER

It is usually best to resist accepting a job offer on the spot. It's okay to express your interest and appreciation for the offer and to request a reasonable amount of time to consider it (anywhere from a few days to one to two weeks depending on the situation). This gives you time to evaluate all aspects of the job before accepting it.

THE JOB SEARCH

Launching an employment campaign requires planning, time, and effort. You'll hear many people say that looking for a job is a job, so treat it with the professionalism and commitment it deserves.

► Where do I start?

- Have a plan, be organized, and start six months before you need a job

► Think about...

- Types of work that interests you and how that might tie into possible career paths
- Organizations for which you have an interest in working for
- Work environments that would best fit you, e.g. office setting, outdoors, creative, etc.
- Important values, e.g. financial gain, flexibility, creativity, stability, etc.

- Transferrable skills, e.g. communication, human relations, organization, leadership, research, planning, etc.

► Things to do

- Write/update resume (see resume guide)
- Obtain references (three at a minimum, preferably professional references)
- Talk to instructors, advisors, parents, friends
- Attend career fairs on campuses or through organizations
- Conduct an informational interview to learn more about a specific occupation
- Research organizations
- Attend conferences related to occupations/industries of interest
- Join professional organizations and stay current with new happenings
- Clean up your online presence – employers do check!
- Visit Advising & Career Services for assistance
- NETWORK, NETWORK, NETWORK
- Check websites, newspapers, and job banks twice/week at a minimum (see sources below)
- Use multiple sources – don't rely on just positions posted on the Internet
- Prepare for interviews (see interview guide)
- Stay positive, be realistic, and don't give up!

► Things to consider

- Temp agencies
- Volunteering
- Internships
- Part-time work (multiple)
- Positions that will help you develop the skills/experience that will take you to the next step in your career

► Things to keep in mind

- Searching for a job can take a long time (six months to a year on average)
- Begin building your network early on while still a student by
 - Getting involved
 - Taking on leadership roles
 - Building crucial skills – technical, language, and others related to field
 - Obtain certifications if necessary
 - Attend events and training opportunities
 - Take rejections as a learning opportunity by asking respectfully what you could do to

be considered a stronger candidate in the future, e.g. interview technique, specific skills or experience

- Do not apply for one position, hoping you'll get it. Apply for multiple positions if possible
- Be persistent and diligent throughout the process
- Conduct yourself professionally through written, verbal, and in-person contact

ONLINE CAREER RESOURCES

Below is a list of some resources found online that can help assist you in your job search.

www.jsc.edu/CareerHub - *career, job search, and job postings*

www.quintcareers.com - *Quintessential Careers*

www.newgradlife.com - *(subscribe to free newsletter that offers valuable advice)*

<http://www.acinet.org/ACINet/> - *Career information*

<http://online.onetcenter.org> - *Occupational database*

www.perfectinterview.com/jsc - *interview tutorials*

<http://www.medcareerinfo.com/index.html> - *information on healthcare careers*

EMPLOYMENT POSTINGS

www.jsc.edu/CareerHub - *career, job search, and job postings*

www.jobsinv.com, **www.jobsinNH.com** , **www.jobsinME.com**

www.schoolspring.com - *all jobs in public schools*

www.indeed.com - *national job postings*

www.7dspot.com - *Seven Days - Vermont jobs, mainly Chittenden and surrounding counties*

www.oriongrassroots.org - *environmentally-based*

www.idealists.org - *social justice/nonprofit*

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INTERNSHIPS

Internships are one of the best ways to develop professional experience, explore career opportunities, and develop connections with organizations. Internships are also an excellent strategy for securing employment. Many organizations use them as screening mechanisms for future employees. All students can benefit from participating in one or multiple internships while in school or even after graduation.

INTERNSHIP RESOURCES:

www.vbsr.org (*paid internships in Vermont*)

Champlain College Internship Fair (*held each October and open to all students*)

National Life (*paid summer internships in marketing, business, finance, HR, etc.*)

www.vbsr.org (*paid internships in Vermont*)

www.oriongrassroots.org (*environmental internships*)

www.thesca.org (*conservation internships*)

www.vttechcouncil.org/internships.html (*paid internships*)

Many internships are not posted, requiring students to make inquiry of organizations when they are interested in interning. Remember to apply all the guidelines listed above for searching for a job when searching for an internship, i.e. be professional and diligent in your search. Most internship sites will expect you to formally apply by submitting a resume and cover letter.