CAREER VISIONS

GUIDING YOU TO A SUCCESSFUL CAREER

UNIVERSITY CAREER SERVICES


CONNECT WITH UCS!
www.uh.edu/ucs
We are a full-service career center offering UH students and alumni resources and assistance in the formulation and implementation of their career plans. From resume writing to interviewing skills, we have tools to get you hired.

Want to learn more about UCS? Connect with us online!

106 Student Service Center 1 | 713-743-5100 | uh.edu/ucs
Greetings from the new Executive Director!

Along with the University Career Services (UCS) staff, I am eager to work with you in the upcoming year!

UCS plays a vital and collaborative role in realizing the university’s mission to support student success. UCS has a dedicated team of Career Counselors for all colleges and disciplines to provide assistance in the formulation and implementation of their career goals and objectives. Services available to students include: career assessments, exploration of all majors and career paths, internship planning, graduate school planning, resumes, cover letters, networking, job search strategies, interviewing techniques, mock interviews, and evaluating job offers.

Our philosophy is to teach lifelong skills. This strategy involves helping students learn how to research career fields, assess personal skills, obtain internships, and identify job opportunities. Our goal is to provide students with a comprehensive career development program, which encourages them to understand the complexity of a college education with future career pursuits.

We encourage students to begin the career exploration process early in their college career. With this in mind, we encourage students to initiate the process of writing resumes, exploring internships, attending employer presentations, and meeting University of Houston alumni during their first and second years of college. By doing this, University of Houston’s students develop a greater understanding of career fields and have more career options as they progress with their college education.

In addition to the career counseling services offered to students, our Employer Development and Relations team works to facilitate relationships with employers interested in recruiting our talented students. To learn more about employers, we encourage you to attend an employer information session.

We encourage students to become involved with University Career Services by setting up a career counseling appointment, attending one of our workshops, or volunteering at our career related events. We welcome you to our office to discuss and develop your career plans.

The University Career Services at UH is located on the first floor of the Student Service Center 1 (#524 on the UH campus map). Please visit us in our newly renovated space which includes digital signs and interactive touch screens.

For more information about our career programs and resources, please visit our website at www.uh.edu/ucs.

We look forward to seeing you soon!

Warmest regards,

Monica D. Thompson
Executive Director
University Career Services
“Life is not easy for any of us. But what of that? We must have perseverance and above all confidence in ourselves. We must believe that we are gifted for something and that this something must be attained.”

~ Marie Curie
UCS Staff

Monica Thompson
Executive Director, UCS

Theresa Cyr
Assistant Director, UCS
Employer Development and Relations

Priyanka Raut
Career Counselor
Colleges of Education, Engineering, Social Work, and Pre-Health

Andrew Tessmer
Career Counselor
College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, and Pre-Law

Tiffany Bitting
Career Counselor
College of Natural Science and Math, and Pre-Health

Rachel Barron
Business Administrator

Jazel Borja
Student Employment Coordinator
SYMPPLICITY is a web-based Career Services Management System used to manage all aspects of the recruitment process and provides a range of online services to students, alumni, and employers. UCS will be launching Cougar Pathway during the fall 2014 semester, and students and employers are encouraged to register and build a profile.

Through Symplicity, students and alumni can search job postings, stay informed about upcoming programs and career fairs, schedule counseling appointments, and participate in On-Campus Recruiting.

92 of the nation's top 100 colleges and universities use Symplicity.

UCS services are available to all currently enrolled students, undergraduate and graduate, as well as alumni of the University of Houston.

Currently enrolled UH students are eligible for all career related programs and resources offered by UCS. Most services, aside from the career related assessment tests, are at no charge. UH alumni have a semester grace period after graduation. After this semester, UH alumni who are interested in utilizing UCS services will need to pay a nominal fee.

COUGAR PATHWAY LAUNCHES FALL 2014

The professional team of UCS career counselors provide individual and group counseling on topics to help you:

• Pinpoint your vocational interests, personality preferences, clarify your work values, and identify your ideal work environment
• Explore what you can do with your degree/major
• Research career fields, industries, and employers
• Establish satisfying and realistic career options
• Improve your resume
• Prepare for interviews
• Learn how to work a career fair
• Develop networking skills
• Plan and conduct an effective job search
• Evaluate salary and job offers

To schedule an appointment, log onto the UCS website at www.uh.edu/ucs or call 713.743.5100. We ask that you choose one UCS career counselor and work with him or her for all of your career-related concerns.

Walk-ins are a good option for students with quick questions. Students have a maximum of 15 minutes with a UCS career counselor. It is first come, first served, no appointment needed. Please find our walk-in hours at: www.uh.edu/ucs.
VOCATIONAL ASSESSMENTS

Vocational assessments are used to help pinpoint your vocational interests and personality preferences, clarify your work values, and identify your ideal work environment. Below are the assessments offered by UCS:

Career Leader

Career Leader is a self-assessment that is best for students who are fairly sure they want a career in the business field but aren’t sure which niche to select. It assesses a student’s interests, motivators, and skills.

Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)

The MBTI is an assessment that helps students to understand individual differences, personality preferences, and uncover new ways to work and interact with others.

StrengthsQuest

StrengthsQuest is an online assessment that will help you gain insight into your areas of greatest potential: the things that you naturally do best. StrengthsQuest is not a career assessment and it won’t tell you what job or career you should do. However, it does provide valuable information about who you are and gives you clues to the type of work environment in which you are most likely to thrive.

Strong Interest Inventory

The Strong helps students discover their true interests and better identify, understand, and often expand their career options. The Strong generates an in-depth assessment of the student’s interests among a broad range of occupations, work and leisure activities, and educational subjects.

RESEARCHING COMPANIES AND INDUSTRIES

University Career Services

UCS has resources to assist you in researching companies and industries such as:

- “Company and Industry Research Guide” handout located under the “Students” section of the UCS website.
- A link to the Houston Business Journal under the “Students” section of the UCS website.
- Reference the “Company Research 101” article in this publication.

M.D. Anderson Library

The M.D. Anderson Library has a wealth of information and a full range of database and publication resources with specific information on public and private companies, subsidiaries, foreign-owned companies, and industries.

Online resources include: ABI/INFORM Complete; BoardEx; Business Insights; Business Source Complete; Hoover’s International Directory of Company Histories; LexisNexis Academic; Mergent Horizon; Mergent Online; NetAdvantage; Plunkett Research Online; ProQuest Historical Annual Reports; ReferenceUSA; Small Business Resource Center; and the U.S. Census Bureau Business and Industry. Access these resources by going to: Research Guides - Loretta Wallace at http://guides.lib.uh.edu/profile.php?uid=23149.

Job Shadowing

Job Shadowing gives students the opportunity to explore their desired career field typically for a half day or one full day. Students apply and are selected by the Job Shadow Sponsor, who is a career professional in their intended career field (i.e., a student interested in going to law school is matched with a lawyer). Students will then spend a mutually agreed upon length of time with the Sponsor at the Sponsor’s place of business, and gain insights into a specific career field. These opportunities are posted on the UCS website.

RESOURCES FOR FINDING A JOB OR AN INTERNSHIP

On-Campus Recruiting

On-Campus Recruiting (on-campus interviews) is a service that brings company recruiters to campus to interview UH students and alumni for full-time, part-time, and internship opportunities. The recruiters represent a broad spectrum of industries and fields, including business, engineering, technology, government, and others. On-Campus Recruiting is open for all majors and all classifications, although the types of companies interviewing will generally reflect the overall job market.

For more information, see the “On-Campus Recruiting Overview” article later in this publication.
JOB BANK

Job Bank is the UCS job board where job postings are listed by companies seeking UH students and alumni for employment. Job postings include part-time, internship, full-time, and career level (all experience levels), and on-campus positions. Job Bank is updated on a daily basis with the most current job opportunities, and may be accessed 24/7.

Job Bank can be accessed through the Job Search link under the “Students” section of the UCS website.

Career Fairs

UCS hosts career fairs each semester, and is one of the sponsors for the annual Texas Job Fair during the spring semester that includes Houston area universities. In addition, UCS sponsors the annual Campus Jobs for Coogs Fair during the summer, and is planning new career fairs for the upcoming academic year. Also, UCS collaborates with the UH Alumni Association (UHAA) to coordinate Alumni Career Fairs throughout the year. Watch for announcements on the UCS website.

Career Fairs are a great place to start a job search and to meet employers from a variety of industries. See the “How to Market Yourself at a Career Fair” article in this publication for tips and checklists.

Co-operative Education

Co-operative Education (or Co-op) is a program that enables college students to receive career training with pay as they work with professionals in their major fields of study. Work experience in government, business, industry, and human services enhances the students’ academic training.

Students are required to submit a work report at the end of each Co-op semester to personally document receiving work experience in their major field of study, and to receive a letter grade on the official transcript. This work report is preformatted and will take about an hour to complete.

Most employers use the Co-op concept as a recruiting tool. They like to fill their new hire vacancies with graduates from their Co-op programs whenever possible. Co-op positions are offered on a part-time, full-time, parallel basis (20 hours or less a week), and alternating basis (40 hours a week) with two students filling each job. While one student works, the other attends school. They trade places each spring, summer, and fall term. There are a few positions that are on a part-time schedule throughout the year; these are known as parallel Co-op jobs.

What are the advantages of being a Co-op student?

- Provides meaningful experience, making students more valuable to an employer upon graduation. Many companies tend to hire former Co-ops.
- Enables a student to earn money to help finance his/her college education.
- Makes academic work more meaningful through practical application of classroom principles.
- Creates the proper environment to explore career choices before graduation.
- Offers the opportunity to collaborate and network with professionals who have many years of experience in the student’s major field of study.

For more information, please contact the Co-operative Education office at 713.743.4230, or visit www.egr.uh.edu/coop.

UCAN@LinkedIn

“Cougars Helping Cougars”

The University Career Advisory Network (UCAN) group on LinkedIn is a career development resource designed to link UH students and alumni with volunteer advisors representing a wide range of occupational fields and experience levels. Through UCAN, you may communicate and network with professionals whose skills, experience, and advice can be extremely useful if you are in a career decision-making or job search mode.

UCAN group members can help you:

- Learn more about particular careers and industries
- Understand the academic and experiential preparation best suited for a given career
- Discover how people find jobs in certain career fields
- Determine the best sources for informational interviews
- Learn about a certain geographic area
- Find out what it’s like to work for a certain employer
WEB-BASED CAREER DEVELOPMENT TOOLS

The UCS website features well researched tools and sources of career development information such as:

FOCUS 2

FOCUS 2 combines self-assessment, career and major exploration, education and career decision making, and action planning into one resource.

The extensive database includes current detailed information on 1000+ different occupations. Brief videos accompany many of the occupations to give students a better feel for a “day in the life of …”

Descriptions include:

- Educational Requirements including Major Areas of Study
- Job Duties
- Skills
- Values
- Job Outlook and Trends
- Earnings
- Advancement Opportunities
- Typical Work Environment
- Typical Work Interest Profile
- Professional Associations

Regular and ongoing updates are made to keep data current with workforce and economic changes. Also, you will have the option to compare two occupations side by side, search for occupations by industry, and much more.

Internships.com

Are you interested in finding an internship? UCS subscribes to www.internships.com which features internship advice as well as internship positions nationwide. Know that you want an internship, but not sure what industry, field, or internship titles fit you? Try taking their quick assessment test: www.internships.com/predictor to learn more about yourself, your areas of interest and internships that may be a good fit for you.

GRADUATE STUDENT SERVICES

University Career Services provides career counseling/exploration and job search help to graduate students and alumni for careers within and beyond academia. Check the “Preparing for Graduate or Professional School” handout under the “Students” section of the UCS website. These services include:

Graduate Career Counseling:

- Identify strengths and weaknesses, pinpoint interests, and clarify values
• Determine what you can do with a graduate degree in your field
• Find out how you can make yourself a more qualified job candidate

Portfolio Management:
• Have your resume or curriculum vitae critiqued

Job Search:
• Learn how to research different career fields and employers
• Participate in a mock interview for academic and non-academic positions
• Understand the importance of networking and how to accomplish it
• Learn how best to use the internet in your job search
• Gather information about salaries and find out how to evaluate job offers

PRE-HEALTH SERVICES

University Career Services provides Pre-Health Services to students and alumni interested in pursuing a career in the medical and/or healthcare fields including: medicine, optometry, dentistry, pharmacology, physical therapy, and research. UCS also maintains a two-way partnership with Exploratory Studies at UH. Exploratory Studies provides general advising, reference services, and file management specifically for students participating in the Health Professions Advisory Committee (HPAC), in addition to the resources and services made available to students through the University Career Services office.

UCS provides career counseling and facilitates career exploration for students interested in healthcare careers. Make an appointment with a UCS career counselor today regarding:

Pre-Health Career Counseling:
• Research healthcare related careers
• Explore related majors that connect with your interests
• Assess your interests, values and preferences
• Receive guidance towards the healthcare career that is right for you
• Obtain graduate and professional school planning information

Pre-Health Experience:
• Identify volunteer and internship opportunities
• Get health related, practical experience
• Identify student and professional organizations on and off campus

Application Assistance:
• Receive test preparation resources for dental, medical, and health related professional programs
• Develop and review your personal statement
• Practice mock interviews for professional and graduate school admissions
• Schedule a resume and cover letter critique session

PRE-LAW SERVICES

University Career Services provides Pre-Law Services to students and alumni. UCS offers professional career counseling to assist you in your decision to pursue a career in law as well as one-on-one help with your resume and personal statement for law school. “Pre-law” is any studies or activities that help prepare you for law school. Pre-law is not a major at the University of Houston. There is no prescribed or preferred major for students who want to become lawyers. Instead there are certain skills and types of knowledge that will train you best for law school. These include:

• Analytical reasoning
• Critical thinking
• Close-reading
• Written and oral communication
• Understanding of structures of society and government
• Research
• Organization and time management

The best “Pre-Law” preparation for law school will involve choosing a major that relates best to your interests and abilities and that helps develop the previously mentioned skills.

Your task as a pre-law student is to make an informed choice as to the direction of your career. It is recommended that you receive exposure to the field prior to entrance into law school. To test your interest in the law, you should engage
in practical learning opportunities such as internships or volunteering. Research the profession with recommended books and by conducting informational interviews with professionals. You may want to join student organizations to share ideas and questions with students who are also interested in a career in law.

Pre-Law Career Counseling:

- Participate in personality, interests, skills, and values assessments
- Decide if law school is right for you
- Review legal career and education preparation resources

Pre-Law Job Search:

- Locate employment and internship opportunities
- Get help with writing a resume
- Practice networking skills

Application Assistance:

- Identify LSAT preparation resources
- Navigate the LSAC website to understand the process of applying
- Get your personal statement, resume, and addendum statements reviewed
- Manage letters of recommendation

ALUMNI CAREER SERVICES

Whether you have graduated this year or in years past, we can all agree, things have changed since the Great Recession of 2008. Rarely do you see lines of candidates wrapped around a building waiting for an interview. What is more common now are the virtual lines of candidates who have applied for a position online and are waiting for a call back or correspondence from the employer. In this new environment, certain skills regarding resumes, interviews, networking, etc. have to be enhanced and used more strategically when looking for a job or starting a career.

Alumni Career Services provides professional job search assistance, resume reviews, interview preparation, graduate school preparation and selection, career counseling and advising, and more to all UH alumni. All UCS services are free to recent graduates for the semester immediately following graduation. Following the first semester after graduation, you will need to subscribe to Alumni Career Services, for a nominal fee, to continue utilizing career services and our online resources including job postings and CareerShift.

Alumni Career Services information and resources are available on the UCS website under the “UH Alumni” section.

JOIN UCS!

The UCS Ambassadors student group is a program that allows students to work at UCS to:

- Gain leadership experience
- Get involved on campus
- Help other Coogs
- Develop great communication skills

Visit the UCS website for more information, program requirements, and application deadlines.
THE JOB HUNT WORKSHOP

Think your degree guarantees you a job? Think again. Finding a job IS a job! A multi-faceted job search strategy is the key. This workshop will give you step-by-step instructions on how to network and effectively use the internet in your job search, as well as an overview of the best strategies in looking for on campus, part-time, temporary, internship, or career-level positions.

ROCK YOUR RESUME WORKSHOP

The purpose of the resume is to get you the job interview. The large majority of job candidates are screened out at the resume stage of the job search. This workshop will help you prepare a resume that will increase your chances of generating job interviews.

YOU’RE HIRED! INTERVIEW WORKSHOP

The structure of the interview, anticipating frequently asked questions, and dealing with difficult and illegal questions are some of the topics discussed in this workshop. Highly recommended for users of the On-Campus Recruiting service.

IMPRESS! HOW TO WORK A CAREER FAIR WORKSHOP

Career fairs can be a great place for you to meet potential employers, but you need to do more than print 30 copies of your resume, practice your handshake, and press your interview suit to succeed! Learn how to make the most of your next career fair in this workshop.

TO INTERN OR NOT TO INTERN? WORKSHOP

An internship is an effective way to gain exposure to the professional world of work while gaining hands-on, career-related experience prior to graduation. This workshop will focus on types of internships, sources of internship opportunities, and getting the most from an internship experience.

LOST? HOW TO CHOOSE A MAJOR WORKSHOP

Having trouble deciding on what major to choose? Feeling a little overwhelmed by all the choices UH offers? We can help! Learn ways to gain clarity about yourself and how to research career options in order to select a major that is a good fit for you.

Please visit the UCS website for a list of career development workshop dates and times. It is not necessary to RSVP to attend the workshops, but it is recommended that you arrive 10 – 15 minutes early as seating is limited. Call 713.743.5100 for special accommodations.
On-campus employment is a challenge to find on any university campus. University Career Services hosts “Campus Jobs for Coogs,” a job fair for on-campus (non-College Work-Study and College Work-Study) student employment. On-campus employment allows students, both undergraduate and graduate, to conveniently work on campus while attending school. Most campus departments/colleges hire their student workers for the entire school year during this event. Visit the UCS website and follow UCS on social media (Facebook, Twitter, and Pinterest) to learn more about potential opportunities.

Here are some important things to remember when searching for an on-campus job:

1. Demand for on-campus jobs is higher than the supply. This means that it is competitive to land an on-campus job.

2. Many students find their on-campus job through word of mouth. When you meet people, let them know you are looking for a job on campus. Not all jobs are posted online; therefore, it is important to network and inquire within your friends and contacts.

3. Have your friends that work on campus be on the lookout. Ask them about opportunities within their offices. When there is an opening, ask your friend to recommend you.

4. Follow-up with your friends and contacts. Don’t just tell them once that you are looking for an on-campus job. Given ample time, follow-up, because you never know when an opening will become available.

5. Start your search in your own department or college. Academic departments may prefer students enrolled in their own department/college.

**COLLEGE WORK-STUDY**

College Work-Study (CWS) is a Federal and State of Texas grant program awarded through the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid that allows students to work part-time to earn money for their college expenses while also gaining valuable job skills. Students may be awarded grants for the fall and/or spring semesters. All students who wish to apply for this award will need to have filed a FAFSA (Free Application of Federal Student Aid) each academic year and you should select the “Work-Study” option. Eligibility criteria include:
4. Work Assignments

- Remember, your work is your signature. It’s a reflection of you, the office, and the University. Sign it with pride!

5. Use of Resources and Supplies

- Your scheduled time at your job is work time. School work should be done on your own time.
- Office supplies and equipment are school property and are for office use ONLY.
- Do not have personal visits from friends and family.

Tips

Keep these things in mind as you begin your on-campus job search:

- Search jobs posted in Job Bank (CWS, non-CWS, on and off campus positions) on the UCS website at www.uh.edu/ucs. Click on the Job Search link (under the “Students” section), then, scroll down to the “College Work-Study” section and click on the Click here link.
- Not all departments post their job openings on our website; therefore, be sure to search departments’ websites, and/or inquire at their offices. Check if they have a job bulletin board where they post available opportunities; for example, the Campus Recreation and Wellness Center, tutoring labs and centers, a specific college, etc.
- UCS has an “On-Campus Employment Guide” handout that provides more information on finding an on-campus job. It can be found on our website under the Students link, click on the Handouts link, and then click on the On-Campus Employment Guide link to review.
- Attend UCS’s annual on-campus job fair, “Campus Jobs for Coogs,” to connect with UH departments seeking student workers for either College Work-Study or non-College Work-Study student positions.
On-Campus Recruiting is a convenient and effective way for UH job candidates to interview on campus with employers representing a broad spectrum of industries such as business, engineering, technology, government, and nonprofit. Interviews are conducted in our office for full-time, part-time, and internship opportunities. While employer needs reflect the demands of the overall job market, there are career opportunities for all academic majors through the On-Campus Recruiting service.

APPLYING FOR ON-CAMPUS INTERVIEWS

The fall and spring semesters are divided into one week recruitment periods. Each recruiting week has corresponding deadlines in which to submit your resume through the UCS website. Check the UCS website for On-Campus Recruiting (OCR) dates and deadlines.

Once you have completed your profile and uploaded at least one resume, you will be eligible to apply for positions posted through On-Campus Recruiting.

IMPORTANT

Submit your resume only if:

- You’ve had it critiqued by a UCS career counselor.
- You are truly interested. After all, you may be selected for an interview!

All interview schedules are set up as pre-selection schedules. Pre-Selection provides the opportunity for students and alumni to have their resumes viewed by employers of their choice, and the employer informs UCS which candidates they would like to interview on campus. All students and alumni whom the employer pre-selects are notified and scheduled for the interview by UCS.

CHECKING YOUR INTERVIEW STATUS

To determine whether you were selected or not selected to interview with the employer, check the “On-Campus Recruiting” section of the UCS website. There are four types of interview statuses:

- **Pending**: Means the employer has not provided their list[s] of interview candidates to UCS
- **Invited**: Means the employer is requesting an interview with you
- **Not-Invited**: Means the employer has not selected to interview you
- **Alternate**: Means you do not have an interview at this time; if someone on the schedule cancels, UCS will contact you regarding any open timeslot(s)

It is recommended that you check your interview status on a daily basis.
PREPARING FOR THE INTERVIEW

On-campus interviewing is often the first step in the interviewing process for many employers. Therefore, it is important to remember that the campus interview is a real interview, and it is not just a practice run.

What should you bring to a campus interview?

- Copies of your resume targeted to the position you are interviewing for.
- Company information you researched.
- List of questions to ask the interviewer.
- Career portfolio for any requested materials from the employer such as references, samples of work, awards, etc.
- Some employers will request a copy of your official transcript prior to or during the interview. You may bring a copy of your official transcript or a copy of your PeopleSoft grades.
- Dress for success! See the “Professional Image Counts!” article in this publication for recommendations on what type of attire and accessories to wear to an interview.

EMPLOYER INFORMATION SESSIONS/RECEPTIONS

Many employers conduct information sessions or receptions prior to their interview date.

The purpose of these information sessions/receptions is to provide information about the company and to give you the opportunity to ask questions. Check the reception information and invitation requirements under the “On-Campus Recruiting” section of the UCS website.

The structure of these events typically include: a presentation of the company, question and answer session, followed by informal one-on-one discussions with company representatives.

These events are another avenue for employers to evaluate you; consequently, put yourself in the interview mindset.
TIPS TO PREPARE FOR INFORMATION SESSIONS/RECEPTIONS

• Research the company prior to the event. See the “Company Research 101” article in this publication for research tips.

• Prepare questions to ask the interviewer.

• Create your marketing commercial that includes your qualifications and interests. See the “How to Market Yourself at a Career Fair” article in this publication for tips in creating your marketing commercial.

• The interviewer will be looking for candidates who ask questions and handle themselves in a professional manner in a social setting.

BENEFITS OF ATTENDING THESE EMPLOYER EVENTS

• These events are the first part of your interview. You can make a good impression with the interviewer in a casual setting.

• Learn more about the company, available positions, and different career paths.

• These events help to better prepare you for the interview.

• An opportunity to network and to talk with professionals working in the field.

THE INTERVIEW DAY

• Turn off your cell phone, or put on vibrate, before you enter the UCS lobby.

• Arrive early (10 to 15 minutes) as this will give you time to sign in, quickly review notes about the company, and to prepare your thoughts for the interview.

• Dress to impress! Wear professional business attire, unless business casual is stated in the employer’s interview requirements.

• Interviews take place in private interview rooms at University Career Services.

• Waiting Room Anticipation: The interview waiting area (Room #156) is where your first face-to-face connection with your interviewer takes place. While waiting for your interviewer to greet you, prepare to make a good first impression. There may be several companies conducting interviews that same day. As a result, treat each interviewer that comes into Room #156 as the one who may be interviewing you.

• Some employers will bring a greeter, who is sometimes a UH alumnus, to meet with you and answer any initial questions prior to your interview. Note these greeters play a role in the decision-making process in determining which candidates are invited for a second interview. Therefore, treat them as another interviewer.

Tip

After the interviewer’s initial introduction, there may be a silent pause while walking to the interview room. Use this opportunity to start building rapport with the interviewer. State that you appreciate the opportunity to meet with them, and begin talking about a particular topic that interests you about their company. This shows you have done your research.
WHY YOU SHOULD PARTICIPATE

- Employers are looking for qualified candidates like you!

- By participating in On-Campus Recruiting, you are not competing with the general population through websites such as www.careerbuilder.com or www.monster.com since only UH students and alumni are allowed to use the On-Campus Recruiting service.

- Throughout the semester, new companies will post their job opportunities through On-Campus Recruiting. Therefore, it is important to continue checking the UCS website often for new additions as you never know when you will find a great opportunity you’ve been waiting for!

CAMPUS INTERVIEWS CHECKLIST

- Observe the OCR deadlines to submit your resume.

- Check the UCS website often for any additional companies who have posted their positions through OCR.

- Check your interview status often!

- Research the company and prepare questions to ask the interviewer.

- Do not be a “No-Show”!!! If you change your mind about the interview, cancel it online no later than 1:00pm two business days before the interview date.

- Update your profile and resume(s) during the course of your job search when information such as your address, phone number, email address, GPA, employment/internships, and/or classification (ex. junior, senior) changes.

Tip: Thank You Notes

See the “Job Search Correspondence” handout on the UCS website for more information on how to write an effective thank you note.
On-Campus Recruiting Employers

Fall 2013 – Spring 2014

AFLAC
Air Liquide
Albemarle Corp.
All-Tex Pipe & Supply, Inc.
Anadarko Petroleum Corporation
Audubon Engineering
Austin Commercial
Baker Concrete
Baker Hughes
BASF
Beta International
Binkley & Barfield
Blinds.com
BNSF Logistics
BP
Builder’s First Source
Bureau of Safety & Environmental Enforcement
Burns & McDonnell
Cameron
Canon Business Processing Services
Caterpillar
CenterPoint Energy
Chancellor Healthcare Institute, Inc.
Chevron
Chevron Corporation
Chevron Phillips Chemical Company
Coca-Cola Refreshments
ConocoPhillips
Consolidated Graphics
Dashiel
DOW
Dri-Qip
Eaton Corporation
Emerson Process Management
Enterprise Products
ExxonMobil
Fluor Corp.
FMC Corporation
Follett Educational Services
Ford Motor Credit Company
Foster Wheeler
Friendswood Development
Frontier Logistics, LP
General Electric
Goodman Manufacturing
Grand Campus Living
Halliburton
Hensel Phelps
Hertz
Hill Geophysical Consulting
HIS
HMT, Inc.
I H S
IMG Financial Group, Inc.
INEOS Olefins & Polymers USA
Intergraph Corporation
ION Media Networks
Johnson Equipment Company
JP Morgan Chase
KBR
Kinder Morgan
Klotz Associates, Inc.
Kohl’s Department Stores
LaPorte CPAs & Business Advisors
LyondellBasell
Marathon Oil
Marathon Petroleum
Mustang Engineering
NASA
National African American Forum
National Oilwell
Neway Valve International, Inc.
Occidental Chemical
Oncor Electric Delivery
Oxy
Pape-Dawson Engineers, Inc.
Pariveda Solutions
Payless ShoeSource
PepsiCo
Performance Contracting
Perry Homes
Phillips 66
PolyOne Corporation
Praxair
Primary Services
Qualla
Quorum Business Solutions
Red Clay Consulting
Regus
Renewal By Andersen
Ross Stores, Inc.
RTH Extrusions
Samsung Austin Semiconductor
Schlumberger
Seismic Exchange, Inc.
Shell Oil Company
Siemens
SKF USA, Inc.
SNC-Lavalin
Sogeti USA
Southwestern Energy Company
Special Quality Alloys, Inc.
Spectra Energy
Stage Stores, Inc.
Sun Products Corporation
Superior Energy Services
Tata Consultancy Services
The AroundCampus Group
The Atkins North America Holdings Corporation
The Dannon Company
The Select Group
TMKIPSCO
Total Quality Logistics
TSS Photography
United States Air Force
UniversalPegasus International
Valero Energy
Vencorex US, Inc.
VSM Abrasives Corporation
W.W. Grainger
Walmart
Williams Corporation
Wipro Technologies
One of the biggest challenges facing first year college students is making a decision about their major and their career path. Research shows that more than 50 percent of students change their major or their career path at least three times in their lifetime. Whether you come into college unsure about what you want to do, or 100 percent sure of what you want to do, the chances are that you will change your decision at least once. University Career Services offers guidance for all first year students in every stage of their career decision making.

Here are some practical steps you can take towards your career planning starting in your freshman year in college:

Where do I begin?

University Career Services offers the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) and Strong Interest Inventory (SII) assessments and individual career counseling appointments to help you choose a major or career path that best suits your strengths, personality, and interests. Understanding these factors, especially as a first year student, can help you:

- Select a major and career path that is a good fit
- Increase your awareness of your learning style so that you can make the most of your education
- Identify personal strengths and areas for improvement
- Learn about qualities that are important for you in a career based on your personality

How do I get work experience while in college?

Gaining experience in the form of an internship, cooperative education (co-op), practicum, part-time job, or volunteer opportunities can help you find out if your intended career path is compatible with your interests. University Career Center staff can assist by helping you:

- Connect with alumni and employers for career related advice
- Search for internship and practicum program opportunities through our online job database and other web-based resources
- Research potential employers using our “Company and Industry Research Guide” located under the “Students” section of the UCS website
- Improve your resume during walk-in hours or scheduled appointments

How do I narrow down my options?

Building awareness of your career goals, personality, experience, and career goals in your area of interest can assist you in narrowing down your career options. A UCS career counselor can also help you narrow down your career options by assisting you to:

- Research graduate or professional programs, learn about timelines for applications, and identify questions to explore when researching these programs
- Find tips for preparing for a career fair in the “How to Make the Most of a Career Fair” handout located under the “Students” section on the UCS website
- Learn about employer information sessions and on-campus interviewing posted under the “On-Campus Recruiting” section of the UCS website

How do I reach my goal?

You have done all of the research and work. Now you are ready to implement your career plan! A UCS career counselor can work with you to:

- Practice a mock interview for employment, graduate, or professional school
- Learn more about job opportunities through networking and online resources
- Learn about salary negotiation and how to evaluate job offers
- Review your personal statement and resume for graduate and professional school or the workforce

Start now for success later!
Which comes first, the major or the career? Do you want to choose a major first and identify career options later, or do you want to choose a career path and then identify possible majors to help get you there?

That depends on you. There is no one right way to proceed!

Many students believe that each specific career field has a corresponding academic major, and they need to declare a particular major in order to obtain an entry-level position in a given career field.

However, majors don’t inherently limit you to only one career field. The major that you choose is only one factor in determining your future job prospects and career path. Your grades and the skills that you acquire through special projects, research assignments, and work experience often tell employers more about what you have to offer than your major.

You must first have a plan of action to follow during the course of your studies to create a solid foundation for your future career success. College is all about self discovery and developing the essential knowledge, skills, and experience necessary to become a productive member of the workforce.

The following information will provide details on how to: choose a major, identify and explore potential career possibilities, and obtain the academic and extracurricular experiences you need to launch the career you want!

FRESHMAN (up to 30hrs): Self Discovery and Exploration

Questions to ask yourself:

- What are my interests, skills, and talents?
- In which subjects do I do well?
- What career fields are the most interesting to me?
- How can I get involved on campus?
- What professional opportunities are available to me?

ACTION PLAN

- Explore majors and career options at University Career Services:
  - Take career assessments to help identify aspects of your interests, values, personality, and skills
  - Browse the UCS website (www.uh.edu/ucs) and become familiar with UCS resources and assessments offered
  - Schedule an appointment with a UCS career counselor who can guide you in the major decision-making process
- Talk about your career interests with parents, friends, and professors. In addition, upperclassmen can give you beneficial insight about their majors, favorite classes, professors, and their career-related experiences. Make sure to review the “Choosing a Major/Career” handout under the “Students” section of the UCS website.
• Explore and develop your interests and skills through student organizations and clubs.

• Identify three to five career field options of interest and research how the majors that interest you would complement them.

• Establish good time management skills and assess your study habits and make any necessary improvements. Seek out academic assistance when needed. Learning Support Services is a great way to get help and utilize your student fees. Check out their website at www.las.uh.edu/lss to make an appointment with a Learning Strategies Counselor.

• Declare a major by 30 credits hours and talk to an academic advisor about course selections.

• Keep those grades up! GPA is strongly considered for many jobs and internships and may be a requirement to be accepted for various colleges and degree programs.

JUNIOR (up to 90hrs): Gaining Experience

Questions to ask yourself:
• Am I prepared for an interview?
• What experience and skills would I like to acquire?
• What companies would I like to research?

ACTION PLAN

• Seek out elective courses that enhance your concentrated area of study and will increase your knowledge and skills in other areas.

• Create or update your resume and have it reviewed by a UCS career counselor.

• Practice interviewing skills with a UCS career counselor, and check out the “Preparing for the Employment Interview” handout under the “Students” section of the UCS website.

• Attend campus career fairs, company information sessions and presentations, and practice networking with employers and alumni.

• Learn how to market yourself and join the student chapter of a professional association related to your major to network with current professionals in your prospective career field.
• Start to build a professional wardrobe for interviews.

• Visit the UCS website regularly to view internship postings and other job opportunities.

SUMMER AFTER JUNIOR YEAR

Use this time to further enhance your resume. Volunteer, intern, or work a summer job related to your prospective career path, or travel abroad and expand your knowledge and experience.

Create a checklist for your final year and look for ways to get a head start. You will be glad you took the extra time now to prepare in advance for the busy year ahead!

Confirm your degree requirements with an academic advisor to ensure there are no surprises when the time comes for graduation.

• Develop an employer prospect list with contact names and websites of organizations you are interested in pursuing. Research these companies by browsing their websites and reading relevant periodicals and trade journals. This insight makes a difference during the interview! For more resources, see the “Company and Industry Research Guide” under the “Students” section of the UCS website.

• Gather information on salary expectations for your career options at UCS or through other online resources. See websites listed under the “Salary Online Resources” section in the “Evaluating and Negotiating Job Offers” article in this publication.

• Utilize On-Campus Recruiting and Job Bank postings, attend career fairs, company information sessions, and any networking or career building workshops.

• Obtain three references by requesting permission to use their names. Give each reference a copy of your resume to familiarize them with your skills and accomplishments.

• Follow-up on all interviews with thank you notes and keep a record of the status of each application submitted.

• Analyze job offers based on your career goals and values. Speak with a UCS career counselor if you need assistance in evaluating job offers. See the “Evaluating and Negotiating Job Offers” article in this publication.

• Accept a job offer and remember the alumni who helped you. Make yourself accessible and return the favor by becoming a member of UCAN.

SENIOR (over 100hrs): Application

Questions to ask yourself:

• Have I completed all requirements for graduation?

• Do I have the relevant knowledge, skills, and experience necessary to enter my intended career field or graduate/professional school program?

• Am I prepared for the world of work after graduation?

ACTION PLAN

• If preparing for graduate or professional school, a UCS career counselor can also guide you in the application process.

CONGRATULATIONS!!!
What do you want to be when you grow up? Not sure?
Well, you are not alone! Many students say they feel
overwhelmed by the number of majors offered at UH and
are unsure about which career to pursue with their degree. If
you feel confused about how to make a decision regarding
your major, career assessments can make the decision-
making process less daunting. UCS career counselors are
trained to interpret career assessments and provide one-on-
one counseling to help you gain clarity about your interests,
values, personality, and skills.

A career assessment is like a tourist’s guidebook. It can
suggest countries to explore, but it can’t tell you what it is like
to actually live and work in that country. To test the options
suggested by career assessments, UCS career counselors
recommend that you take classes, do volunteer work,
get involved with student and professional organizations,
and meet people already working in the career fields that
interest you.

Choosing high quality career assessments is important
to ensure that your decisions are based on accurate
information. Here are some recommendations from the
professional career counseling staff at University Career
Services:

**Interests:** The gold standard of career interest assessments
is the Strong Interest Inventory (SII), the most widely used
and well-respected career interest measure in the world.
The SII compares your responses to a large sample of
professionals who are satisfied with their careers. This
assessment requires professional interpretation by a UCS
career counselor. UH students and alumni may take this
assessment for $10 at University Career Services. Though
not as comprehensive as the SII, there is a free Interest Profiler

**Values:** Research shows that a significant predictor
of career happiness is the quality of fit between an
organization’s values and your values. Examples of career
values are independence, job tranquility, and status. You

**Personality:** The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)
is a well-known personality assessment, and requires
professional interpretation by a UCS career counselor. UH
students and alumni may take this assessment for $10 at
University Career Services. There is a free Personality Type self-assessment available at [www.personalitytype.com](http://www.personalitytype.com). This free version will give you an approximation of what the more established MBTI would tell you. You don’t need to buy any of the reports from the website because you can visit with a UCS career counselor to find out how your personality affects your preferred work environments.

**Skills:** UCS career counselors talk about “motivated
skills,” which are areas in which a person has both natural
strengths and the desire to use those strengths. You can
evaluate your motivated skills online using the Motivated Skills Card Sort Exercise activities and worksheets at [www.stewartcoopercoon.com/jobsearch/motivated-skills](http://www.stewartcoopercoon.com/jobsearch/motivated-skills).

Once you have reviewed your assessment results, you may
find it easier to make career decisions or you may still feel
uncertain. Professional UCS career counselors can help you
narrow down your options and create a strategic action
plan to help you create a career that fits well for you. To
schedule an appointment, go to the “Students” section of
the UCS website.
Have you heard that liberal arts students can’t get jobs? Do you worry about what your options are as a psychology major? Are you tired of your parents asking you what you can do with an English degree? Do you secretly (or not so secretly) wish you had chosen business as your major? Do you fear you are doomed to work in retail for the rest of your life? Well fret no more liberal arts students, and have hope. Your degrees DO have worth and can be valued by a variety of employers!

As a liberal arts student, you have developed strong critical thinking skills and possess the ability to research, write, analyze, and synthesize information. A liberal arts education teaches students to view problems from multiple perspectives and to think independently. Put simply, you have been learning to learn, which makes it easy for employers to train you. Even though you might not have the specific technical skills that an engineering degree has, you do have widely applicable skills that will transfer from the classroom to the workplace.

Think about it: How many group projects have you worked on during your academic career (teamwork and leadership abilities)? How many papers have you written (research and writing skills)? Furthermore, you’ve taken a wide variety of classes across multiple disciplines, including foreign languages, which have increased your language skills and multicultural sensitivity: two highly marketable skills in today’s workplace. Employers want to hire you because they see you as creative, open-minded, well-rounded candidates with excellent communication skills and the ability to relate to people easily and effectively.

“More than any other curriculum, the liberal arts train people to think critically about concepts and society, look at the big picture, and analyze cause and effect relationships, break an idea or situation into component parts and put it back together again.” - Robert Goodward, Director of Publications for Liberty Mutual Insurance.

Due to its versatility and depth, your liberal arts degree affords you flexibility in career choices. You have a vast array of options and can work in almost any field. While this freedom can feel liberating, it can also seem overwhelming at times. If you don’t know what you want to do or what you’re looking for, it can be incredibly difficult to actually find it! To ease this frustration, you should turn your focus and attention inward, on you. Once you identify and clarify your personality preferences, interests, skills, motivations, and values, you can more easily pinpoint a career that will be a good fit for you.

A Liberal arts education represents infinite opportunity and capability, which may either lie dormant or be nurtured to fruition. The challenge lies in bringing it to fruition.

Meeting with a UCS career counselor can help you with the self-assessment and job search processes. As you begin looking for and applying for jobs, keep these tips and techniques in mind to best market yourself to employers:

- Be proud of your liberal arts education – Fully understanding the worth of your degree will help you convince someone else that your liberal arts degree is valuable!
- Identify all your transferable skills – Be able to effectively explain how you can be an asset to that organization/company.
- Know what you want to do (clearly communicate this) – Employers want to hire graduates with clearly defined goals.
- Take advantage of the resume and cover letter – These application materials give you the opportunity to strut your writing skills. Be sure to integrate your transferable skills into your bullet points to prove how you utilized those skills in the past. Demonstrate the significance and worth of your education and experience in your cover letter. As a bonus, it also serves as a writing sample, which might set you apart from other candidates if you create a well-crafted, compelling letter.
- Gain experience – Intern, volunteer, join student organizations, and take classes outside of the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, etc.
- Have realistic expectations – You have to work hard to find a satisfying job that aligns with your interests and values. Many companies don’t actively recruit liberal arts majors. It’s your responsibility to be proactive, take initiative, and be persistent in your job search. It’s also up to you to persuade employers that you have a lot to offer!
- Get to know your selling points – Companies want to hire individuals with more than a single dimension or focus of their education; pure technical talent is no longer competitive enough in today’s job landscape. Be able to market your educational experience to employers, and help them better understand how you could be a fit in their organization.
Many students underestimate the importance of getting career-related, hands-on experience while they are still in college. This is certainly understandable. A large number of students at the University of Houston are trying to balance both work and school. Many students are in survival mode, trying to get through school, make it to work on time and, yes, actually pass their classes. Here is some food for thought that may convince you to pause and invest some time into finding and completing an internship.

According to the 2014 National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) Internship and Co-op Survey, employers made full-time offers to 64.8 percent of their interns, while the co-op conversion rate increased from 36.9 percent in 2013 to 46.7 percent. The survey also concluded that employees who completed an internship or co-op program with their employer are more likely to be with the company at both the one year and five year retention benchmarks.

It is important to determine prior to looking for an internship, what you would like to learn. This will help shorten your internship search process and make the internship experience worthwhile. Some of the goals for getting an internship could be: to gain professional work experience, to explore a possible career option or field of interest, and to learn about possible career opportunities related to your major. Let’s cover these concerns and more.

When would you like to do an internship?

It is possible to start an internship as early as your freshman year. Requirements vary for each company, therefore, it is advisable to conduct your research early on to determine your target company’s criteria. You can also do a full-time or part-time internship throughout the year, in the fall, spring, or summer. The total process of finding, applying, and interviewing for an internship can take several months. Be sure to plan ahead to evenly balance out the time required to conduct a successful internship search with your other obligations and responsibilities.
How do you search for internships?

There are many ways to search for internships. For example: On-Campus Recruiting, Job Bank, academic department bulletin boards, UCS career fairs, UH career fairs, company websites, company networking events, faculty, cooperative education, student organizations, professional associations, employer information sessions, employer seminars, and alumni connections or the University Career Advisory Network (UCAN) on LinkedIn. Volunteer opportunities could also be a stepping stone towards an internship position.

How do you write a resume and cover letter for an internship?

A well written and organized resume will be your marketing tool and should help get your foot-in-the-door by getting you an interview. University Career Services offers Rock Your Resume Workshops as well as one-on-one personal resume and cover letter reviews. You can make an appointment with a UCS career counselor through the UCS website at www.uh.edu/ucs.

How do you apply?

Customize your resume and cover letter to showcase your experience and skills most relevant to the internship job description requirements. Carefully read the instructions and use the designated method of contact. You may be required to submit one or more of the following documents: resume (either upload, email, or mail), cover letter, and other required documents such as official transcripts, references, recommendation letters, letters of interest, portfolio, or in some cases, a video resume.

Remember the following:

- Send follow-up emails if you haven’t heard from the employer two weeks after applying.
- Prepare for a potential internship interview. At UCS, you can schedule an appointment with a UCS career counselor to conduct a mock interview. We also have useful interviewing handouts on our website under the “Students” section.
- Interns who have proven themselves to a company throughout a successful on-the-job experience tend to be favored for full-time positions over candidates who have not completed an internship.

Whether your internship experience is paid or unpaid, for academic credit or not for credit, all professional work experience is valued by employers. UCS is here to help you with your career search.

Internship Aspirations, Goals and Preferences

Determine what you are looking for in an internship, and evaluate your:

Aspirations

- What do I see myself doing after graduation for the next few years?
- What do I enjoy doing? What issues am I most passionate about?
- What do I most desire to learn and/or experience?
- What rewards do I seek? What cause do I advocate?

Goals

- What competencies, skills, and knowledge are most desired in my given profession?
- What are my goals for this internship?
- What competencies, skills, and knowledge do I want to learn? Upon which skills do I want to improve?
- What am I looking to gain from this experience?

Preferences

- In what type of organization, environment, and culture do I want to work (for-profit, nonprofit, government, small organization, large organization, etc.)?
- What location do I want to have my internship (local or national/international)? Do I have appropriate transportation, housing, insurance?
The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines self-awareness as “an awareness of one’s own personality or individuality.” In other words, self-awareness means knowing yourself, your strengths and weaknesses, what you enjoy, and ultimately knowing what it is that makes you unique. Overall, self-awareness is important for a variety of reasons, but in terms of employment, your level of self-awareness is one of the most important factors in successfully landing a job or internship.

ASSESS YOURSELF

Many people embark on their job or internship search with the primary focus being on what it is that they want. Some students seek an internship in mechanical engineering, some look for a full-time position in graphic design, while others may be more interested in a part-time research assistantship. However, one could argue that it’s much more beneficial to begin that process by first considering who we are, or in some of the more technical fields such as engineering or technology, what we do. Assessments such as the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) and Strong Interest Inventory (SII) can offer you some substantial insights into these aspects of yourself. Once you take the assessments, meet with a UCS career counselor to interpret your results, and find out how those aspects of yourself can be applied and articulated in the context of a job search or a career decision.

APPLY YOURSELF

Everyone that is interviewing for a position, regardless of their specific field of study or discipline, essentially wants the same thing, a job. With that in mind, employers tend to be more specifically interested in what you have to offer.

MARKET YOURSELF

Employers don’t just hire candidates because the candidates want a job. Employers hire candidates because of who they are and how they are a fit for the position. With that being said, know yourself and know what makes you the ideal candidate. According to Dr. Randall Hansen, Founder of Quintessential Careers, “In today’s job hunting environment, the most successful job seekers are those who understand the value of marketing and apply to themselves those principles that companies have used for years to successfully sell their products.” In other words, the people who get jobs view themselves as a “product.” They don’t make themselves simply “available for purchase;” rather, they convince employers that they’re “worth the purchase.” Learn to distinguish yourself as an individual who is qualified for the job, as opposed to someone who simply is looking for a job.

CUSTOMIZE YOURSELF

Without ever meeting a job applicant, that person’s resume and cover letter can let the hiring manager know how serious he/she is about a given position. When your cover
letter says absolutely nothing at all about the job you’re applying for, or when your resume does nothing to connect your work and educational experiences to the duties and responsibilities associated with the position, employers might think that you’ve sent those exact same cover letters and resumes to more than a handful of employers. When viewing yourself as a “product,” failing to tailor your resume and cover letter to the position you’re applying for is similar to expecting people to purchase a product when they have no idea what it’s used for.

CONNECT YOURSELF

With the rise of social media, sites like LinkedIn offer a great, low-risk platform for reaching out to professionals, while providing you with a way to brand yourself by joining groups and online discussions. Actively going out to meet people and taking advantage of the online resources at your disposal can help you build a solid knowledge base of your intended career, and ultimately, set you apart from other job seekers.

Joining student organizations, attending information sessions, career fairs, and other professional networking events are other great ways to network.

However, maintaining those relationships is key. Networking isn’t just about meeting people, it’s about knowing people. When you do establish these contacts, be sure to stay in touch with them periodically and give them updates on your job search.

KNOW YOURSELF

One of the most significant aspects of the job search is professional self-awareness: knowing yourself and knowing what you are qualified to do. Some of the key elements involved with self-awareness are to understand your skills, interests, experiences, and how, collectively, these relate to the job.

Knowing how to package your talents and skills, and knowing about your career field can have a major impact on whether or not an employer calls you in for an interview and ultimately offers you a job. Be sure to consider these things when applying for jobs and internships, and be thoughtful throughout your job search to ensure that the employers you’re looking for are looking for someone like you.

Tip: Job Search Tips to Market Yourself

1. Be proactive and don’t wait for opportunities to come to you.

2. Use several resources such as the internet, networking, professional associations, and UCS in your job search.

3. Realize the importance of creating a solid network of contacts that could point you to a potential job opportunity.

4. Target your resume to the job description and highlighting what skills and experience you have to offer an employer.

5. Practice your 30 second commercial and highlight your skills and experience when networking.

6. Follow-up with a thank you note within 24-48 hours after an interview, and reiterate your interest in the position and distinguish yourself from other candidates.

7. Set realistic expectations in finding the “perfect” job; instead, look for a job that is the best fit and where you can gain valuable experience.

8. Make sure you have a positive online image. Employers do access social media sites to obtain information on potential candidates.

9. Be prepared for an interview by researching the company, dressing professionally, and practicing how to effectively answer interview questions; this shows how serious you are about the interview.

10. Take advantage of the many resources available at University Career Services that can support you during your job search.
1. **First impressions count.** Most likely, your cover letter will be the first thing the employer reads. The purpose of the cover letter is to demonstrate your organizational and writing skills to future employers while distinguishing yourself from the other applicants. A strong cover letter should be written clearly and concisely, and should be proofread multiple times for spelling and grammatical mistakes. If the employer is not impressed by the cover letter, he or she may not even read your resume.

2. **Do NOT mass produce.** It is very important to tailor each cover letter to a specific position and organization. Incorporate information that reflects your knowledge of the company, its industry, and relevant issues. Do your research! Also, pay attention to the job description and spotlight your accomplishments and skills that directly relate to the position.

3. **Show, don’t tell.** Employers are impressed when you can demonstrate your skills using past experience. Do not just say you are ‘detail-oriented’; instead, describe specific examples where you paid great attention to detail. Remember, you are trying to set yourself apart from the other applicants. Anyone can claim to be ‘hard-working,’ but only a truly hardworking person can prove it.

4. **Emphasize how you will benefit the organization.** If you write too much about how you will benefit from being hired (i.e. “I hope to learn a great deal about the industry”), you will be calling attention to the gaps in your experience and knowledge. Employers want to know what you can do for them. Do not simply say, “I am confident I would be a great asset to your team.” Explain how you plan to contribute once you are hired. What do you have to bring to the table?

5. **Demonstrate that you are well-rounded.** If every point you make about yourself is drawn from your educational background, the employer might think you are narrowly focused. If possible, draw on experiences from a variety of settings and class projects. If you do not have any work experience, you can expand on community service, leadership roles, and extracurricular activities.

---

**Cover Letter Tips**

All cover letters should…

- be concise and professional in tone.
- explain why you are sending a resume.
- tell how you learned about the position or organization.
- convince the reader to look at your resume.
- highlight your education, skills, and experience.
- reflect your positive attitude.
- indicate what you will do to follow-up.
For the employer, the resume is a critical tool used in evaluating a potential candidate’s qualifications. In many cases, the resume may be your initial contact with a potential employer, and will give the employer an impression of whether or not you may be a good fit for the organization. When done correctly, a resume can successfully market your skills and abilities, and assist you in obtaining an interview!

**RESUME PREP**

When creating your resume, it is important to be concise and relevant. You have approximately 30 seconds to impress the employer enough to screen you into the hiring process and offer you an interview. Therefore, it is important to review the job description and to tailor your resume to fit the job you are seeking. Use keywords from the job description to show how your qualifications match the position.

As you develop your resume, use titles, numbers, and names to describe past achievements. It conveys that someone else had enough faith in your abilities to put you in a position of responsibility. Using quantitative data shows the magnitude of the achievement and offers concrete evidence that is rarely questioned. In addition, use action verbs that make your experience jump from the page; for example: Analyze. Create. Execute. Manage. Organize.

Example: “…headed engineering student organization,” sounds much better when written as “…Served as President of Mechanical Engineer Student Chapter of 55 members…”

Names demand the same respect that numbers do: “…interned at a major oil and gas company,” does not capture as much attention as “…interned at BP.” If the company name is not as widely known, use a description like, “Fortune 100 Company.”

In formatting your resume, use a standard typestyle like Calibri or Times New Roman, wide margins, bold headings, and indentations or bullets to guide the eye quickly to the points that you want to emphasize.

Once you have completed drafting your resume, proofread it and use spell check! Typos and grammatical errors account for the majority of the most common mistakes made by resume writers; too much or too little information runs a close second. Ask a UCS career counselor to review your resume. They can help make sure you are marketing yourself in the best way possible for the job. It pays off to take the time to make it the best it can be.

**RESUME CONTENT**

The standard new college graduate resume follows a basic reverse chronological format: contact information, objective or career summary, education, professional experience, extracurricular activities, honors and awards. Depending on your qualifications and the particular job, you may also include sections detailing your specific skills; for example, technical skills or laboratory skills.

**ONLINE APPLICATIONS**

More than 80 percent of employers require candidates to apply for openings via the company website or internet job boards. This saves companies’ time and money by maximizing the efficiency of the candidate selection process.

Applications submitted online go into the company’s applicant database. A hiring manager who has an opening will enter keywords to search the database and find applications that are a match. Those that are a match become the hiring manager’s candidate pool. Your focus is how to make sure your resume does not sink to the bottom of the pool. Employers were polled for their advice on how to make an online application stand out, and here are a few of their suggestions:

- Follow directions and enter the data in the correct fields
- Tailor your application for the position; do not copy and paste from a generic resume
- Use keywords and industry jargon; use verbiage from the job posting
• Create a skills inventory section and put it in the comments field
• Complete all fields – do not write, “See resume”
• Use a plain text version of your resume
• Check your spelling and grammar to ensure there are no errors
• A phone call or email to the recruiter is a good follow-up to your application
• Formatted, print version of your resume and a text-based (ASCII) resume

POSTING YOUR RESUME ONLINE

Although it is important to circulate your resume when searching for employment, you should be aware of the criminals and identity thieves who are also interested in your information. Your name, home address, telephone number, and detailed work history can be very valuable to identity thieves and fraudsters.

UCS advises students and alumni to take caution when posting a resume online! Most job sites offer anonymous or quasi-anonymous posting options that let you hide your contact information and email address when you post a resume. This resume posting option allows you to decide who sees your real information, such as your home address, if you choose to include it. Masking this information is perhaps the single most important step job seekers who want to post a resume online can take to protect themselves.

The goal is to avoid having your full legal name, your home address, your phone number, your detailed work history floating around online and eventually getting into the wrong hands. This is information only a legitimate employer should receive, and you can help by taking advantage of private posting options job sites usually offer.

Educate yourself to know when and where to post your resume, and be selective when applying for online job postings. A great resource for such education is www.staysafeonline.org. This website goes into detail on privacy issues and staying cyber safe.

FIVE MOST COMMON RESUME MYTHS

#1: Your resume must be one page.

False. For example, if you are a graduate student who has worked on research with multiple professors, worked for 10 years in the field before starting your master’s program, or presented at multiple conferences for student chapters of professional organizations, you may be cutting out essential information if you try to limit your resume to one page. Even undergraduate students with a few years of relevant work experience and multiple positions in student organizations may have difficulty keeping to the one page limit.

#2: Your resume should include your entire work history.

False. Your most relevant experience for the position you desire is what needs to be showcased on your resume. Remember, your resume is your marketing tool. Volunteer experience and internships can be just as beneficial as a paid position. A part-time job that you only worked at for a month or two will not excite your potential employer and may even hurt your chances of being called for an interview.

#3: A great resume will produce job offers.

False. A great resume may get you an interview. No matter how great your resume is employers still want to meet prospective employees to find out if they are a good fit with their team. You may look great on paper, but an employer will almost always want to meet a possible future employee in person. This is why it is important to work on your interviewing skills by scheduling a mock interview appointment with your UCS career counselor.

#4: You should include “References available upon request” at the bottom of your resume.

False. This line is unnecessary and will take up space on your resume that you may need to use for more pertinent information. Employers know that you have references and they will request them when needed.

#5: It is okay to fib or stretch the truth on your resume.

False. Never put information on your resume that is not the complete truth. Employers will find out, and you will lose credibility with that particular employer and most likely every other employer that person knows. Increasing your GPA, stretching your job duties, and making yourself an employee instead of an intern will be discovered and will harm your future opportunities.

Tip

Make sure to really know your resume; this way you will be prepared for specific questions the employer might ask you. Be prepared to back up your answers with measurable results by using numbers, data, percentages, dollar amounts, etc.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESUME SECTION:</th>
<th>INFORMATION TO INCLUDE:</th>
<th>ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Heading–Contact Information</td>
<td>• The following information should be at the top of your resume</td>
<td>• Use a professional greeting on your voicemail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Name</td>
<td>• Use a professional email address, like, <a href="mailto:yourinitiallastname@gmail.com">yourinitiallastname@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Address (city, state and zip only for privacy reasons)</td>
<td>• Use caution when including contact information if posting online to unauthorized websites or resume databases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Contact number (checked regularly)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Email address (checked regularly)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Personalized LinkedIn URL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective Statement</td>
<td>• An objective tells potential employers the type of work you are seeking and something about what you have to offer</td>
<td>• Be specific and tailor objective to specific company and/or position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Avoid general statements that do not indicate what type of position you are seeking – for example:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Seeking a responsible, challenging position that will allow me to grow, realize my potential, and make</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a meaningful contribution to the achievement of the company’s goals.” (Too vague)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This example displays goal clarity: “Objective: Position in Human Resources where proven abilities to select,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>train, motivate personnel, and manage information are desired.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Profile or Summary of</td>
<td>• Include number of years of paid and unpaid experience</td>
<td>• Use three to four points to summarize competencies and best skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualifications</td>
<td>• Education or specific training</td>
<td>• Be specific and tailor summary to specific company and/or position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Achievements and specialized proficiencies related to targeted position</td>
<td>• Typically used when you have many years of experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>• List the name of the university, city, state, degree, major, minor, and graduation date in the month/year format</td>
<td>• List cumulative GPA if it is 3.0 or higher; also include major GPA if it is 3.0 or higher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The most recent educational information should be listed first</td>
<td>• Recent grads without much work experience should list educational information first</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• If you are still in school, add expected date of graduation</td>
<td>• Alumni may list education after work experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Do not abbreviate words such as the university’s name, degree, and major</td>
<td>• List specific relevant coursework, projects, research, and academic honors in this section</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RESUME SECTION:</td>
<td>INFORMATION TO INCLUDE:</td>
<td>ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Professional Experience         | • Work experiences from internships, cooperative education (co-ops), summer jobs, part-time and full-time jobs, volunteer work, or military experience  
• Include the job title, name of company, location (city, state), and dates of employment in the month/year for each position  
• List accomplishments, responsibilities, and special projects in bullet format | • List work experience, no more than ten years old, in reverse chronological order with current or last job listed first  
• Use an action verb at the beginning of each statement  
• Statements should include measurable results to highlight job duties and results (ex. numbers, data, percentages, and dollar amounts) |
| Activities                      | • List professional and/or student organizations in order of importance  
• List leadership positions and dates held and committee assignments | • Dates of membership in the month/year format (optional) |
| Honors and Awards                | • Honor societies, scholarships, Dean’s List  
• List names of organizations and names of awards | • List in order of importance  
• Include dates received (semester and academic year) |
| Skills                          | • Computer and technical skills  
• Foreign languages  
• Teaching or tutoring  
• Certifications  
• Professional licenses | • Computer skills – include software applications, programming, and operating systems  
• Languages - include level of competency (speak, read, write, fluent or conversational) |
| Other Information and Sections   | • Other sections that may be included: community service, travel abroad, volunteer work, publications and presentations, professional development, military experience, relevant projects, leadership | • Consider the relevance and content of a section related to targeted position |
| References                      | • Do not include reference information on the resume  
• “References available upon request” is not necessary and uses valuable space | • Ask permission of your references and provide them with a copy of your resume before giving their contact information to a potential employer |
| Information **NOT** to include on resume | • Age, marital status, health, nationality or ethnicity, religion, salary requirements, pictures, and references |                                                                                   |

For more detailed information on resume content, view the “Developing a Resume” handout under the “Students” section of the UCS website.
Career experts say, “Dress for the job you want.” But, what does that mean exactly?

**DRESS FOR SUCCESS**

You have less than one minute to make a first impression. In her book, *Don’t Take the Last Donut: New Rules of Business Etiquette*, Judith Bowman states, “They look at how you walk into the room, how you carry yourself, what you are wearing, and if you make eye contact or not.” This is certainly true for employers. When employers were given a list of appearance related attributes and asked to rate the degree of influence that each attribute would have on their opinion of a candidate, the results indicated that a candidate’s overall grooming exerted the most influence. While your abilities are what get you the interview, your professional image (grooming, dress, verbal, and nonverbal communication) and level of confidence make a significant impact.

Traditional business attire is most reliable and effective when meeting with potential employers. Having a well tailored suit in your wardrobe is key to maintaining a professional image.

Business casual dress is becoming more of the norm in major companies. In many cases, business casual dress may be appropriate once you start a job, but it is not appropriate for the interview process. It is better to be over-dressed as opposed to under-dressed. Employees like business casual for the comfort and flexibility it provides, and managers say that it boosts employee morale. Unfortunately, there is no set, explicit definition of business casual dress, and “casual” can be taken to the extreme. It is important to understand what business casual dress means within your workplace. If you are unsure about your company’s dress code, be sure to ask your supervisor and/or the Human Resources Department for assistance. Remember, what you wear can say a lot about you. If you take your job seriously, then your wardrobe should reflect your level of professionalism.

**NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION**

Your posture, facial expressions, level of eye contact, and handshake are important pieces of your professional image. They are valuable ways to communicate with others without ever saying a word. Having a weak handshake or poor posture might convey that you lack confidence. If your facial expressions contradict what you say, what do you think people will believe? Being aware of your non-verbal communication will help you develop a professional presence that says you are motivated, confident, and capable.

**BUSINESS ETIQUETTE**

Knowing how to conduct yourself in business situations is critical to your professional image. Business etiquette includes understanding how to behave in social situations (company gatherings, lunches, receptions) and now includes smartphone, email, and social media protocols as well. To learn more about proper business etiquette, visit University Career Services and speak with a UCS career counselor. You can also view the “Business Etiquette: What You Need to Know” handout under the “Students” section of the UCS website.

**PROFESSIONAL ONLINE IMAGE: SOCIAL MEDIA**

With approximately 92 percent of U.S. businesses using social media to support their recruitment efforts, your online image is more important now than it’s ever been. In 2013, over 45% of Fortune 500 Firms included links to social media on their career page sections. Though LinkedIn is utilized by the vast majority of these firms, Facebook and Twitter are also being used by recruiters to evaluate candidates. The rise of social media has given employers the opportunity to gather sometimes intimate details about you without ever having to meet you in person. Bearing this in mind, be very mindful of what you post and share on social media sites like Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn because people are increasingly paying more and more attention.
PROFESSIONAL IMAGE

SUITS

• High quality, worsted wool or wool/polyester blend suits are most appropriate. Professional business suits are typically lined, well-structured, and durable.
• Suits should not be too loose or too tight.
• Skirt/pants should hang well and not be too loose or too tight [should not hug the rear or thighs/legs].
• Black, dark grey, and navy suits are ideal. If wearing pinstripes, they should be muted/understated.
• Don’t wear your suit coat in the car – hang it up or lay it on the car seat. Do wear the suit coat throughout the interview process.

SHIRTS

• Collared, long-sleeved, button-down shirts with cuffs extending ¼” below suit sleeve are appropriate.
• White, ivory, or pale blue blouses or button-down shirts are recommended. If wearing pinstripes, they should be very thin.
• Cotton shirts are ideal and hold up well under perspiration, which is especially good for Houston summers.
• Always iron your shirt, even if it claims to be “wrinkle free.”
• Be careful of gaps between buttons, especially if you have a larger chest measurement. Have your buttoned shirt tailored or go one size up to avoid the “too tight” look.
• Avoid low necklines.

SHOES

• Heels should not exceed 3 inches. Classic, closed toe pumps are appropriate.
• Shoes should be solid in color and complement your suit (black with black, etc.).
• Do not wear sandals.
• Do not wear clunky, heavy, thick-soled shoes/boots.
• Black or brown leather is recommended.
• Formal dress shoes are the most appropriate; wing tips can be worn to an interview if they are either solid black or brown.

TIES

• Silk or silk blend ties are best.
• Width should be about the same as lapels, generally 2¾” to 3½” wide. Tie pattern should be classic, conservative and simple, not too ornate, loud, or trendy. Colors should coordinate well with the suit/shirt.
• A simple stripe pattern would suffice.

ACCESSORIES

• Perfume/cologne should be light.
• Nail polish should be light colors or clear.
• If wearing a skirt, nude pantyhose are a must and should match your natural skin tone.
• If makeup is worn, it should be natural looking and not too heavy.
• No nose rings, tongue rings, lip rings, eyebrow rings, or facial dermals should be worn.
• Jewelry should be simple and classic. Small earrings, a watch and/or ring are appropriate.
• Many employers say they view visible tattoos and piercings as unprofessional, so be sure to cover them if they are visible.
Successful interviews can be summed up in two words: achievements and attitude.

The candidates that can fully express their abilities and desire to do their best for the company will have a better chance of getting a second interview or even the job.

PREPARATION EQUALS SUCCESSFUL INTERVIEWING

SELF-ASSESSMENT:

The first step is to assess your skills, interests, strengths, values, and career goals. Identify accomplishments from courses you have taken, group projects, experiences in internships and summer jobs, part-time and full-time jobs, and leadership roles you played in student organizations to which you belonged.

Evaluate how your experience and background relates to the description of the position and the company’s needs. Then, be prepared to show how you are a good fit for the position and how you can make an immediate contribution.

In your final assessment, ask yourself whether this position and the company’s mission, career paths, and industry complement your own career goals and values.

- Research the company: Tips on researching companies and industries can be found in the “Company Research 101” article of this publication.

- Questions to ask the interviewer: Prepare a list of questions for the interviewer that will show your interest in the company, and will help you decide if the position and company fit within your career goals.

- Mock interview: Participate in a mock interview with a UCS career counselor. They will teach you how to look and act in an interview and give valuable feedback on how to improve your interview skills.

- Practice, practice, practice: Practice answering interview questions and role play with someone you trust that is objective and will provide valuable feedback. Be prepared and confident in order to gain a competitive edge.

- Dress for success: Please refer to the “Professional Image Counts!” article in this publication.

INTERVIEW STRUCTURE

FIRST IMPRESSIONS/INTRODUCTION:

The minute you walk through the employer’s door, the interview process begins. You could be evaluated by people you meet, such as the receptionist and other people who may play a role in the decision-making process.

Typically, the interview starts with small talk, and during this time, the interviewer is evaluating your personality, physical appearance, non-verbal actions, and initial responses. He or she is making an immediate determination to questions such as: “Would you fit in with the company culture?” You have just a few minutes to make a positive first impression, which can set the tone for the interview. Therefore, it is important to take the lead and begin to build rapport with your interviewer.

Once you are seated and begin the rest of the interview, it is very important to use appropriate body language in order to make a positive impression.

- Eye Contact – maintain steady eye contact.

- Facial Expression – do not over-exaggerate expressions, and smile when appropriate.

- Posture – project confidence by sitting tall (find a comfortable position and lean forward slightly).

- Gestures – should be limited and done in a positive manner.

- Space – be aware of your personal space and that of the interviewer.

INTERVIEW Q and A:

During this phase of the interview, the interviewer will ask a series of questions about your work experience, skills, education, activities, interests, and career goals.
To prepare for an interview, you may also want to Google interview questions + <name of company> to find sample questions for a specific company.

All of your responses should be concise. You must help the interviewer see that your skills and background are a good match for the company and the position. You should also demonstrate what sets you apart from other candidates. When possible, use relevant examples to illustrate measurable individual and team accomplishments, leadership abilities, challenges that you overcame, etc. Use examples from courses you have taken, group projects, experiences in internships and summer jobs, and student organizations leadership roles.

During the interview, maintain a conversational flow and be careful not to sound too rehearsed or to use clichés. While the interviewer is asking questions, he or she will be measuring your responses against critical success factors for the position such as: attitude, work ethic, intelligence, and honesty.

The interviewer should leave a few minutes at the end of the interview for you to ask questions. These questions could relate to responsibilities of the position, the profile of people who have been successful in the position, or some recent development at the company or the industry that you discovered during your research.

**Suggested questions to ask the interviewer:**

- Who is the supervisor for this position and what level of management are they?
- How often are performance reviews given, and how will my performance be measured?
- Is there a training program, and if so, how long?
- How would you describe the growth potential for the company and the industry?
- What are some of the department’s ongoing and anticipated special projects?

**CLOSING THE DEAL:**

Your interview has been going well, and it is coming to a close. You want to leave a good impression with the interviewer. Make sure you close the sale, that is, the sale of you. Here are some key points to keep in mind:

- Rehearse your closing ahead of time to appear more natural and confident. Make sure to highlight your key strengths and how you can make a contribution to the company or organization.
- Ask, “What is the next step in the interview process?”
- If the interviewer asks you to return for a second interview, make sure you get the necessary details such as date, time, location, interviewer’s name, etc.
- If this is the final interview, ask for a timeline when a final decision might be made and how the interviewer would prefer you to follow-up (call or send an email) regarding your status.
- Ask for the interviewer’s business card, and express your interest in the position and the company. Be enthusiastic and confident.
- Shake the interviewer’s hand and thank him or her for the opportunity to discuss the position.
- Lastly, remember the interview is not only a way for the employer to learn if you are right for the job; it is a way for you to learn if the job is right for you.

**BEHAVIOR-BASED INTERVIEWING:**

This type of interview is the most widely used, and it focuses on measuring your leadership abilities, problem-solving, and decision-making skills. Behavioral interviews assume that past performance is a predictor of future behavior or performance.

During this type of interview, you will be asked to describe a situation where you exhibited a specific behavior. Typically, these questions begin with, “Tell me about a time when…”. Derive examples from coursework, group projects, work experiences, internships and co-ops, and student organization activities.

Be prepared to use the STAR technique when answering these questions.

**Situation** – Describe a specific situation or event.

**Task** – What major tasks were you responsible for? Describe challenges you overcame, while showing skills and knowledge you used.

**Action** – Describe actions you took; in a group project, focus on what you did and not the efforts of the team.

**Result** – Describe the outcome of your actions; describe what you accomplished and learned.

**How to prepare for the behavioral interview:**

- Evaluate your background and identify your skills that relate to the requirements of the position.
• Develop thorough descriptions of situations that demonstrate how these skills were used in specific tasks assigned to you.

• Use the STAR technique in creating these descriptions, and when possible, quantify or qualify the results.

• Prepare examples of situations where results were different than expected and how you handled and overcame the situation.

Examples of behavioral interview questions:

• Tell me about a situation where you worked on a project as part of a team. What was your role, and what were the results?

• Give me an example of a time when you went above and beyond the call of duty to get a job done.

• Give an example of a time when you sold a supervisor, professor, or people in a group project about an idea or concept. How did you proceed?

• Tell me about a time when you came up with an innovative solution to a challenge in your work or class.

• Describe a time when something you were involved in did not turn out as you planned.

SECOND INTERVIEWS

During second interviews, be prepared for a series of interviews with individuals and/or small groups who are peers, supervisors, or executives, and the interviews can range from a half day to a full day of interviewing and related activities. Second interviews are technical and more focused on leadership and problem-solving skills. As you close your interviews, reiterate that you are confident you are a great fit for the position. Be sure you understand the next stage in the selection process and the timetable. Sometimes, but rarely, job offers are extended during the follow-up interview. Consider how you will reply if this happens. Most candidates ask for a certain length of time, such as one to two weeks, in which to make a decision. Make sure to obtain a business card from each person you interview with in order to send thank you notes.

After the interview, evaluate whether this position, the people, and the company fit with your interests and career goals.

THE FINAL STEP - FOLLOW-UP:

The follow-up is the last step in the interview process. Send a brief thank you note via email within 24 hours. This is a good way to reiterate why you are seriously interested in the position and the organization. Also, this communication puts your name back in front of the interviewer who will be deciding whether you are invited back for any additional interviews, or if you are given a job offer. Be concise and to the point in your follow-up email, making sure that you get your point across quickly and efficiently.

For sample thank you notes and other professional email correspondence, see the “Job Search Correspondence” handout under the “Students” section of the UCS website.

AFTER THE INTERVIEW:

After the interview, it is important to assess the experience while it is still fresh in your memory. Make notes of what you learned and include information such as:

• Write down the name, title, and contact information of the interviewer(s).

• Make a list of the questions you were asked, and review which ones you had difficulty in answering.

• Review what the position entails along with the duties and responsibilities.

• Note your reactions as to whether this position, along with the company and its culture, fit your interests and career goals.
• Assess what you learned from the interview process and what went well, along with how to improve your skills for future interviews.

UCS RESOURCES

For additional information regarding the interview process, see the “Preparing for the Employment Interview” handout under the “Students” section of the UCS website, attend the You’re Hired! Interview Workshop, and make an appointment with a UCS career counselor to conduct a mock interview.

TOP 5 INTERVIEW TIPS

1. Dress appropriately.

Your physical appearance can speak volumes to someone who is meeting you for the first time. Even if you know that the firm allows employees to wear jeans, don’t sabotage yourself by showing up to the interview in casual clothing. When in doubt, dress on the conservative side and show up in neat, professional clothing; a business suit is your best and safest bet. In an interview, stay away from flashy jewelry, plunging necklines, too-short hemlines, t-shirts, and shoes that are too casual or too difficult to walk in. You never want to wear something that can be distracting.

2. Set yourself apart from other candidates.

What sets you apart from other candidates are: the skills you have gained through your work or volunteer experience, knowledge you have acquired through your academic experience, and how you incorporate these experiences in your answers. Be familiar with the job description of the position for which you’re interviewing in order to illustrate how your experience, abilities, and strengths are congruent with the company’s needs. Employers want to know why they should hire you specifically. Make clear connections for them.

3. Research the position and the company.

When you walk into a job interview, knowledge of the company’s history, goals, and current activity proves to the interviewer that you are not only prepared for the interview, but also that you want to be a part of the organization. As a general rule, the more famous the brand, the more they will expect you to have done your homework. Researching the company shows you’re serious about the job. Use resources such as the UCS handout “Company and Industry Research Guide” or the Houston Business Journal link under the “Students” section of the UCS website.

4. Ask questions.

Three in five interviewers say that interviewees often show a lack of interest in the job by not asking questions about the company or position. If you don’t ask smart questions, you’ll appear indifferent. The University Career Services handout “Preparing for the Employment Interview” lists sample questions for a job candidate to ask in an interview. You should stay away from questions concerning salary, benefits, and hours, which should be discussed once an initial offer is made.

5. Send a thank you note after the interview.

Make sure to send a handwritten thank you note or email to the interviewer expressing gratitude for their time and consideration. While you don’t want to call the company every day, a phone call to check in a week after the interview is perfectly acceptable.

*The quality of a person’s life is in direct proportion to their commitment to excellence, regardless of their chosen field of endeavor.*

– Vince Lombardi
While opportunity might not come knocking on your door, it very well could call you on the phone. Will you be ready? Many employers ask job candidates to participate in an interview over the phone or via Skype in order to screen candidates and narrow the pool of applicants, who then, will be invited for an in-person interview. These convenient interviewing methods save time and money and are very popular, especially in the early stages of the hiring process. For general, fundamental interviewing tips and techniques useful for any type of interview, please read “The Interview” article in this publication. In addition to these tips, phone and Skype interviews require that you make certain arrangements specifically for these modes of communication. As with in-person interviews, preparation is key!

Some recruiters schedule phone interviews for specific dates and times, while others might call you unexpectedly and ask if you “have a few minutes to talk.” Therefore, it’s important that you be ready for a phone interview on a moment’s notice.

**BEFORE YOU GET THE CALL**

- Charge your phone or consider using a landline, if possible.
- Find a quiet space: no TV or music, no other phones ringing, no friends, roommates, family, or loud pets in the room, no background noise (traffic, construction, dishwasher, etc.).
- Let people know you need to be in a quiet space and that they should not interrupt you - put up a “Do Not Disturb” sign, if necessary.
- Turn off call-waiting in order to avoid any interruptions.
- Print out a copy of your resume and have it easily accessible during the phone interview.
- Compile a list of your greatest strengths and accomplishments you can refer to while on the phone.
- Keep a pen and paper handy for note taking.
- Have a glass of water nearby in case your mouth gets dry.

**DURING THE PHONE INTERVIEW**

- Smile! Even though the interviewer can’t see you, smiling will alter the tone of your voice and project a positive image to the interviewer.
- Stand up! This, too, will alter the tone of your voice in a positive way. You will sound more energetic and confident.
- Speak slowly and enunciate very clearly. If the interviewer can’t hear or understand you, it won’t matter how wonderful your responses are.
- Use the interviewer’s title to address him or her. For example, Mr., Ms., or Dr.
- Do not interrupt the interviewer. Listen to each question very carefully.
- Give short answers. Be concise and succinct. Do not ramble.
- Thank the interviewer for his or her time and ask if it would be possible to meet in person. Remember, your goal is to set up a face-to-face interview!
SKYPE INTERVIEWS:
ARE YOU READY FOR YOUR CLOSE-UP?

A lot of companies utilize Skype as a convenient, cost-saving way to conduct video interviews with out-of-state or out-of-city candidates. If a company asks you to participate in an interview via Skype, you will need to prepare just as you would for an in-person interview and incorporate some of the phone interview tips as well!

Lights, camera, action! To get ready for your close-up video interview:

1. **Run a microphone check.** Conduct a technical check/rehearsal before your interview. Make sure your internet connection is stable and invest in a dedicated microphone. The built-in microphone isn’t very reliable and can make you sound like you’re in a bat cave.

2. **Use a good headshot and stage name.** Create a professional Skype account username and upload a professional profile picture. Present yourself as a responsible, mature professional, not as “hotgurrl87.”

3. **Set the stage.** Find a quiet place in which to conduct the interview and make sure the background is plain and neutral. Do not have any distracting posters, pictures, knick-knacks, etc. in the background of your shot. The focus should be on you and your qualifications, not on the poster of your favorite sports team behind you.

4. **Get in costume.** Dress professionally and be well groomed! You need to dress in professional business attire. Not only will this project a polished and professional image, it will help you “get into character” – you will feel more professional, which will positively influence your body language and communication style.

5. **Light yourself well.** Good lighting is crucial. Set up two lights on either side of your computer and webcam. Test the way the light hits you – it should be evenly lit and flattering.

6. **Look into the camera.** Avoid the mistake of looking at the interviewer or yourself on the computer screen. That will make it look as if you’re looking down. Instead, look directly at the camera. That way, it will appear as if you are making good eye contact.

7. **Have your “script” ready.** Print out a copy of your resume in case you need to reference it during the interview.

**AFTER THE INTERVIEW**

Regardless of the type of interview you participate in, you should take notes about what you were asked and how you answered those questions. Furthermore, be sure to send the interviewer a thank you note reiterating your interest in the position. Your thank you note should be sent within 24 hours after the interview. For more tips on writing thank you notes, see the “Professional Communication Etiquette” article in this publication.

**Tip You Can Do It!**

- Print out a copy of your resume to reference during the interview.
- Dress to impress whether it’s a phone interview or a Skype interview! You’ll feel more confident, and therefore, your responses to interview questions will sound confident.
- Don’t forget to smile! Smiling will project a positive tone.
Business etiquette matters now more than ever before as technology allows us to tweet, post, and comment to hundreds of people at a time. Here are some guidelines to communicate effectively and professionally:

COMMUNICATION ETIQUETTE: WORDS THAT WORK

Using the Phone

When you call someone, the first thing you should do is identify yourself and state why you are calling. Never launch into questions or requests for assistance until you have first stated who you are. If the call goes to voicemail, listen to the message. Some messages will indicate whether or not the person is in the office, who to contact if you need immediate assistance, or provide an email address asking the caller to use email as the preferred method of contact. The preferred method of contact usually gets your request answered sooner! Lastly, by all means, leave a message. State your name and number first and speak slowly and clearly. Briefly state what you’re calling about and then close by repeating your number again slowly! Wait 48 hours before you call the person back again.

Email Communications

You may use your iPhone, Android, or Tablet to send email messages, but this doesn’t mean that you can format your email like it is a text message. When you are communicating with professional people rather than friends, take care to avoid grammatical and spelling errors. Whether you are communicating with a prospective employer, UH staff, or faculty, pay attention to how and what you write. Keep in mind these simple steps before you click “Send”:

Step One: Be sure that you’re addressing your email to the right person. We have all heard horror stories about emails that were sent to the wrong person and the negative ramifications that followed. Making sure the recipient’s email address is correct will save you some unwanted stress.

Step Two: Include a subject line that is direct and to the point. Business professionals often check their inbox and scan the subject lines of emails to see what needs immediate attention. A vague subject line could get your email passed over.

Step Three: Treat your email like a letter. Use a greeting like “Dear” or “Good afternoon,” and end with a closing like “Sincerely” to help personalize your communications. If you’ve never emailed the person before, take time out to do some research to learn more about him or her. This will help you select the most appropriate greeting. Using “Dear Sir” for a female is not appropriate. Neither is “Dear Howard” when you are addressing faculty members with a Ph.D. In addition, keep your email brief. Any lengthy communication should be sent either in an attachment or through other means like snail mail or fax. When writing your email, maintain a courteous and professional tone. Email is impersonal and the tone of messages can be misinterpreted. Do a final check for spelling, grammar, and missing words. Once you click “Send,” your message is in cyberspace and can’t be taken back.

The Art of Conversation

There are a few general rules to being a good communicator:

- Listen and concentrate on what the other person is saying and let them know you understand them by nodding and making eye contact.

- Think before you speak. Don’t jump into a conversation or finish the other person’s sentence because you think you know what the other person is going to say.
• Use proper titles when addressing professionals. For example, when communicating with a faculty member on campus, be sure to address them as “Professor” or “Doctor.” If unsure whether they have received a Ph.D., feel free to refer to them as “Professor,” “Sir,” or “Ma’am.”

• Remember to say, “Please” and “Thank you” because these basic principles of good manners can be somewhat lacking in our fast-paced world.

Just a reminder: the smallest effort in brushing up your communication skills can make a big impact. It can make a positive impression! Using professional communication etiquette everyday will help you stand out from the crowd in school, in your job search, in the workplace, and in life.

Remember to Always Say, “Thank you!”

We often leave an interview feeling somewhat relieved because the interview is over. However, the interview process doesn’t end there. Although we thank the hiring manager[s] for their time at the end of an interview, we must also remember to thank them in writing after the interview!

Why is it important?

Thank you notes and emails are extremely important in the professional world. Writing an effective thank you note or email is a good practice to build, especially when interviewing for internships and other employment opportunities, requesting reference and recommendation letters, or any other instances where it may benefit you to display some form of professional courtesy. The purpose of sending a thank you note or email is to establish goodwill, express your appreciation, and strengthen your candidacy.

When should you send a thank you note or email?

• After an informational or professional interview.

• When a professional writes a reference or recommendation letter.

• When you want to extend gratitude for someone who helped you in the pursuit of your goals.

• After a job shadowing or employer networking event.

What should you include?

There are a few key elements to address when writing thank you notes and emails:

1. Reiterate your interest in the position and the company or organization.

2. Highlight something positive from the interview or restate something you learned.

3. Provide any information not previously given in the interview.

4. Match your qualifications, skills, and strengths with the job requirements.

5. Express your sincere appreciation.

Who should you send it to?

Thank you notes and emails should be addressed to the hiring manager or interviewer and any other professionals involved in your interview. You can also request that the interviewer shares your note or email with the team.

Email vs. Snail Mail?

Nowadays, email thank you notes are professionally acceptable, but you are also allowed to send both if you prefer. Physically mailed thank you notes can be handwritten or typed. It is generally believed that in any format, thank you notes or emails should be sent within 24 hours of the interview.

Need more help?

For more information about writing effective thank you notes or emails, please view the “Job Search Correspondence” handout under the “Students” section of the UCS website.
An estimated 70 – 80 percent of jobs are advertised through non-traditional job search channels.

Non-publicized jobs encompass the hidden job market and generally can be found only through networking and informational interviewing. Even when jobs are advertised, the person who utilizes networking gains a competitive edge.

WHAT IS NETWORKING?

“Networking” refers to the process of discovering and utilizing connections between people to exchange information and ideas about careers, job search strategies, and job opportunities. It is the most effective career exploration and job search tool!

The following diagram shows how quickly networks can grow.

BENEFITS OF NETWORKING

- Uncover information regarding a specific employer, job, or career of interest to you.
- Acquire mentors to obtain advice on conducting a successful job search and refine your communication and interview skills.
- Stand out among hundreds of other candidates by connecting with contacts within a company.

BEFORE YOU START NETWORKING – DETERMINE WHAT YOU HAVE TO OFFER

First, prepare a sound bite, which is an abbreviated introduction of yourself. It includes your name and university, your major, goals and the purpose of your networking.

Example: “Hi, my name is Jacob Smith, and I am a computer science major at the University of Houston. I’m interested in the field of software development; particularly in the technology industry.”

Next, create a marketing commercial (refer to the “How to Market Yourself at a Career Fair” article) that talks about what you have to offer, and include information such as:

- What are your greatest accomplishments?
• What are your areas of interest and career goals? Knowing your goals will help you to determine what type of contacts to seek out.

• What are your relevant skills, courses, internships, and other work experiences?

• Why are you interested in the field/job and industry?

Preparing this information before you meet a contact will help you to say what you want in a few quick sentences. You can also use this information as a lead-in for an informational interview or telephone conversation you have with a contact in the field.

IDENTIFYING NETWORKING CONTACTS

Everyone knows other people and has a network. It is recommended to begin networking with people you already know. You may receive useful information and advice, and it will help you in building your confidence. But networking involves moving beyond one’s immediate network and tapping into other people’s networks, perhaps far removed from your own.

Here are sample networking sources:

• **Family and Friends:** Parents, brothers and sisters, uncles and aunts, cousins, other family members, close friends and acquaintances

• **Employment:** Present and former employers (supervisors and coworkers), subordinates, customers, clients, suppliers, competitors

• **Professionals:** Accountants, lawyers, doctors, dentists, clergy, insurance agents, professional societies, bankers, librarians, hair dressers

• **School:** Classmates, professors, advisors, administrators, student organizations, conference speakers, company representatives at information sessions and career fairs, UH alumni (especially recent grads)

• **Community:** Chambers of Commerce, clubs, professional associations, service organizations, religious groups, public service work, coaches, and sports team members

• **Internet:** Online discussion groups and blogs, web based social networks such as LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter

• **UCS Resources:** UCS career counselors and UCAN (University Career Advisory Network)

WHERE TO MEET CONTACTS:

• Student professional organizations and associations

• University of Houston and College Alumni Associations

• Career fairs

• Local and national organizations

• Volunteer and community service

• Company receptions and information sessions

• Chamber of commerce meetings and events
MAKING INITIAL CONTACT

During initial contacts, do not ask for a job, simply ask for information about where positions may exist. Ask questions that get people talking about jobs and careers; listen and take notes. Wait until your contact asks about you, and then explain your situation in positive terms. Ask for suggestions or referrals. Sample questions include the following:

- What are the top employers for this position/field?
- Are there professional organizations and associations that I should join?
- Are there any publications I should read?

INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWING

Informational interviewing is the process of gathering career information from people who are currently working in a job, career field, organization, or geographic area of interest to you. Information can be obtained through one-on-one discussions, social interactions and informal conversations, over the phone, or through email.

PREPARING FOR INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS

- Evaluate and know what your career interests are.
- Create a set of questions that will help you determine if a field or organization are a match with your skills, and expectations.
- Start scheduling appointments with people you know.
- Prepare responses to questions you may be asked.

Sample Informational Interview Questions:

- How did you decide to go into this field and industry? What is your educational background and work experience?
- What is a typical work day like – routines and duties performed on a regular basis?
- What do you like most about your job, your company, and your industry? What do you dislike or consider as challenges?
- What is the ideal education and background for this career?
- What are typical career paths in the company/industry?
- What is the future of this field and industry?

Questions About Your Job Search:

- What would you suggest I do to make my resume more effective?
- Do you have any career advice or ideas for me?
- Can you recommend any groups or professional organizations in which I could become involved?
- Are there any specific publications that I should read or websites I should visit?
- Who else (in your field) would you recommend I talk to?

DURING THE INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW

- Be on time, prepared, and dressed professionally.
- Ask for information and suggestions.
- Be respectful of the contact’s time.
- Bring updated copies of your resume and business cards in case the contact asks for one.
- Thank the person for his/her time and information, and ask if he/she could recommend anyone else to contact.

FOLLOWING-UP AND MAINTAINING YOUR NETWORK

- Write a thank you note to everyone you speak with within 24 hours.
Follow-up on leads you’ve been given.

Keep contacts informed of your progress throughout the process and how you are taking action on their suggestions.

Maintain your network even after you start a new job as they can assist you with career development throughout your life.

Incorporate networking into your everyday life as you will reap benefits both personally and professionally.

For more tips and information about networking and information interviews, view the “Informational Interviewing and Networking” handout under the “Student” section of the UCS website.

KEEPING IT TOGETHER – STAYING ORGANIZED

Keep track of your activities and of business cards you receive.

Items to Note:

- Contact Information (Name, Title, Phone, Email, Address and Company Name)
- Referral Source
- Date/Place of Meeting(s)
- Key Points Learned
- Future Follow-up Plan/Date
- Networking Contact Suggestions and Actions You Have Taken
- Thank You Notes Sent
- Next Steps
- Additional Notes

READY, SET, GO!

Professional networking sounds less terrifying if you think of it as relationship building. According to the Wall Street Journal article, “Empower Your Connections, Not Just Yourself,” networking is relationship building, which can become a full-time job if not done efficiently. Adam Rifkin, a Silicon Valley entrepreneur once named Fortune’s best networker, believes people fail to effectively leverage networks because they view them within a hub and spoke structure; every new connection adds increased weight to the hub until it is eventually overwhelmed. Rifkin encourages removing yourself from the center of the structure and viewing all individuals as connected to each other, not just you. Building an extensive community allows everyone in a network to benefit from one another, and for ideas and information to be shared and spread more quickly. Below are a few ways to “Empower Your Connections.”

1. Connect with fellow students, faculty, and staff on LinkedIn and facilitate introductions within these connections. Maintain an updated profile monthly and utilize the status feature to keep your network up-to-date on your internship or job search.

2. Join the University Career Advisory Network (UCAN) on LinkedIn. This group is specifically designed to help students ask for career advice and connect with professionals in their field of interest.

3. Participate in company information sessions or receptions on and off campus. Companies typically hold information sessions with the specific purpose of meeting potential interns or full-time candidates. So bring your friends along too!

4. Join student organizations and get involved! Many student organizations are involved within the community and with employers.

5. Utilize social networks you’ve already created. Ideally, your social networks are with those who have your best interest at heart.

6. Make an appointment with a UCS career counselor. If the idea of building new relationships makes you nervous, practice!
If you don’t have a LinkedIn profile yet, you may be missing out on finding jobs as well as professional networking opportunities. LinkedIn is a professional social networking site designed to help people manage their professional relationships.

LinkedIn currently has over 300 million professionals in over 200 countries and territories worldwide. Professionals are signing up to join LinkedIn at a rate of more than two new members per second. There are over 39 million students and recent college graduates on LinkedIn, its fastest growing demographic. More than 3 million companies have LinkedIn company pages, and this includes executives from all 2013 Fortune 500 companies as members. Using LinkedIn as a networking and personal branding tool is strongly recommended for the professional job search.

Here are a few strategies to get you started:

1. **Create a complete LinkedIn profile.** Include all relevant experience, education, skills, and accomplishments as well as a professional photo. Obtain recommendations from supervisors, coworkers, and customers. Update your profile regularly.

2. **Request connections with everyone you know to begin growing your network.** Use LinkedIn to connect to people with whom you went to school, worked, or have other connections.

3. **Ask your first degree contacts for introductions to new people with whom you would like to connect.**

4. **Join LinkedIn groups that are relevant to your field and/or industry, as well as company, education, and alumni groups.** Actively participate in group discussions by making intelligent comments and posting news articles.

5. **Search people, recruiters, jobs, and companies for positions of interest.**

When communicating with other LinkedIn members, your messages should be as professional and concise as possible. The following steps are recommended:

1. **DO NOT USE THE DEFAULT MESSAGE.** This message does not state who you are or the reason you would like to connect. Although using the default is convenient, it is the least likely way of making a good impression and getting a desired response.

2. **PERSONALIZE YOUR MESSAGE.** Even if you think the member knows you well, it’s a good practice to personalize your message. First impressions always count, even via email. With this in mind, take time to make sure your message is professional and authentic. The extra time and effort you invest in your message will make it more effective.

3. **INTRODUCE YOURSELF.** State who you are and how you know the person. For example, “I am a computer engineering junior at the University of Houston, and we are both members of the IEEE LinkedIn group.”
4. **MENTION REFERRALS.** If you and the member have a third party in common, tell them. For example, “My coworker John Williams, Director of Marketing at XYZ Company, recommended I contact you.”

5. **EXPLAIN WHY YOU WANT TO CONNECT.** If you admire their work, follow their blog, have questions about what they do, or want to re-establish a connection, tell them!

6. **BE POLITE AND PATIENT.** Don’t forget to say, “May I,” “Please,” and “Thank you.” Also, remember that professionals are busy people. Be patient if they don’t respond immediately. Some professionals rarely check their LinkedIn accounts; therefore, be prepared to wait for a response.

Need help getting started on LinkedIn? UCS career counselors can help! They are available to meet with you and review your LinkedIn profile and networking strategy. Students and alumni are also welcome to join the UCS UCAN LinkedIn group. Connect to UCS staff, UH students and alumni; also receive UCS announcements, events, career-related articles, and other information. For additional information on how to effectively network using social media, please review our “Using Social Media in the Job Search” handout under the “Students” section of the UCS website.

---

**NEW TO LINKEDIN AND NOT SURE WHAT TO DO?**

Here are additional tips to get you started:

**Establish a Professional Profile**

- Treat your profile like you would treat your resume, free from spelling and grammatical errors.
- Since you upload your resume to LinkedIn, we encourage students to visit a UCS career counselor during walk-in hours for a resume critique.
- When you’ve completed your profile, thoroughly check it for misspelled words and grammatical errors. Once you create your account, everyone can see it.
- For more tips, see the “How to Build a Professional Student LinkedIn Presence” handout.

**Join LinkedIn Groups**

- Joining groups will give you the opportunity to connect with individuals who have similar interests and career goals.
- When you join a group, you will gain inside access to information such as job postings.
- For more information, see the “How to Network Professionally Online” handout.

**Explore Opportunities**

- Before you attend a career fair, or you are called in for an interview, research the companies that interest you. Be prepared to speak knowledgeably about the company to show how your experiences and qualifications are a match for the position. Prepare questions to help you evaluate if the company and position are a fit with your career interests and goals.
- See the “How to Conduct Essential Employer Research on LinkedIn” handout.

For additional information on how to effectively use social media as a networking tool, please review our “Using Social Media in the Job Search” handout, along with the other handouts mentioned here under the “Students” section of the UCS website.
What is a career fair? It’s an event hosted by UCS or UH colleges where employers from all industries participate in meeting and recruiting UH students and alumni for entry-level positions and internships. Career fairs are a great place to start your job search, and participating will benefit you in numerous ways such as:

- Learning more about companies and organizations and what positions they offer.
- Establishing a network of contacts through employers and recruiters as well as other job seekers.
- Increasing your chances of receiving an interview by meeting and talking to hiring companies.
- Getting pre-selected for On-Campus Recruiting interviews. Please refer to the “On-Campus Recruiting Overview” article in this publication to learn more about this service.

PREPARING FOR A CAREER FAIR:

- When possible, obtain the list of companies scheduled to attend the career fair. Map out which companies you are interested in and create a list of your top five to ten companies.

- Do your homework. Research your target companies in order to be better prepared if they ask you specific questions.

- Determine three companies that you are most interested in, and spend most of your research time identifying their vision, products and services, where they are located, etc.

- Participate in On-Campus Recruiting. Complete your profile and upload at least one resume on the UCS website.

- Ask questions. Create a list of questions specifically designed for the companies with whom you plan to speak. This will help you appear well informed and interested in their organization.

- Practice your introduction. Employers have a window of 60 seconds to meet with job seekers. Therefore, first impressions are important. Do not say to employers, “What do y’all do?” Create your marketing commercial to “sell” yourself to potential employers. See the “Create Your Own Marketing Commercial” checklist later in this article.

- Update your resume. Have your resume reviewed by a UCS career counselor. Your resume is your most important marketing material! Take advantage of the services UCS has to offer such as the Rock Your Resume Workshop and Impress! How to Work a Career Fair Workshop. UCS also offers a variety of career-related handouts that can be found under the “Students” section of the UCS website.

- Prepare to answer questions. Employers are trying to get to know you, therefore, be prepared to think fast on your feet. Avoid using “um, like, ah,” etc.

- Make sure your professional attire is clean and pressed. You are already being evaluated as a potential candidate; therefore, first impressions are important. Even though this is not an interview setting, it is necessary to look professional.
CREATE YOUR OWN MARKETING COMMERCIAL

A marketing commercial (also known as an elevator speech, 30 - 60 second introduction, or sales pitch) is your personal advertisement to introduce yourself briefly to a potential networking contact. It is an effective marketing tool that, when used correctly, will help you open up doors to many opportunities. Below is a checklist of information you should include:

- **Education**: College, major, and any other relevant academic information
- **Experience**: Internships, Co-ops, part-time and full-time employment
- **Volunteer activities**: School and community
- **Leadership roles**: College, church, local and national organizations
- **Background**: Most important skills, strengths, accomplishments, and goals
- **SELL YOURSELF!**

Practice your marketing commercial to make it sound natural and not rehearsed!

CAREER FAIR ETIQUETTE:

- **Be respectful** and turn off your cell phone!
- **Be courteous** and aware of the employer’s time.
- **Enjoy the career fair**, be enthusiastic and let your positive attitude show!
- **Bring mints** to maintain a fresh breath.

DAY OF THE CAREER FAIR:

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

- **Stock your portfolio** with several copies of your resume. Always give a resume to each employer with whom you speak.
- **Obtain a layout map of company booths**. Create a quick game plan; this way you can quickly map out your target companies.
- **Bring list of target companies**. Remember to bring your list of top five to ten companies that you’ve researched.

DURING THE CAREER FAIR

- **Arrive early**. There may be a long wait time to visit with your preferred employers, therefore, be prepared to wait.
- **Make the most of your wait time**. Reading the company’s advertising materials will help you learn something new about the company.
- **Introduce yourself**. Smile and speak clearly at all times. Greet the recruiter, state your name, and welcome them to the University of Houston. Have good eye contact!
- **Ask questions about the company**. Have your list of questions ready and space to jot down notes.
- **Take notes** on information needed as to how, when, and who to follow-up with, steps in their interview process, etc. Also, ask about employer information sessions and campus interviews, and make a note of these events and dates.
- **If you see a company that you’re interested in** and you didn’t have a chance to research it, collect information they give out and review it. Then, come back and connect with the employer or recruiter.
- **Look beyond the obvious**. Even though hospitals hire nurses and doctors, they also need professionals in various fields: accounting, human resources, psychology, etc.
• Ask for a business card. Obtaining a business card provides direct contact with the organization. Remember to ask each recruiter you meet what is their preferred method of contact to send them a thank you note.

• Be flexible. If the recruiter does not know about a specific job or internship you are interested in, ask them for a contact person that would be able to help you.

• If the huge crowds are overwhelming, give yourself a break and come back to the fair when you feel re-energized.

• Network with other students and alumni while you are waiting to speak with a recruiter. Where have they worked before? Where have they interned? You never know when making these connections can lead you to the possible company contact.

• Look your best and be confident. When you sell yourself as a great candidate, it will be hard to forget you.

• On the spot interviews are rare, but employers and recruiters do have this option. If this is the case, be prepared to answer questions as if you are in an interview setting.

• You get what you give. Only YOU can control what you will gain from any event.

AFTER THE CAREER FAIR

• Look over your notes and review what each company has to offer. Decide which ones to follow-up with.

• Review your goals with the information you learned about the companies you visited.

• Write a thank you note to the employers you spoke with no later than one to two days after the career fair. Be sure to list key points that you spoke about. This will help the employer to remember who you are.

• Follow-up with the employer if you have not heard from them in two weeks. You may contact them by calling or sending an email to re-establish your interest in the company.

CAREER FAIR DON’TS:

• Do not show up in everyday clothes. Employers see this as sloppy and unorganized. Wear your professional best and they will see you at your best.

• Do not come on too strong. While it is great to show you have personality, remember to practice your introduction, and listen to what the employer is saying in order to respond accordingly.

• Do not appear insincere. Compliments are good, but there is a fine line and usually employers can spot this. Talk about how well the company is doing and not necessarily the employer themselves.

• Do not interrupt someone else’s conversation. Sure the line is long and you have five more companies you need to see, but be considerate of those around you.

• Do not forget to ask. Always ask employers before taking giveaways and handouts.

Check the UCS website at www.uh.edu/ucs for dates and times of UCS career fairs.

THANK YOU NOTES: TIPS AND GUIDELINES

It is considered good professional etiquette to send a thank you note to employers and recruiters you met and spoke with at career fairs. Therefore, be sure to stand out from the rest of the student body and follow these tips and guidelines when writing or emailing your thank you notes.

Thank you notes should address:

• Company’s hiring needs
• Your qualifications and skills
• Your desire to be considered for an interview
Researching companies and industries may be the single, biggest secret to a successful job search.

Two main reasons for conducting company research are:

1. To make an informed career decision. It’s important to evaluate potential companies and the career opportunities and work environment they offer. Determine if the company and the job are a fit with your career interests, skills, values, and goals.

2. Equip yourself for the interview. If you want to distinguish yourself from other candidates, learn about the company you plan to interview with. You will gain a competitive edge if you are able to speak knowledgeably about the company and ask relevant questions during the interview.

BENEFITS OF RESEARCHING

Before you apply for any job, spend time researching companies and industries. Here are some of the benefits of researching:

- **Target companies**: Create a targeted list of companies and industries that interest you, and maximize your research efforts by focusing on your targeted list.

- **Market yourself effectively**: Identify the needs of the company and market your skills and experience to show how you are a viable candidate for the job.

- **Cover letters and resumes**: Tailor your cover letter and resume to the position; show how your experience and skills are a match.

- **Effectively prepare for the interview**: Prepare to confidently answer the question, “What do you know about our company?” Formulate questions to ask during the interview, and demonstrate your interest in the job and the company.

- **Is it a fit?**: Identify whether the company culture and career opportunities align with your career goals.

Tip: Distinguish Yourself

Employers view research as a critical factor in the evaluation of potential candidates. Candidates stand out and are more likely to receive a job offer if they:

- Can speak knowledgeably about the company and its products and services during the interview process.

- Discuss how their experiences and qualifications are a match for the job and the company’s needs.

- Exhibit how they can make an immediate contribution to the company.
WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN A COMPANY?

- The company’s services and products
- The type of company: public, private, nonprofit, government, small business, etc.
- Whether the company is a subsidiary or division of a larger organization, or the parent company
- Locations – local, regional, state, national, international
- The company’s customers, competitors, and market share
- The size of the company; number of employees
- The industries the company operates under; current and future industry trends
- The corporate culture and work environment
- Available job opportunities and potential career paths

WHERE TO FIND COMPANY AND INDUSTRY INFORMATION

Resources for researching companies and industries include:

- UCS handout “Company and Industry Research Guide”
- Internet, company and industry websites
- University Career Services website resources under the “Students” section of the UCS website
- UH’s M.D. Anderson Library online Research Guides and Career Resources link, which includes databases, directories, books, and more: http://guides.lib.uh.edu/profile.php?uid=23149
- Financial data and company annual reports
- Social networking: LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and any other social media sites
- Print resources such as directories, newspapers, and business and trade journals
- Trade and professional associations and organizations
- Chambers of commerce and Better Business Bureau
- Connections: People working for a company, UH alumni

- Comprehensive websites such as:
  Guide to Researching Companies, Industries, and Countries from Quintessential Careers: www.quintcareers.com/researching_companies.html
  How to Research Employers and Industries from The Riley Guide: www.rileyguide.com/employer.html

CAN’T FIND COMPANY INFORMATION?

If you are having trouble finding information about a particular company, conduct research on the industry and look for information such as:

- Typical customers and competitors
- Advantages and challenges working in the industry
- Entry-level opportunities; education and skills required; how people advance
- Current and future industry trends; growth opportunities and potential threats
- Leading professional or trade organizations

Tip

Things to Know Before You Begin Researching

- Generally, it is easier to find information about public companies rather than private companies.
- Information on parent companies will be easier to find than a company’s subsidiaries or divisions.
- Company and industry research is more effective when you use multiple resources.
- If you are unable to locate information on a particular company, research the overall industry’s trends, issues, and news events. Standard & Poor’s Industry Surveys are available online from the NetAdvantage database that is accessible through the M.D. Anderson Library.
- Use your personal network as another research tool to find information about specific companies.
Planning and Preparing a Successful Job Search

First, identify your skills, interests, strengths, and values. Next, determine your short and long-term career and life goals.

Planning a successful job search is like taking a road trip. The first step is figuring out your destination, your choice of career and career setting. Once you have figured out your destination, pack your bags with the appropriate cover letter, resume, and list of references. The next step is to map out your trip, meaning, be aware of what resources are available and how to access those resources as you approach your destination: a satisfying and rewarding career!

Therefore, it is important that you identify and clarify your goals in order to have a solid idea of what employment opportunities to look for as well as where. Using a multi-faceted job search strategy will be much more effective in identifying and utilizing numerous job search avenues for obtaining interviews and job offers. Below are a few tips to help you get started.

1. Tell Me About Yourself
Here’s your chance to effectively articulate and convey your skills, interests, strengths, values, and goals to potential employers. Prepare your personal 30 second marketing commercial that includes this information, as well as professional experience, education, and extracurricular activities such as involvement in student and professional organizations. Practice your marketing commercial to make it sound natural and not rehearsed.

2. Action Plan
Create a list of companies you’re interested in and research each one. Attend career fairs, information sessions, and other company networking events, and utilize the On-Campus Recruiting service at UCS. Please refer to the “On-Campus Recruiting Overview” article in this publication for more information.

3. Build Your Network
Learn how to network effectively. Join student and professional organizations that will help you build connections with employers in various industries and fields. Learn about these companies by participating in job shadowing opportunities, attending company office visits, and other networking events. Connect with companies and industry professionals on LinkedIn to learn more than what is just on their website. Attend The Job Hunt Workshop to learn more about networking effectively, and refer to the “Get Connected Using LinkedIn” article in this publication for more information and tips.

4. Create an Impressive Resume
“Show” versus “tell” an employer about your experiences and education. Instead of listing your responsibilities, explain your accomplishments, contributions, and quantify everything that is measurable. Tailor each resume to the specific job description. Attend the Rock Your Resume Workshop at UCS, and visit UCS during walk-in hours for a resume critique.

5. Interview
Prepare for your interview by researching the company and creating a list of questions to ask the interviewer. Anticipate questions you may be asked and prepare by using the STAR technique! Schedule an appointment with a UCS career counselor for a mock interview.

6. Follow-Up
Always thank the recruiter(s) and/or employer(s) for the interview, whether it’s by sending them an email or by writing them a hand-written thank you note.
**TAKING ACTION**

The following are some of the methods typically used by employers in recruiting entry-level and experienced applicants, followed by ways you can tap into these methods:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>WHAT EMPLOYERS DO</strong></th>
<th><strong>UCS RECOMMENDATIONS</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recruit and connect with college students and alumni.</td>
<td>Participate in On-Campus Recruiting, career fairs, and view job postings on the UCS website.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review resumes and cover letters for open positions.</td>
<td>Meet with a UCS career counselor to fine tune your resume and cover letter for the positions you are applying to.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sponsor career fairs and connect with potential employees.</td>
<td>Connect with UCS to find out about upcoming career fairs and dates for the Impress! How to Work a Career Fair Workshop on the UCS website.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hire from their interns, Co-ops, and part-time employees.</td>
<td>Obtain an internship, co-op, or volunteer position based on your interests, skills and values!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Network with professionals in their field, faculty, and University staff.</td>
<td>Expand your network and build relationships on and off campus. A great place to begin is with the University of Houston Alumni Association (UHAA) and industry specific organizations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connect with professional associations, student organizations, student clubs, and honor societies.</td>
<td>Join student and professional organizations and associations and attend their meetings. Review the possibilities for student involvement at uh.collegiatelink.net.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hire based upon industry specific trends and company needs.</td>
<td>Research company specific trends and websites for up-to-date information. Meet with a UCS career counselor for additional resources on hiring trends within your field.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertise and promote positions online and through professional networking sites.</td>
<td>Gain insight into the company’s culture by connecting with the organization on LinkedIn and researching current employees pathways to success.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post jobs within academic and student service departments throughout campus.</td>
<td>Check with faculty, staff, counselors, and peers on campus about potential employer networking opportunities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. CAREERSONAR

It connects with your LinkedIn and Facebook accounts and aggregates and ranks current open positions by the strengths of your social connections. It helps you identify contacts within the company you’d like to join. You can then leverage those contacts to get your foot in the door.

2. POCKET RESUME

This app costs $2.99 but building a great resume is hard work, whether you’re creating a new one or updating your old one. Pocket Resume aims to make it simpler by giving you the capability to create, edit and send your resume from your mobile device. Getting started is simple, use the Pocket Resume user interface, enter your information, choose a template and it will format your information and output your resume in PDF or RTF format. You can also import your LinkedIn data into the app to simplify the process even more.

3. HIDDEN JOBS

According to Hidden Jobs, more than 80 percent of job postings never get advertised. This service looks through company websites, newspapers, press releases, and other online media sources to identify companies that are “expanding their operations.” Hidden Jobs doesn’t actually list jobs on its app, but using its data can help you identify companies on the cusp of hiring and then target them for a position. Hidden Jobs refers to its app as “radar for new jobs.”

4. JOBMO

JobMo looks for jobs in more than 20 different countries and uses worldwide localization to find the positions closest to you and allows you to apply to them right from your mobile device. It also offers resources to compare salaries based on industry trends.

5. GIGWALK

Need some extra money? Have a smart phone? Gigwalk has multiple gigs all over your chosen area that range from $5 to $30 per gig. Companies interested in how their location is being marketed or managed advertise these gigs and then reimburse you once the information is uploaded through their app. Opportunities include Mystery Shopper, taking pictures or video of a store location, verify pricing for particular products, or speaking to customer service agents in the store to assess their knowledge about certain products.

ADDITIONAL APPS TO KEEP YOU ORGANIZED:

1. Pocket - Great for saving articles and blog posts you want to read later.

2. Flipboard - One place for all of your social media, blogs you follow, and news pages. Best of all, if you find something you want to read later, you can save it to Pocket!

3. Evernote - Not just for notes! You can capture everything in one app: notes, pictures, video, lists, and voice memos. It’s accessible anywhere and you can sync it across all of your devices.
The job search can be especially difficult for international students here in the U.S. It's a challenge because there are many elements that make the job search unique including language skills, visa issues, employer policies, cultural differences, and more.

For these reasons, University Career Services has several resources available especially with international student in mind to answer questions about conducting an effective job search.

**HANDOUT: THE JOB SEARCH FOR F-1 AND J-1 INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**

This handout is available under the “Students” section of the UCS website at **www.uh.edu/ucs**. It covers information such as: employment options, resume and interview tips for international students, cultural barriers to the job search, online resources, and more!

**MYVISAJOBS.COM**

Founded in 2006, Myvisajobs.com is now the largest and most trusted employment website for foreign workers seeking opportunities in the U.S.

**UCS WEBSITE AND OISSS**

Although finding employment as an international student can be complex, it is manageable if you seek assistance and support. International students should work closely with the Office of International Student and Scholar Services (OISSS) for all work authorizations, policies, and immigration regulations. OISSS is located in the University Center North, Room 203; Phone: 713.743.5065; **www.uh.edu/oisss**.

---

**Tip**

**Advice for International Students**

- Start the job search process early - minimum of one year in advance of graduation
- Attend UCS’s workshops on: resume writing, interviewing skills, internships, and more
- Meet with a UCS career counselor to discuss career goals, resume writing, interviewing skills, and the job search process
- Attend employer information sessions, career fairs, and other networking events
- Learn American business etiquette, job search strategies, and networking skills
- Demonstrate excellent English skills (written and spoken)
- Participate in professional organizations, campus organizations, and extracurricular activities
- Maintain a commitment to the job search process (stay motivated and positive)
We all have questions and concerns when it comes to choosing a career. There are many factors to consider. Does my career align with my interests? What is the work environment like? Does the industry or job fit with my long-term career goals? These are just some of the questions you may ask yourself.

If you are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, Intersex, or Asexual (LGBTQIA), there are additional issues to consider when it comes to your career. The transition from college to career can be difficult and stressful for anyone, but as a member of the LGBTQIA community you may face unique challenges. Are you in or “out”? Is the work environment safe and supportive? Can you be open and honest and still advance your career? If you are LGBTQIA and beginning your job search, it is important to understand that the workplace can vary dramatically in terms of support and openness for LGBTQIA employees.

For UH students, the transition from college to a work environment may be a surprise as UH has active LGBTQIA student groups, non-discrimination and harassment polices, and a supportive environment. Not every workplace will offer these same things. Fortunately, an Equal Rights Ordinance was passed for the City of Houston to prohibit workplace discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity, as of May 2014. Currently, there are no federal protections for workplace discrimination of LGBTQIA individuals.

Guideline #1: What is Comfortable?

Career experts advise that you do what is comfortable for you in your career decision making and job search. In order to determine your comfort level, you may want to assess what is important for you in managing your career. Is being out part of who you are? If so, then you may want to target LGBTQIA friendly companies in order to ensure equal treatment and support. Do you consider sexual orientation to be just a piece of what defines you? Are you careful and selective about the people to whom you disclose? If this is the case, then you may lean toward LGBTQIA friendly companies but remain flexible and open to all options. If you are not comfortable sharing information about yourself, and have considered your sexual orientation to only a few people, if anyone at all, then you may consider companies that provide you with a high degree of privacy. Once you have determined the comfort level that is right for you, begin to organize your job search. The way you identify and see yourself in the workplace may change over time and/or depending on the employer or work environment.

Guideline #2: Research, Research, Research

Researching an industry and employer is essential in your job search. Does the company offer domestic partner benefits? Does the company have a firmly enforced non-discrimination policy? Look at the policy language to see if it includes sexual orientation or gender identity.

There is no federal law that prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity in the workplace, therefore, it might be important for you to find out which states prohibit employment discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. Visit the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) website at www.hrc.org. It is the number one resource for information with regard to industry and employers as well as current legislation advocating for the equal rights and benefits for LGBTQIA Americans in the workplace. The HRC Corporate Equality Index (CEI) is an excellent resource for identifying LGBTQIA friendly companies. The CEI rates companies on a number of different criteria, including non-discrimination policy, diversity training and benefits, gender identity or expression, domestic partner benefits, and formal or informal LGBTQIA employee resource groups. You can research potential employers to determine the companies that might be a good fit for you. UCS is also Bronze Level Certified through OUT for Work and has a link to the OUT for Work’s employer research library under the “Students” section of the UCS website.
Guideline #3: Job Search Strategies

A successful job search begins with a solid resume. Your resume is your first impression on paper. It is designed for you to obtain an invitation for an interview. For LGBTQIA students who have participated in a number of gay-related activities, reflecting their experiences on their resume may present some difficulty. The skills that they have developed as a result of their activities will be of interest to an employer. As a LGBTQIA job seeker, you must determine if you are comfortable being out on your resume. Consider your audience and weigh the pros and cons of including such information.

If you’re not sure how to include this information in your resume, schedule an appointment with a UCS career counselor. A UCS career counselor can assist you by suggesting ways of highlighting your skills, and help you to decide whether to downplay the nature of the organization(s) in which they were developed. You may decide that you wish to screen out unsupportive employers. If this is the case, you could highlight your membership and contributions in organizations whose mission centers around the needs and concerns of LGBTQIA members.

Guideline #4: Coming Out on the Job

Considering whether or not to come out on the job is a personal choice. Once on the job, assess your workplace culture for supportiveness. Consider the timing of when to come out. You may want to have a “trial run” with one or two co-workers that you trust. Perform at your best and build support. Coming out on the job can be challenging, but it can be done successfully.

Remember, do what is comfortable for you. Utilize all of your resources, including University Career Services. Research the industry and company to determine the right fit, and clarify your goals. Visit the Human Rights Campaign website to assist you. Putting all the pieces together will help you make choices that are good for you and your career. If you feel uncomfortable coming out at the workplace or feel as though you are not receiving the level of support you are looking for, consider engaging in professional activities outside the workplace. Extending yourself in the community though professional associations or community organizations can help you expand your network and allow you to interact with professionals outside the organization. Consider joining the University of Houston LGBT Alumni Association (www.uhlgbtaa.com) for additional support and career advice.

Helpful Websites for LGBTQIA Individuals:

- UH LGBT Resource Center: www.uh.edu/lgbt/index.php
- UH CAPS LGBTQIA Career Resources: www.uh.edu/caps/resources/lgbtqia_career_resources.html#plan
- OUT for Work: www.outforwork.org
- LGBT Switchboard 24-Hour Helpline: www.montrosecenter.org/hub/services/avp/switchboard/
- GLAAD: www.glaad.org
- The Pipeline Project: www.lgbtpipeline.org
- It Gets Better: www.itgetsbetter.org
- Campus Pride: www.campuspride.org
For military members returning from a deployment overseas, the choice to transition back into civilian life may be the logical next step in their career. A big part of this transition often involves going back to college and seeking a degree.

There are approximately 1,600 student veterans currently enrolled at the University of Houston and enrollment continues to grow. Through military service, these individuals have earned a variety of education benefits. If you are a veteran returning to college, it is important to consider all of the educational benefits and resources available to you.

As a student veteran on campus, the transition from military life to student life may be quick but difficult as you navigate through the admission, registration, and career decision-making process. Knowing what to expect before you start can help make the process go more smoothly.

What is a veteran?

Title 38 U.S. Code 101 (2) The term “veteran” means a person who served in the active military, naval, or air service, and who was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable.

What is a Disabled Veteran?

(A) A veteran who is entitled to compensation (or who but for the receipt of military retired pay would be entitled to compensation) under laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs for a disability (i) rated at 30 percent or more, or (ii) rated at 10 percent or 20 percent in the case of a veteran who has been determined under Section 3016 of Title 38, U.S. Code to have a serious employment handicap, or (B) A person who was discharged or released from active duty because of a service-connected disability.

UH VETERANS SERVICES

The University of Houston’s Veterans Services Office (UH VSO) is one of eleven university programs in the United States that provides essential resources to student veterans and their families to help make their college experience a successful one. UH’s program is the only one of its kind in the region.

Prospective veteran students can review the important steps needed to prepare for the admission process right from the Office of Admissions website. In addition to admission assistance, this office provides other services including:

- Assistance with course registration
- Information about compensation through the GI Bill
- Loan programs
- Scholarship research
- College Work-Study employment
- Various workshops and seminars

The UH VSO also connects students to valuable campus services such as Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), University Career Services (UCS), Center for Students with DisABILITIES (CSD), Learning Support Services (LSS), and more. Visit the UH VSO website at www.uh.edu/veterans for more information.

MILITARY LIFE TO COLLEGE LIFE

Student veterans often face a unique set of issues as they adjust to life on campus. For those student veterans with many years of military service, it may take longer to relearn academic habits and study skills. In addition, veterans may become more easily frustrated with the less structured academic environment as the disciplined routine of military life no longer exists.
Some veterans may feel their responsibilities as a student are less important, which may lead to a lack of effort or involvement. Decisions about keeping up with class assignments and exams may seem insignificant to the decisions they may have made while in the military. Student veterans may feel alienated when people may not understand the difficulties military members faced or the challenges involved.

FROM CAMPUS TO CAREER

As a student veteran you may not know how to translate your military experience into civilian experience. If you are not sure how to adapt your military background into civilian terms, visit www.onetonline.org and click on the Attn: Veterans link. This tool will translate your military assignment into a civilian occupation that helps identify transferable skills.

University Career Services (UCS) offers a wide range of programs and services to help you reach your career goals. Schedule an appointment with a UCS career counselor to help you develop a civilian friendly resume that will help market your military skills. Search, submit applications, and participate in internships to apply your academic skills and gain valuable experience in a civilian role. For more information on these or other UCS services, visit the UCS website at www.uh.edu/ucs.

Many organizations want to hire veterans! Some job search resources specific to veterans include:

- G.I. Jobs: www.gijobs.com
- U.S. Department of Labor’s Veterans’ Employment and Training Service: www.dol.gov/vets
- Hire Veterans: www.HireVeterans.com
- Hire a Hero: www.hireahero.org
- Hire Heroes USA: www.hireheroesusa.org
- Military Connection: www.militaryconnection.com/hire-vets.asp
- Troops to Teacher: www.proudtoserveagain.com
- Helmets to Hardhats: www.helmetstohardhats.org
- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs: www.houston.va.gov
- USA Jobs: www.usajobs.gov
- The Riley Guide: www.rileyguide.com/vets.html
- Military.com: www.military.com

Student veterans can begin to tackle these issues by starting slowly.

- Take just a few courses your first semester - check with your academic advisor on the appropriate number of hours.
- Consider taking a variety of courses that tap into different interests and skills.
- Utilize the organizational and time management skills learned in the military to structure study time and complete assignments.
- Participate in student activities or join student groups such as the Student Veterans of America at UH as a way to connect with other students and the larger campus community.
- Recognize that others may not agree or understand the challenges of military service.
For many students, a job search is the first time in their lives when they encounter repeated rejection while pursuing something important. While it can be disheartening to get a “thanks but no thanks” letter – or no response at all – how you handle the rejection will have a big impact on your future job search success.

Finding the right job is a journey and a process. Learning to deal with job search rejection is an important developmental task that most people must master to have a successful career. Here are some tips to help you handle rejection gracefully while you are looking for the right job for you.

DON’T TAKE IT PERSONALLY - IT’S NOT ABOUT YOU

This sounds obvious but can be challenging to remember when you are the one being rejected. The decision not to hire you may be due to factors such as: the company decided to hire an internal candidate; your qualifications, though impressive, didn’t match the company’s specific criteria; or your values weren’t a match for the company’s culture. For these and a number of other reasons beyond your control, the decision has nothing to do with you. Just because you may not have been the perfect match doesn’t mean that you’re not an outstanding professional with excellent attributes and skills.

STOP AND TAKE TIME TO EVALUATE YOUR JOB SEARCH

If you are having difficulty in determining the reason you aren’t getting an interview or a job offer, take some time to evaluate all aspects of your job search and interview process.

If you applied for a position, but weren’t selected for an interview, reflect on what you did during the job search process.

- Did you fill out the company’s application completely and correctly?
- Did you target your resume to show how your skills and accomplishments are a fit for the job?
- Did you target your cover letter to clearly show that you possess the desired skills, experience, and knowledge to do the job?
- Did your qualifications match the majority of requirements listed in the job description?

If you thought the interview went well, but you received a rejection letter or didn’t hear back from the employer, what could you do differently in the next interview?

- Did you have the qualifications and experience the employer is looking for?
- Did you dress appropriately and make a good first impression?
- Did you show up late for the interview?
- Did you prepare for the interview by researching the company, practicing answers to interview questions, and formulating questions to ask the interviewer?
- Did you provide specific examples regarding how your skills and experience are a fit for the job, or did you fail to elaborate?
- Did you clearly express your interest in the job?
- Did you follow-up with a thank you letter?
- Did you really want the job?

By asking questions like these, you can learn from each application and each interview experience. In cases where you don’t have any information about the reason a company hired a different candidate instead of you, let it go and move on to the next opportunity.
KEEP YOUR JOB SEARCH MOVING AHEAD

Do not use rejection as an excuse to stop working on your job search. Instead, use rejection as a chance to apply for different jobs, interview, and go through the entire job search process as a way to improve your skills every step of the way.

If you stop looking, and wait to hear about a potential job offer, you can lose valuable momentum in your job search. You should not stop your search until you have received and accepted the right job offer.

Stay in touch with your network, and keep them up-to-date on your job search progress. Ask them for advice about what you could do differently, as well as if they have any recommendations on who you could contact for a potential job lead.

If you feel stuck and need help to evaluate your next steps, make an appointment with a UCS career counselor. We can provide you with job search techniques, help you improve your interviewing skills, critique your resume to highlight your strengths, etc.

TRUST THAT THE RIGHT JOB IS OUT THERE FOR YOU

Another way to look at job search rejection is that it could be a good thing in the long run. If the company didn’t think you were the right candidate for the job, it may have not been the best fit for you. As the saying goes, when one door closes, another one opens. Often, that second door leads to a better job and company than the first one might have been. Things happen for a reason, and maybe the job rejection you just received wasn’t your dream job after all.

Have faith in yourself and in your abilities. Think about the rejection as a possible opportunity to do something entirely different, for example, pursue a lifelong passion to start your own business.

Visualize the day you accept your new job. Imagine yourself happy and confident about your job choice. Imagination and visualization are powerful parts of the human mind; use them to your advantage!

BE THE CEO OF YOUR LIFE

Consider your job search as if it were a business.

Imagine that your life is a privately-owned business, and that you are the CEO (Chief Executive Officer). As the CEO, you have ultimate control of how your mission, vision, short- and long-term goals, and strategic plan are created and carried out. You make all of the decisions, and everything starts and stops with you. You are solely responsible for the success or lack of success of your business.

Also, fight against fear, self-doubt, and what could or couldn’t be possible, and instead, focus on what could be. Stay motivated, positive, optimistic, and keep moving forward all the while believing in yourself. Today could be the beginning of an incredible turn-around for your “company.”

“Nobody owes you a career. Your career is literally your business. You own it as a sole proprietor. You have one employee: yourself. You need to accept ownership of your career, your skills, and the timing of your moves.” – Andrew Grove, Co-founder, Intel Corp.

“Most of the important things in the world have been accomplished by people who have kept on trying when there seemed to be no hope at all.”
– Dale Carnegie

TIPS FOR STAYING MOTIVATED DURING YOUR SEARCH

Focus On Your Goals

• Stay focused on what you really want — a job that matches your career interests, skills, and values.

Visualize Your Goals

• Designate a place in your home where you can post reminders: a dream job list that includes everything you’d like in a job and in a company; a picture that represents the job you’d like to have and you can see yourself doing; and a motivational quote that inspires you.

Establish a Plan of Action Each Day

• Finding a job can be a job in itself. Therefore, treat your job search as your job, and establish “office hours” where you go to work on finding the right job for you.

• Break large tasks down into smaller, more manageable tasks. For example, create a list of calls to make, research a specific company, set up an informational interview, etc.

• Avoid the procrastination trap, and make progress, no matter how small, to feel a sense of accomplishment and to fuel your motivation.


University Career Services / CAREER VISIONS
Surround Yourself with a Social Support System

- Line up all the emotional bolstering you can because a job search can be tough on the ego.
- Spend time with supportive family and friends who will support you and hold you accountable for your progress.
- Stay away from negative people who could hinder your job search – people who are critical and anxious about your job search and may ask questions that make you feel worse.
- Find mentors and advisors (in or out of your career field) who can encourage and guide you. Professional associations may be a good place to start.
- Sometimes the best sources of support are people who already navigated their own tough job search and landed a great job at the end of it. Let these people share with you how they did it and learn from them.

Expand Your Network

- Conduct informational interviews to learn about specific careers and to gain insight into unadvertised employment opportunities.
- Join LinkedIn Groups to build your professional network and to connect with individuals with similar interests. You can also use LinkedIn to research companies and industries, and to find potential job leads.
- Network with UH Alumni by joining the UH Alumni Association.

Maintain Good Health

- Get seven to eight hours of sleep a night to increase your focus.
- Eat healthy snacks and meals to increase your energy.
- Exercise is a great way to channel stress and to generate energy to keep you going. Find ways to exercise that best fit your lifestyle, for example, playing sports, cycling, weight lifting, walking, and yoga.

Creativity and Hobbies

- Join a professional organization or association in your desired field.
- Use your creativity to boost your energy through avenues such as photography, scrapbooking, drawing, painting, poetry, writing, and blogging.
Christine Ha, who is blind, competed on Season 3 of the cooking show “MasterChef” and was crowned the winner.

Christine lived in Lakewood and Long Beach, California as a child before her family moved to Houston, Texas. She received a Master of Fine Arts degree for creative fiction/nonfiction at the University of Houston’s Creative Writing Program in 2013, and a Bachelor of Business Administration degree in Finance/MIS from the University of Texas at Austin in 2001.

She received the editor’s poetry prize from The ScissorTale Review, and was a finalist in the 2010 Creative Nonfiction MFA Program-Off contest. She also served as the Fiction Editor for “Gulf Coast: A Journal of Literature and Fine Arts,” a literary and visual arts magazine (Houston, Texas). In addition, her work has appeared in “Fire Point,” “The ScissorTale Review,” and “PANK Magazine among others.”

Christine believes that if she really wants to, she can overcome any obstacle and any challenges to really achieve what she wants and prove herself to the world. Everyone is very capable. Much more capable than they think they are.

Volunteer your skills in your community at your local church, a nonprofit organization, or events in your neighborhood.

Don’t neglect hobbies that you already enjoy (video games, watching old movies, etc.). Taking time for relaxation will renew your energy.

Reward Yourself

Create a list of mini-rewards and progressively better rewards to match the accomplishments you achieve.

Take short breaks periodically to refuel your mind and body.

REJECTION AND SUCCESS

We can all learn from others who have struggled, encountered setbacks again and again, yet never gave up. Here is a story of Christine Ha, a fellow Coog, and the obstacles she overcame to be crowned a MasterChef.

Although Christine didn’t have professional culinary training, she didn’t want to let her blindness keep her from following her dreams. She started her own blog, www.theblindcook.com, which is how she was discovered.

During Season 3 of the cooking show “MasterChef,” Christine competed with about 100 other chefs. On the show, contestants were evaluated by three tough judges of food and culinary talent, Chef Gordon Ramsey, food critic Joe Bastianich, and Chef Graham Elliot.

Christine’s favorite part of cooking is the presentation of food. Because she wasn’t born blind, she remembers colors and visualizes what is on the plate and what garnishes to include that will create a good presentation. Throughout each show, Christine felt, “I couldn’t see what anyone else was doing, I was solely focused on myself, and I think that helped me. It gave me an advantage,” she said. “When I came out of it, it was the most stressful intense experience of my life, it was amazing.”

During the season finale of “MasterChef,” Christine was awarded the title of MasterChef, and she won the $250,000 grand prize and a cookbook deal.

Christine’s dream of publishing a cookbook is now a reality, and the title of her first cookbook is Recipes from My Home Kitchen: Asian and American Comfort Food.

As Christine looks to her next dream of opening her own ice cream store and a pub, she gives the following advice, “I just want people to realize that they have it in themselves if they really want to,” she said. “If they have that passion, that fire, that drive, that desire... you can overcome any obstacle and any challenges to really achieve what you want and prove yourself to the world. Everyone is very capable. Much more capable than they think they are.”

Photo Credit: Greg Gayne / FOX
Evaluating and Negotiating Job Offers

Congratulations! You’ve received a job offer – or offers. Now what?

EVALUATING WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT

Salary should not be the sole factor in accepting a job offer.

The first step in evaluating a job offer is to identify and create a list of your life and work values. Once you have created this list, prioritize each value and use this ranking in your job evaluation. Some factors to consider:

THE COMPANY

- Organization’s business
- History
- Reputation and image
- Organization’s competitors
- Corporate culture and values
- Organization’s viewpoint of its customers
- Financial standing and security of organization
- Current and future growth potential
- Current and future products/services
- Number of offices and locations (global)
- International exposure
- Priorities (company and employees)
- Technological innovation
- Quality of products/services
- Community involvement
- Staff turnover rate

THE POSITION

- Scope of work, tasks, and responsibilities
- Task or project oriented
- Level of job challenge
- Teamwork or independent work

THE COMPANY

- New or established position
- Level of pressure and pace of work
- Level of independence
- Supervision/leadership role
- Advancement opportunities
- Transferability of skills in 2 – 3 years
- Working conditions
- Travel/relocation requirements
- Social significance of job
- Work hours stated and expected
- Overtime requirements (how often)
- Operating budget and/or expense account
- Work schedule options (flexible schedule)

WORK ENVIRONMENT

- Quality of facilities and surrounding area
- Your office space
- Working conditions
- Dress code/attire
- Employee morale

SUPERVISOR AND COWORKERS

- Personality of potential supervisor and coworkers
- Management style of the organization and supervisor
- Mentor program
- Evaluation process (how often, impact on raises)

SALARY

- Beginning rate and range
- Your personal bottom line/budget
- First payday (how often)
- Salary growth potential
- Sign-on and other bonuses
BENEFITS TO CONSIDER

- Paid vacation/holidays
- Sick and personal leave
- Retirement/401K plan (transferable if you leave)
- Stock options
- Incentive savings
- Medical insurance
- Life insurance
- Dental and vision insurance
- Disability insurance (short and long-term)
- Tuition reimbursement
- Workplace flexibility policies
- Commuting and parking expenses
- Moving and relocation costs
- Child care expenses/daycare
- Maternity/paternity leave
- Recreation facilities

CONTINUING EDUCATION PROGRAMS

- On-the-job training provided
- Professional development opportunities
- Opportunities to stay current on changes and trends in the field and industry
- Continuing education opportunities

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

- Relocation opportunities
- Promotion potential
- Lateral or rotation job moves available to broaden experience

THE LOCATION AND LIFESTYLE

- Geographic location
- Cost of living
- Climate
- Metropolitan vs. rural community
- Appeal of city or town
- Major sources of employment for area
- Proximity to graduate schools
- Proximity to family and friends
- Commuting distance and costs
- Recreational/cultural opportunities
- Employment opportunities for spouse
- Housing accommodations
- School districts

ADDITIONAL FACTORS TO CONSIDER

- How will the size of the company affect you?
- Does it make a difference if the company is public or private?
- Is there a preference between a small business or a large corporation?
- Will the nature of the position fit with your short and long-term career goals?
- Does the work match your interests and does it make good use of your talents and skills?
- What is the importance of this position in this organization?
- Are professional goals encouraged?

WEIGHING THE FACTS

Weigh each offer against the other by listing the most important job factors from the list above in a chart like the one on the following page. Then, in the “Your Needs” column, rate the factors on a scale of one to ten (one = least important to ten = most important). Next, on the same one to ten scale, rate how each company matches with your priority factors. Finally, total all of the scores from “Your Needs” column for each company. The company with the highest score is the one that matches your job needs the closest.
After weighing all the factors and two jobs are equal, ask yourself what truly matters the most to you. Decide which offer best fits your interests and career goals in the long run. Talk with someone who can help you evaluate which offer is best for you: a UCS career counselor, a faculty member or professor, parent, friend, etc. But, remember the final decision is up to you!

NEGOTIATING JOB OFFERS
STEP 1: ANALYZE

BEFORE BEGINNING THE NEGOTIATION PROCESS

• Determine the factor(s) you feel are necessary to negotiate.
• If the issue(s) can be settled, be prepared to accept the offer.
• Research salary ranges for the position and industry.
• If the position and benefits offered match your own requirements, don’t negotiate if you don’t have to.

KNOW YOUR VALUE

• Evaluate salary information.
• Research the job market and its future job outlook.
• Research industry trends and its future growth areas.
• Know your value and consider your skills and experience.
• If relocation is required, who will cover these costs.

SALARY FACTORS TO CONSIDER

• Establish a budget and assess what salary range is acceptable in meeting your financial obligations.
• The cost of living difference, if moving to another city.
• Benefits
• Beginning salary rate and range
• Start date
• First payday and how often you will be paid
• Sign-on or other bonuses
• Incentive pay or profit sharing options
• Salary growth potential
• Evaluation and promotion process

When evaluating salary requirements, be sure to also examine the company’s benefits as part of the overall compensation package.

NEGOTIATING JOB OFFERS
STEP 2: STRATEGIZE

WHEN TO NEGOTIATE

• Do not bring up salary requirements during the initial interview.
• Let the employer bring up salary first; try to avoid this discussion until the employer feels you are the right candidate.
• Don’t discuss salary until you receive the offer, but before you accept the position.
• Don’t accept an offer on the spot; instead, negotiate a date you will give the employer your decision. Then carefully evaluate all aspects of the offer, and seek the opinion of professors, advisors, family, friends, UCS career counselors, etc.

PLAN AHEAD ON WHAT TO SAY AND PRACTICE

• Never state a single salary figure in the beginning.
• Be prepared and have a salary range in mind as this will give you more room to negotiate but be realistic.
• Be prepared to back up this salary range with specific information on the labor market and job type.
NEGOTIATING JOB OFFERS
STEP 3: NEGOTIATE

FACTORS THAT MAY BE NEGOTIATED

Here are a few factors that may be negotiated: salary to a certain limit, location of position along with the division or department, reporting date, appraisal reviews, relocation expenses, and sign-on bonuses.

NEGOTIATING THE OFFER

- Define your conditions and the minimum you will accept from an offer.
- Bring salary data collected during your research; quantify and be able to justify your value.
- Negotiate with one organization at a time; spend your time and energy on your first choice.
- Maintain professionalism during the process.
- Listen to the employer’s issues and find a common ground.
- When the final offer is made, be prepared to make a decision.

MAKING THE RIGHT DECISION

- Consider your individual needs and goals: does the position match your interests, values, skills, etc.?
- Discuss family goals: will your family needs and lifestyle preferences be met?
- Career goals: does the position fit in with your short and long-term goals?
- Finally, evaluate each offer with the same set of factors to determine which position is the best fit for you.

NEED ADDITIONAL TIME TO MAKE A DECISION?

- Take the time you were given to carefully evaluate the offer. Does the position meet your career interests and goals?
- If you are unable to make a decision, or are waiting to hear about other pending offers, contact the employer for an extension as soon as possible. Be prepared to give a concrete reason for requesting an extension. If you need help with how to phrase this request, visit with a UCS career counselor.
- Ensure the employer this is an important decision, and that you want to find the right fit.
- Be sure to follow-up on the agreed extension date to give the employer your final decision, and also be prepared to make and stand by that decision.
- If given an offer from a company that is not your first choice, and you haven’t heard back from your first choice, don’t be afraid to reach out to gain an idea of when they will make their final decisions. This way you can ask for a sufficient amount of time to deliberate your next steps.

NEGOTIATING JOB OFFERS
THE FINAL STEPS

GET THE OFFER IN WRITING

This letter should include all of the terms and conditions of the position: salary, start date and time, location, benefits, a thorough job description, etc.

ACCEPTING AN OFFER

- It is important to verbally accept the offer over the phone; contact the employer by the agreed upon date.
- When you accept an offer, follow-up with a written acceptance letter.
- Call any employers you have pending offers with, tactfully decline the offer, and follow-up with a withdrawal letter.
- Cancel any scheduled interviews (on and off campus) along with on-site visits.
- Once you’ve accepted a job offer, you have made a commitment to your future company. At this point, your job search should cease. It is unprofessional to keep looking for that “better” offer!
**DO NOT REVOKE AN ACCEPTED OFFER!**

You will burn bridges, and take the risk of not being considered for future positions in that organization. Also, employers have contacts within their field and are willing to share this information.

**DECLINING AN OFFER**

- Verbally inform the employer of your decision; express your appreciation for the offer and for their time during the interview process.
- Follow-up by writing a withdrawal letter declining the offer, and keep things positive to avoid closing the door on the possibility of working with the company in the future.

**Tip**

**Evaluating the Total Compensation Package**

- When evaluating a salary offer, consider the relative terms of the total compensation package, which includes pay, benefits, and intangibles.
- Tangible pay and benefit factors should include the cost of living.
- Intangible pay and benefit factors could include type of work, organizational culture, and promotion/pay increase opportunities.
- Negotiating salary and benefits requires up-front planning, preparation, and establishing your goals. What is your bottom line?

**SOURCES OF SALARY INFORMATION**

- Review the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) Salary Survey available at UCS
- Trade and professional association surveys
- Full-time job listings
- Business and trade journals
- Professionals in related career fields

**ONLINE SALARY RESOURCES**

- CareerOneStop: www.careeronestop.com
  Wages and trends by occupation, industry, state
- CollegeGrad.com: www.collegegrad.com/salaries
  Salary calculator, negotiation tips, cost of living
- Sperling’s Best Place: www.bestplaces.net/col/default.aspx
  Compare two cities side by side
- HomeFair: www.homefair.com
  Salary calculator, city and school reports, cost of living
- JobStar: www.jobstar.org
  Collection of salary surveys
- PayScale: www.payscale.com
  Salary reports based on job title, experience, and location
  Salary guides, evaluating salary data
  Geographical, occupation, industry data
- Salary.com: www.salary.com
  US Salary Wizard, benefits calculator
For many students, once college graduation is over and the dust settles, there's the unanswered question, “what's next?”

There are countless directions a college grad can take; whether it’s going on to graduate school, getting that first professional job, moving home, volunteering, or traveling. For some, relocating is the best option. It can be across town, across the U.S., or even across the globe. In some areas of the country, the job market has been slow to recover, especially for eager college grads wanting to get started in the real world. Fortunately, there are other regions of the U.S. where hiring is on the upswing and there are plenty of opportunities, just waiting for eager new college graduates.

What's next? If you have the ambition to dive into the unknown, uproot your life and relocate to a new area, for example another state, where do you begin?

WHERE DO YOU BEGIN?

The first step is to research your destination. Learn what it’s like to live there through exploration. What is the cost of living? Do you need a car to get around? What areas are best to live in? What is the economy and the job market like? What is the weather like? Could you easily adapt to this new environment and way of living? Do you have a connection to this new place?

Secondly, take a very close look at your finances; do you have enough money to move and live on your own? Do you have family or friends who will let you stay with them until you get established? Estimate a monthly budget. How much will it cost you to live and eat, pay taxes, commute, and entertainment? Once you have an itemized budget, you’ll know how much money you’ll need to make per month to live on and take a vacation, or to build up your savings.

FINDING A JOB

Thirdly, it is important to network. Reach out to companies and employers in the area where you plan to move. Ideally, you want to line up a job before you move to a new location. Start by applying and completing online applications for jobs that interest you and are in the area where you plan to move.

Securing a job in a new city could be very challenging and rewarding. Ask yourself: What are your career goals? Do you have a passion that could lead you to a job opportunity in your field? Do you have a connection with people or companies at your new destination? How do your skills and experiences qualify you for the position? Essentially, evaluate how you can market yourself to potential employers. One reason why relocating for a job is attractive to recent college grads is the plentiful opportunities in other cities.

MAKING THE MOVE

Now it’s time to pack up your car, hire a moving service, or recruit friends and family to help you move. If you decided to rent an apartment, many apartment complexes will secure your lease and accept payment over the phone; therefore, you can move in immediately when you arrive at your new destination. This will allow you to start getting acquainted with the area and your new life. It’s official!
Many college graduates are busy focusing on landing their first job and neglect to plan for success once they land it. Here are some strategies to help you lay a solid foundation for an effective and rewarding career:

Teamwork: Realize that many of your accomplishments will involve other people. Therefore, spend the first month devoting a significant amount of time building professional relationships and making connections. Take the time to really listen to what your supervisor and colleagues are saying about your new work environment and processes. Be especially alert as they tell you what they are hoping you will achieve in your new role.

Autonomy: Honor individual differences. Some people like to use the phone or email, and others prefer face-to-face communication. This is an opportunity to take the first 90 days to learn these preferences and use them to help others feel more comfortable.

Constructive Feedback: Resist the urge to critique everything about how the organization is currently functioning. You were likely hired for your fresh perspective and eagerness to make a difference, but don’t be the annoying new hire who enjoys telling everyone how inadequate their current efforts are. When current team members complain about flaws in the organization, resist the urge to join in. As the new kid on the block, you are at risk for seeming negative if you complain too much.

Measurable Results: Try to find at least one early win. You want to have a reputation as someone who gets things done. Consequently, look for an opportunity to get quantifiable or measurable results in an area where you are clearly the main person responsible for the project. Try to find something to do that is highly valued by your supervisor and your immediate team. However, remember to proceed cautiously when choosing what to tackle because you don’t want to aim too high and set yourself up for failure.

Establish Priorities: Never assume that you know what the priorities for your position are until you have arrived at a mutually agreed upon consensus with your supervisor. Ideally, you will have written performance objectives with a timeline, ranked according to importance. If your supervisor doesn’t seem to know this information, or doesn’t have it, help him or her to create it. Do it cheerfully and without any hint of blame that your supervisor currently lacks clarity about what he or she wants you to do.

Performance Check-In: Halfway through your first 90 days, check in with your supervisor to see how he or she thinks you are doing. If the feedback is vague (as in, “You’re doing OK”), ask more specific questions such as: “On a scale of 1 to 10, 10 being best, what number would you give my performance?” “What am I doing currently that you want me to keep doing?” “If you had to name one thing I could be doing better, what would it be?”

Stay Connected: Keep networking and stay current in your field. You’ll be a more valuable employee if you are connected and your skills are up-to-date.

And finally, have fun! You earned this place in the organization, enjoy it!
WHAT ATTEND GRADUATE OR PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL?

Graduate study requires a significant commitment of time and money. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, the average student debt, including undergraduate loans, tops $40,000 for master’s degree students, $55,000 for doctoral degree students, and $90,000 for professional degree students.

Before spending this kind of money and the time it takes to complete a graduate program, you should first contemplate and clarify your career goals. You also want to know about the demands of the programs for which you are interested in applying.

Graduate degrees are usually either academic or professional in nature. Academic degrees focus on original research, while professional degrees focus on practical application of particular knowledge and skills. Masters degrees take anywhere from one to three years to complete, and a Ph.D. will usually take an additional four to seven years to complete. For many fields, a master’s degree is sufficient for employment; examples include the Master of Business Administration (M.B.A.) and the Master of Social Work (M.S.W.). For other fields such as medicine (M.D.), law (J.D.), or teaching at the college level (Ph.D.), a doctorate is necessary.

As you research choices for graduate school, consider the following questions:

- What are my short-term and long-term career goals?
- Is graduate school necessary for me to achieve these goals?
- In my field, is it easier to attend graduate school directly after receiving my undergraduate degree, or would I benefit from a couple of years of work experience?
- What is the cost of graduate school; direct (tuition) and indirect (loss of possible earnings)?
- At present, do I have other needs that conflict with pursuing a graduate degree?
- Will my job and salary prospects be enhanced by graduate studies?
- Are there employers who would assist in paying for graduate school?

WHY SHOULD YOU NOT ATTEND GRADUATE SCHOOL?

There are many reasons to attend a graduate school; however, here are some reasons why graduate school might not be a good option for you:

- Uncertainty about your career goals or career direction
- Fear that you will not be able to find a job
- Other obligations or priorities in your life that will keep you from being able to invest in your graduate studies

Still confused about whether or not to attend graduate school? You may want to meet with a UCS career counselor to clarify your goals and find out what your options are.
WHAT TO CONSIDER WHEN SELECTING A GRADUATE SCHOOL

If you decide to make the commitment to go to graduate school, here are a few factors to consider when selecting a program that fits your interests and career goals:

**Ranking and Reputation:**
- Reputation of the program and the school
- Accreditations and rankings

**The Cost (in addition to tuition and books):**
- Financial aid resources
- Cost of living
- Available fellowships, research assistantships, and teaching assistantships

**Faculty:**
- Student to faculty ratio
- Diversity of faculty and staff
- Teaching or research focus
- Faculty Research

**Location, Type, and Size:**
- Large vs. small
- Private vs. public
- Traditional vs. for-profit

**Campus Life:**
- Campus associations and organizations – student and professional chapters
- Housing facilities – dorms vs. apartments

**Quality of Resources and Facilities:**
- Library, computer labs, classrooms, labs

**Career Services:**
- Job search resources
- Assistance in finding internships and full-time job opportunities

THE APPLICATION PROCESS: HOW UCS CAN HELP

Now that you have made the decision to apply for graduate school, you will need to create a strong application package. Your goal is to present yourself as a well prepared and well qualified candidate.

In addition to application forms, transcripts, and letters of recommendation, you will most likely be required to submit a personal statement and/or participate in an interview.

**Personal Statements:**

This essay is an extremely important part of your application! You might be wondering, “What is a personal statement exactly? Why do I have to write one? What should I include?” A purposeful, concise, and focused essay, the personal statement allows the reader to get to know you aside from your transcript, admission test scores, and letters of recommendation.

A compelling statement should convince the reader that you will thrive in that program and will make positive contributions to the academic community. By providing insight into your interests in the program, your motivations, and your academic and career ambitions, the admissions committee can determine if the graduate program aligns with your interests and goals, and whether or not you will be a good fit for that specific program.

YOUR PERSONAL STATEMENT IS A(N)...
- Picture of who you are as a person
- Invitation to get to know you
- Story of your self-reflection
- Indication of your priorities/choices

YOUR PERSONAL STATEMENT IS NOT A(N)...
- Academic paper about your life
- Narrative of your accomplishments
- Journal entry
- Plea or justification for admission
Before you begin:

- Ask yourself: What is your overall personal or professional aspiration?
- Why do you want to attend graduate school and this program in particular?
- What makes you an asset to the program? What are your unique strengths and characteristics?
- What is the application process? (Read application instructions carefully.)

Writing tips:

- Follow instructions!
- Incorporate an organizing theme highlighting your uniqueness.
- Write concisely with purpose and focus.
- Use details and concrete examples wherever relevant – show, don’t tell!
- Vary your sentence structure and use transitions.
- Use active voice verbs for clarity.
- Get feedback from people you trust (especially your recommenders).
- Proofread and revise, revise, revise!

A UCS career counselor can give you helpful feedback about creating your personal statement. To schedule an appointment, visit the UCS website at www.uh.edu/ucs.

Interviews:

Some programs require an interview as part of the admissions process, which can be especially helpful for candidates whose other application materials are lacking. An interview is a great opportunity for you not only to find out more about the school, but also allows you to highlight your unique qualifications. Admissions committees will want you to present yourself as a motivated, committed, and confident applicant. Before the interview:

- Assess yourself: why do you want to enter this program and career field?
- Know your motivations, strengths, weaknesses, values, and goals.
- Reflect on your past work and volunteer experiences: what did you learn?
- Research the school and the program: make yourself aware of the faculty's research, and about the program’s philosophy and training objectives.
- Become familiar with any special facilities or research opportunities it has to offer.
- Learn the size of the department, the types of research and teaching interests of the faculty, and publications and affiliations of faculty members.

Schedule a mock interview with a UCS career counselor to learn how to market yourself and to improve your interviewing skills. To schedule an appointment with a UCS career counselor, visit the UCS website at www.uh.edu/ucs.

RESOURCES FOR CONSIDERING GRADUATE SCHOOL

- Peterson’s – find a graduate school by areas of interest
  http://www.petersons.com/graduate-schools.aspx
- GradSchools.com – includes national and international graduate programs
  http://www.gradschools.com
- Masters Degree Online – directory of online degrees
  http://www.mastersdegreeonline.org
- US News and World Report – ranking of schools
  http://grad-schools.usnews.rankingsandreviews.com/best-graduate-schools
C.T. Bauer College of Business
Rockwell Career Center

Cemo Hall, 2nd Floor
Jamie Belinne, Assistant Dean
832.842.6121
jbelinne@uh.edu
www.bauer.uh.edu/career

The mission of the Rockwell Career Center is to complement C.T. Bauer College undergraduate and graduate business students’ experiences with professional development to help them attain successful and fulfilling business careers and increase the value of Bauer to the business community. It is our goal to offer 1:1 career counseling sessions with major-specific counselors, as well as workshops and other resources to facilitate the job search process. Also, we provide Bauer students the opportunities to network with alumni and potential employers through various events.

The Rockwell Career Center is located in Cemo Hall on the second floor. Hours of operation are 8:00am - 6:00pm Monday – Thursday, and Friday 8:00am - 5:00pm. Walk-in hours are available as well.

The College of Technology Career Services is dedicated to providing services focusing on assisting with the preparation of our students for the world of work. It is our goal to offer career coaching sessions, seminars, and resources to facilitate the job search process. Also, we provide our students opportunities to network with alumni and potential employers through our bi-annual career fair, as well as other college events held.

Conrad N. Hilton College of Hotel and Restaurant Management
Career Placement Services

Conrad N. Hilton College, S108
Lori Osborn, Director of Placement Services
713.743.2423
lgosborn@uh.edu
www.hrm.uh.edu/CAREER-CONNECTIONS/Career-Placement-Services/

The Conrad N. Hilton College Career Placement Services Office provides assistance to all Hotel and Restaurant Management students.

Each spring and fall semester, the Hilton College hosts an on-campus career fair. The fair is designed to introduce Hotel and Restaurant Management students to opportunities within the hospitality industry including restaurants, hotels, sales, catering, event planning, club management, and other related industries. Networking with these industry professionals throughout a student’s college career is critical to their success in the job placement process.

The Hilton College invites and hosts hospitality companies to interview students for full-time, part-time, supervisory, management, and internship opportunities. In preparation for these on-campus recruitment activities, a career awareness and interview workshop is offered to assist students in the areas of dress for success, interviewing skills, writing a professional resume, etc.
Career Development Workshops are also available to all HRM students. Students will enhance their overall skills and begin their journey in becoming excellent future hospitality leaders by attending the Career Development Workshops.

For more information, please visit the Conrad N. Hilton College website and Career Placement Facebook page.

Cullen College of Engineering
Engineering Career Center

302 Engineering Building I
Vita Como, Senior Director Development & Career Services
713.743.4230
vcomo@uh.edu
www.eegr.uh.edu/career

The Engineering Career Center (ECC) offers comprehensive services to all students in the College of Engineering including internships and permanent positions. It is a resource for information on industry trends, job market, and professional development.

The ECC provides Cooperative Education opportunities to all undergraduate and graduate students at the University of Houston. The ECC is the location of the Cooperative Education Program Office.

Graduate College of Social Work
Alumni and Career Development Services

110HA Social Work Building
Ann Liberman, Director, Alumni and Career Services
713.743.8071
gliberman@uh.edu
www.uh.edu/socialwork/alumni/career-services/index.php

The mission of the GCSW Office of Career Services is to assist students and alumni of the GCSW in identifying and securing professional social work employment. Services are available to current GCSW students, alumni, and to employing agencies. Efforts are directed toward preparing students for job searches, making social work career choices, providing ongoing support, and assisting in job placement.

Services include: individual career consultations, resume development and critiques, job opportunity listings, mock interviews, career resource materials, workshops, and ongoing job search support. Career Services links to the GCSW website’s online Job Board, which posts current social work positions for the social work community. Positions are posted at no charge and can be easily accessed by those looking specifically for social work positions.

A variety of career oriented workshops are held each semester including: Resume Development and Critique, Job Search Techniques, Interviewing Skills, Social Worker Salary Information, and Social Work Licensing Information Sessions.

University of Houston Law Center
Career Development Office

100 Law Center
Allison Regan, Assistant Dean for Career Development
713.743.2276
ahregan@central.uh.edu or lawcareer@uh.edu
www.law.uh.edu/Career/homepage.asp

The mission of the Law Center Career Development Office (CDO) is to facilitate maximum employment of each graduating class through providing highest quality career counseling, education, and contacts.

In support of this mission, the CDO guides students and alumni in the use of tools and strategies for successful job searches. The cornerstone of our service is our one-on-one career advising.

The CDO hosts numerous programs and events designed to help students explore career options and develop vital job search skills. We also present career panels, networking events, workshops, mock interviews, job fairs, recruitment programs, and maintain an electronic job bank.
OTHER CAMPUS RESOURCES

Other resources are available at various locations on campus. Visit the websites and locations of any of the following to find out how you can utilize their services.

OTHER COLLEGE RESOURCES:

**College of Education**
- Farish Hall, Room 214
- Dr. Melissa E. Pierson, Associate Professor
  - 713.743.4961
  - mpierson@uh.edu
  - www.coe.uh.edu

**College of Optometry**
- J. Davis Armistead Building
- Roger Boltz, O.D., Ph. D., FAAO
  - Interim Dean and Chief Financial Officer
  - Associate Professor
  - 713.743.1893
  - boltz@uh.edu
  - www.opt.uh.edu

**College of Pharmacy**
- 141 Science and Research Bldg. 2
- Shara Zatopek, Associate Dean
  - szatopek@uh.edu
  - www.uh.edu/pharmacy

**Cooperative Education (Co-op Office)**
- 302 Engineering Building 1
- Yolanda Brooks Brown, Director
  - 713.743.4230
  - ybrooks@central.uh.edu
  - www.egr.uh.edu/coop

**Gerald D. Hines College of Architecture**
- 122 Architecture Building
- Trang Phan, Assistant Dean
  - 713.743.3463
  - tranph@uh.edu
  - www.arch.uh.edu

**Industrial Scholar Interns Program**
- 302 Engineering Building 1
- Yolanda Brooks Brown, Director
  - 713.743.4230
  - ybrooks@central.uh.edu
  - www.egr.uh.edu/isip

**OTHER CAMPUS RESOURCES**

**A. D. Bruce Religion Center**
- ADB—Building 562
  - 713.743.5051
  - adbrc@uh.edu
  - www.uh.edu/adbruce

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)
- Student Service Center 1, Room 226
  - 713.743.5454
  - www.caps.uh.edu

Office of International Student and Scholar Services (OISSS)
- University Center North, Room 203
  - Anita Gaines, Director
  - 713.743.5065
  - againes@uh.edu
  - www.uh.edu/oisss

The Justin Dart, Jr., Center for Students with DisABILITIES (CSD)
- CSD Building 568, Room 100
  - 713.743.5400
  - uhcsd@central.uh.edu
  - www.uh.edu/csd

Learning and Assessment Services
- Student Service Center 1, Room 210
  - Patrick Daniel, Executive Director
  - 713.743.5498
  - pdaniel@uh.edu
  - www.las.uh.edu

LGBT Resource Center
- University Center, N201
  - Lorraine Schroeder, Director
  - 713.743.5463
  - lschroeder@uh.edu
  - www.uh.edu/lgbt

University of Houston Alumni Association
- 3100 Cullen Boulevard, Room 201
  - 713.743.9550
  - alumni@uh.edu
  - www.houstonalumni.com

Veterans Services
- 202 University Center North
  - Dr. David Small, Interim Director
  - 832.842.5490
  - vets@uh.edu
  - www.uh.edu/veterans

Women’s Resource Center
- 201 University Center North
  - 832.842.6191
  - www.uh.edu/wrc