UNIVERSITY TYPES & DEGREES

TYPES OF COLLEGES/UNIVERSITIES
✴ Community colleges – primary mission is quality teaching
✴ Comprehensive university – primary mission is teaching and research
✴ Ph.D. granting university – primary mission is research
✴ Research 1 university – primary mission is research
✴ Professional schools – primary mission is to develop practitioners in the field (e.g., lawyers, doctors)
✴ Types of private universities
  ▪ Religious universities
  ▪ Non-profit universities
  ▪ For-profit universities

TYPES OF GRADUATE PROGRAMS
✴ **Research Scientist Model** (also called Bench Science) – A graduate program using this model prepares students to be researchers/scientists. Hence, the focus is on basic scientific concepts and theories. Although the research may be basic or applied, the focus is the research process itself.
✴ **Scientist-Practitioner Model** – A graduate program using this model prepares students to be both scientists and practitioners. Hence, the focus is on clinical/applied research as well as clinical/applied experience.
✴ **Professional Model** (also called the Practitioner-Scholar Model) – A graduate program using this model prepares students to be a clinician/practitioner. Hence, the focus is developing and using skills based on the practical application of scholarly knowledge. An understanding of current research and scholarship is important so as to improve practice.
✴ **Terminal degree vs. doctoral preparation programs**
  ▪ A terminal degree master's program refers to programs where (1) the students can pursue their career with just the master's degree, and (2) where the vast majority of students in the program do not pursue a doctorate.
    • Examples of programs that are generally (but not always) terminal degree programs – social work, marriage and family therapy, school counseling, university counseling, business administration, healthcare administration, public administration, nurse practitioner
  ▪ A doctoral preparation master's program is specifically designed to help students prepare for a future doctorate (e.g., research methods and statistics classes, faculty research mentor). A thesis is almost always required.
    • E.g., post-baccalaureate pre-medical preparation program, general experimental psychology master's program
✴ Note: In many Ph.D. programs, students will complete a master's degree as part of the Ph.D.

RANKINGS OF FACULTY (HIGH TO LOW – IN GENERAL)
1. Distinguished professor or endowed chair
2. Professor
3. Associate professor
4. Assistant professor
5. Other professor ranks
  ▪ Visiting professor – temporary position, usually at rank of assistant or associate professor.
  ▪ Research professor – this position only has research duties and is generally funded by contracts and grants.
  ▪ Professors of practice – this position usually has a primary focus on teaching and is generally awarded to individuals who have skills/expertise obtained in nonacademic careers
6. Lecturers

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- Full-time
- Part-time (adjunct)
7. Teaching associates / graduate student instructor / teaching fellow
8. Teaching assistants / pedagogical aides

DEGREES

✳ **Master's degrees** – The master's degree generally takes one to two academic years of full-time study to complete, and they usually require either a thesis, a creative component (project), and/or an oral/written exam to complete the degree. Ranges from 30-60 units/hours past the bachelor's degree.

✳ **Doctorate degrees –** Doctoral programs consist of course work in conjunction with a dissertation (presentation and defense of results of independent research). Approximately 90 units/hours past the bachelor's degree.

✳ **Professional degrees** – Generally require a total of at least six years of college work for completion.

Some Popular Degrees

Bachelor Degrees	Master Degrees	Doctor Degrees	Professional Degrees
Bachelor of Science (B.S.)	Masters of Science (M.S.)	Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)	Medicine Doctor (M.D.)
Bachelor of Arts (B.A.)	Masters of Arts (M.A.)	Doctor of Psychology (Psy.D.)	Doctor in Dentistry (D.D.S. /D.M.D.)
Bachelor of Social Work (B.S.W.)	Masters of Marriage & Family Therapy (M.F.T.)	Doctor of Marriage & Family Therapy (D.M.F.T.)	Doctor in Osteopathic Medicine (D.O.)
	Masters of Education (M.Ed.)	Education Doctorate (Ed.D.)	Doctor in Pharmacy (Pharm.D.)
	Masters of Human Relations (M.H.R.)	Doctor of Social Work (D.S.W.)	Doctor in Veterinary Medicine (D.V.M.)
	Masters of Public Health (M.P.H.)	Medical Doctorate (M.D.)	Juris Doctor (Law) (J.D.)
	Master of Science in Counseling (M.S.C.)	Doctor of Public Health (D.P.H.)	Doctor in Theology (D.Th., Th.D., D.Theol.)
	Master of Social Work (M.S.W.)		Doctor in Chiropractic (D.C.)
	Master of Engineering (M. Eng.)		Optometry Doctor (O.D.)
	Master of Business Administration (M.B.A.)		Doctor in Podiatry/Podiatric Medicine (D.P.M.)

CHOOSING A CAREER/GRADUATE PROGRAM

APPROACHES TO CHOOSING A CAREER/GRADUATE PROGRAM

✳ **The "Divine Calling" Mentality** – I have known what my life's work will be ever since I was a child so there is no need to explore this question at all (e.g., psychologist, doctor, social worker, lawyer).

✳ **The "What Ever Comes Along" Mentality** – I am keeping my options open as long as possible because I do not even want to think about it. I will just take whatever job/graduate program falls into my lap.

✳ **The "Department Store" Mentality** – Just tell me what is available, and I will choose the one that is the most attractively packaged.

Each of these approaches to choosing a career/graduate program is very limiting. These approaches involve little research into the available options or the advantages and disadvantages of different careers/graduate programs.

✳ **The "Effective Consumer" Mentality** – involves researching potential options to see which is the best "fit."
- For example, effective and satisfied car shoppers will research different types of cars to see which is the best fit for their personality and fits within their available means. Then they will look at different dealerships to compare prices so as to get the best deal possible.
- If an individual approaches a career/graduate program in the same manner as the effective car shopper (i.e., consumer), then this person may get the better career than one who (1) only has one option, (2) who takes what comes along, or (3) who takes the most attractive job.

GETTING INTO GRADUATE SCHOOL

Positive Reasons for Going to Graduate School	Negative Reasons for Going to Graduate School
Necessary for many careers	Often times used to postpone a career or to avoid employment
More well-rounded education	Pressure from peers, parents, faculty, etc.
Broadens skills	To find one's self
Makes more options available	Just because financial assistance was offered
Gives an edge over competition	

WHAT ARE GRADUATE PROGRAMS LOOKING FOR?[2]

Very Important Criteria

✲ Make sure all materials are turned in on-time!

✲ Degree of fit between the graduate program and applicant's goals, interest area, and skills/attributes

✲ Clarity and focus of the applicant's statement of purpose.

✲ Admissions tests (see section below)
   ▪ Note – some programs (especially those that follow the "professional model") do not require an admission test.
   ▪ Check the graduate program admissions criteria to see what scores are required or recommended.
   ▪ Take a preparation course and practice exams. Study, study, study!

✲ Grades
   ▪ Good grades are necessary, but recognize that good grades are not enough.
      • Most applicants will have excellent grades. Also, it is difficult to compare grades across departments or campus. That is why grades are just one of many criteria used to evaluate applicants. This is also why many programs emphasize scores on an admissions test.
   ▪ If your overall GPA is not high, but your major GPA or last 2-year GPA is high, briefly point that out in your personal statement. Many students will not have a high GPA at the beginning of their academic career (possibly because they originally majored in an area they were not excited about).

✲ **For research scientist and scientist-practitioner programs**
   ▪ Research experience resulting in a publication or professional conference presentation(s).
   ▪ See the following document about publishing for novice scholars
      http://www.csun.edu/plunk/documents/PublishingPresentation.pdf

✲ **For professional model programs and terminal degree programs**
   ▪ Practical experience (e.g., internships, volunteer, work) in the field

✲ Letters of recommendation (see section on letters of recommendation)

Generally Important Criteria

✲ Honors and scholarships
   ▪ It is difficult to ascertain how to meaningfully compare honors/scholarships among candidates.

✲ Course work
   ▪ For Ph.D. programs, statistics and research courses will be especially relevant
   ▪ Undergraduate major(s) and minor(s)

Avoid Liabilities (discussed in later sections) (Appleby & Appleby, 2006)

✲ Damaging personal statements

✲ Weak or harmful letters of recommendation

✲ Poor writing skills

✲ Misfired efforts to impress

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[2] Keith-Spiegel, P. & Wiederman, M. W. (2002). *The complete guide to graduate school admission*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

ADMISSIONS TESTS

✳ Study for your admission exams! Students can increase their exam scores through careful preparation.

✳ Test services typically report your scores from the last five years to the school.
  ▪ Some schools use the highest score, while others average all scores.
  ▪ Don't take the test just for practice unless you know the school only uses your highest score.

✳ Take your test early so that your scores will be available by the admission deadline. Also, this will allow you to retake the test if needed.

✳ As a general rule of thumb, try to take the test during your first semester senior year.

✳ Medical school applicants should take the MCAT during their junior year.

> One study found that individuals who took graduate school admission tests while still in school generally scored higher than those who waited until after they graduated.

Some Admission Tests for Graduate School

	Exam	Agency	Webpage / Phone
DAT	Dental Admission Test	American Dental Association	http://www.ada.org
GMAT	Graduate Management Admissions Test	Educational Testing Service	http://www.gmat.org
GRE	Graduate Record Examination	Educational Testing Service-GRE Sylvan National Registration Center	http://www.gre.org 800-473-2255
LSAT	Law School Admission Test	Law School Admission Council	http://www.lsac.orgL
MAT	Millers Analogies	Psychological Corporation	800-622-3231
MCAT	Medical College Admission Test	MCAT Program Office Association of American Medical Colleges	http://www.aamc.org
Praxis Exam	Formerly known as the National Teachers Exam	Teaching & Learning Division, Educational Testing Service	http://www.ets.org/praxis
OAT	Optometry Admission Test	Optometry Admission Test	(312) 440-2693
PCAT	Pharmacological Admission Test t		
TOEFL	Test Of English As A Foreign Language	Educational Testing Service - TOEFL	http://www.toefl.org
VAT	Veterinary Admission Test		

Tentative Time Line for Doctor Programs

Action	Tentative Timeline
Decide on type(s) of program(s) in which you are interested	Spring or early summer
Review admissions criteria for the types of programs	Spring or early summer
Study for admissions test (e.g., GRE, LSAT, MCAT)	Summer
Decide which schools and advisors in which you intend to apply	September deadline
Update resume/vita	September (and throughout the process)
Create marketing/networking webpage (e.g. Academia.edu, LinkedIn.com)	September
Take admissions test	September/October
Send **short** email to prospective advisors at doctorate programs	Early October
Solicit commitment from faculty/supervisors to write letters of recommendation (usually 3 letters are needed)	Early October
Finalize list of programs	October
Prepare writing sample (if required)	October
Secure transcripts	October
Submit materials to letter writers	4-6 weeks before deadline
Submit all materials	November 15-March 15 (depending on programs)
Remind letter writers that the letters are coming due	One week before deadline
Remind letter writers again that the letters are coming due	One day before deadline
Send "thank you" email/card to all people who wrote letters	One week after deadline
Wait … and wait some more … and wait some more	Winter break and early spring
Rejections, acceptances, and/or interview offers	Spring
Review program and faculty webpages prior to visit	Day before visitation/interview
Interview or attend campus visitation days	Late January through March
Send 'thank you' email to individuals you met with during the interview	Day after visitation/interview
Make decision	March-April
Discuss and/or negotiate funding	March-April
Send update emails to all people who helped you in the process	March-April

Tentative Time Line for Terminal Degree Programs

Action	Tentative Timeline
Decide on type(s) of program(s) in which you are interested	Spring or early summer
Review admissions criteria for the types of programs	Summer
Study for admissions test (e.g., GRE, LSAT, MCAT)	Summer
Decide which schools/programs you intend to apply	Fall
Update resume/vita	Fall (and throughout the process)
Create marketing/networking webpage (e.g. Academia.edu, LinkedIn.com)	Fall
Attend informational sessions provided by the program	Fall
Take admissions test (if required)	Approximately one month prior to application deadline
Solicit commitment from faculty/supervisors to write letters of recommendation (usually 3 letters are needed)	Approximately two months prior to application deadline
Finalize list of programs	Fall
Secure transcripts	At end of semester prior to deadline
Submit materials to letter writers	4-6 weeks before deadline
Submit all materials	Check for a priority deadline. If so, submit materials before the priority deadline because preference is sometimes given for admission and funding
Remind letter writers that the letters are coming due	One week before deadline
Remind letter writers again that the letters are coming due	One day before deadline
Send "thank you" email/card to all people who wrote letters	One week after deadline
Wait … and wait some more … and wait some more	January-March
Rejections, acceptances, and/or interview offers	Spring
Review program webpages prior to visit	Day before visitation/interview
Interview or attend campus visitation days	Late January through March
Send 'thank you' email to individuals you met with during the interview	Day after visitation/interview
If not accepted, send "thank you for not accepting me" letter	Day after non-acceptance
Make decision	March-April
Send update emails to all people who helped you in the process	March-April

EVALUATING/CHOOSING GRADUATE PROGRAMS

✳ Decide what type of program you want and what your primary focus will be.

✳ Research graduate programs
  ▪ Begin at least one semester before the application deadline. For example, if the application deadline is in December, you should be researching graduate programs in the prior spring or summer.
  ▪ Find a graduate program that has a strong program in your area of interest.
  ▪ Examine the school's home page to identify the faculty members' academic interests and publications

✳ Find out whether the university is regionally accredited (see next table).

✳ If relevant, find out whether the specific graduate program is professionally accredited.
  ▪ U.S. Department of Education
  ▪ Council for Higher Education Accreditation
  ▪ Professional organization in your discipline (e.g., American Psychological Association, Foundation for Interior Design Education Research)

✳ Check the course catalog to determine if the school offers the courses you want.

✳ Search out information about the faculty in the prospective graduate program.
  ▪ Do the faculty hold advanced or terminal degrees in their field?
  ▪ Are the faculty respected by colleagues in the field?
  ▪ Are there faculty members with interests similar to your career goals?

✳ For those pursuing a Ph.D., examine faculty research interests.
  ▪ What research topics are studied?
  ▪ Does the faculty member present and publish with students.
  ▪ Does the faculty member have grants?

✳ Examine admission requirements.

✳ Talk to faculty members at the school you are interested in.
  ▪ Send a very short email to the faculty members to ask if (1) they are taking students, and (2) if their research interests are the same as published on the webpage.

- Note: Do not attach a vita/resume. However, include the link to your academia.edu or LinkedIn.com webpage that has a copy of your vita/resume.
    - One advantage of having the academia page is you can check to see if someone accessed the page from the geographic area where you sent an email. You can tell if the faculty member was potentially interested in you.
- Do not be discouraged if a faculty member does not reply back. At highly competitive programs, they likely receive numerous emails from prospective students.
- Remember to keep the email short. Faculty members are very busy, and they are likely to just skim a long email to see if/how they should respond. Do not use the email to tell them about yourself. If they are interested, they will examine your webpage. Also, they will eventually see your application materials.
- Network with faculty members and/or their students at professional conferences.
- Attend informational meetings on campus or at professional conferences.
- Talk with alumni from your prospective school.
- Do not write to faculty members for a catalog and/or admission materials. Write to the graduate coordinator or department for that information.
- If a faculty member is interested, he/she may get in contact with you and/or have the admissions personnel forward your application packet. Additionally, if your credentials look promising then the faculty member may advocate for you when the admission committee makes its decisions.

✽ Talk to current graduate students about the program, funding, and the specific faculty.
✽ If you can, visit schools you are interested in before applying to the program.
- Many schools provide funding for prospective graduate students to come visit.
- Many schools provide summer research fellowships. A summer research fellowship can help students determine if they are a good fit with the program.

✽ Determine if funding is available (e.g., fellowships, research/teaching assistantships, and/or tuition fee wavers).
✽ Determine if there is housing available for graduate students.

Regional Accrediting Agencies

Accrediting Agencies	Region	Home Page
Middle States Association of Colleges and School	DE, DC, MD, NJ, NY, PA, Puerto Rico, US Virgin Islands	http://www.msache.org
New England Association of Schools and Colleges	CT, MA, ME, NH, RI, VT	http://www.neasc.org
North Central Association of Colleges and Schools	AK, AZ, CO, IA, IL, IN, KS, MI, MN, MO, ND, NE, NM, OH, OK, SD, WI, WV, WY	http://www.ncacihe.org
Northwest Association of Colleges and Schools	AK, ID, MT, NV, OR, UT, WA	http://www.cocnasc.org
Southern Association of Colleges and Schools	AL, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, SC, TN, TX, VA	http://www.sacs.org
Western Association of Schools and Colleges	CA, HI, Guam	http://www.wasc.web.org

GUIDELINES FOR THE STATEMENT OF PURPOSE / PERSONAL STATEMENT

✽ Also referred to as autobiographical statement, letter of intent, personal statement, or statement of interest.
✽ Most graduate programs require some type of personal statement or essay. However, the requirements vary widely. Some programs only require a couple of paragraphs regarding your reasons for applying to their graduate school while other programs require numerous essays on a variety of topics.
✽ Start composing your statement of purpose early.
✽ Before writing:
- Think of your audience. Who will be reading this statement?
- Examine the application materials and literature about the desired graduate program to determine the primary focus and interests of the faculty and department.
- Consider what the admission committee might be looking for.
✽ Demonstrate the quality of your writing.
- Have a clear focus.
- Be organized – Make an outline prior to starting the writing.
- Be succinct.
- Be concise.
- Avoid repetition or overelaboration
- Avoid colloquialisms (e.g., "I'm a people person," or "I hung out").

❋ Keep your essay positive.
   ▪ In general, do not mention potential liabilities about yourself or your current program.
   ▪ Be enthusiastic about the field and your career goals.
❋ Make sure your statement fits with the graduate program mission.
❋ If you are applying to a Ph.D. or master's program that uses the research-scientist or scientist-practitioner model, then make sure your statement fits with a specific faculty member's interests.
❋ Follow guidelines exactly!
   ▪ Each school has different guidelines, so you will have to tailor each statement of purpose accordingly.
   ▪ Address EACH aspect of their questions.
   ▪ Some programs often ask multiple questions. Address each question separately.
      • E.g., social work programs often ask you to write about your work/volunteer experiences, how you fit within the mission of social work, what area of social justice you are interested in, and your experiences with diversity.
   ▪ Do not exceed the page limit or word limit.
❋ Content
   ▪ Identify your educational and career goal.
   ▪ Briefly (1-2 sentences) explain how you became interested in the field.
   ▪ Highlight your specific educational and occupational experiences that facilitated your desire to achieve a graduate degree in the field:
      • Education background.
      • Explain how your paid and volunteer experience validated your desire to pursue this career.
      • Each of these experiences should demonstrate how they ultimately led to your educational/career path.
      • For Ph.D. and master's programs leading to Ph.D., explain your research background.
   ▪ Explain your personal attributes that make you a good fit with the program and future career (e.g., fluency in languages, fluency in statistical programs or programming languages, ability to overcome obstacles, work ethic).
   ▪ Identify why are you applying to this specific program and/or faculty member.
      • Generally, you should tie your research interests with at least 2 faculty members to increase your chances. Obviously, these faculty members need to be doing similar research.
   ▪ Explain how this program will position you for your career.
❋ Throughout the statement, emphasize what you bring to the program, without overstating your abilities.
   ▪ Strengths and achievements.
   ▪ Mention relevant skills (e.g., research and computing skills).
❋ Every sentence on the statement should be designed to help the reviewer (1) understand that your applying to this program was well thought out, and (2) what you can bring to the program and career.
❋ Always remember this is your professional representation of yourself.
❋ Damaging personal statements (Appleby & Appleby, 2006)
   ▪ Do not engage in excessive self-disclosure that takes you away from the important point (i.e., why they should accept/interview you).
      • Avoid getting caught up in the all the miniscule details that led you to pursue the career.
   ▪ Do not over disclose personal mental health issues.
   ▪ Do not demonstrate "excessive altruism"
      • "I want to make the world a better place" or "I want to help humanity"
   ▪ Avoid unprofessional writing
      • Inappropriate humor
      • Overly clever or cutesy comments
❋ Integrate characteristics that show you have overcome challenges without creating a damaging personal statement.
   ▪ E.g., if you immigrated to the USA as a child, neither of your parents had a college degree, and you grew up in a high-risk neighborhood, it would be easy to write many paragraphs about all of the challenges you have overcome. However, this "telling of your story" takes you away from why they should accept you into the program. Instead, you can integrate these ideas into your research interests, without providing too much focus on the minute details (e.g., "As an immigrant to the USA, I believe I can provide an insider's view when interpreting research on immigrant families." Or "Having grown up as an immigrant in high-risk neighborhoods, I am very passionate about conducting research (or clinical practice) on identifying qualities that promote positive mental health in low SES immigrants"

✱ Draft an initial statement and revise the draft. Then set it aside for a day or two, and then revise the draft again.

✱ Have others proofread and critique your statement (e.g., major advisor, references)

✱ The statement should be modified for each school/program.

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION FOR GRADUATE SCHOOL

✱ Develop a positive relationship with at least 3 or 4 of your professors so that they can write letters of reference tailored toward your unique qualifications.
  ▪ Stop by their office hours when you are in their class.
  ▪ Briefly stop by their office hours after you are no longer in their class.

✱ Get letters come from faculty members who have had considerable contact with you, especially in a non-classroom setting such as a research lab, campus organization, professional conference, or community project.

✱ The best letters are from faculty members who have worked with you professionally (e.g., supervised you on a research project, co-authored a paper or conference presentation with you, served as an adviser to you in your role as an officer in a campus organization, served as your academic advisor)

✱ If you have work experience in the field, have a current or past supervisor write one of the letters of reference. The other 2 or 3 letters should be from faculty members who can attest to your potential to succeed in graduate school.

✱ Do not include letters from public officials, religious leaders, or lay people, unless they can attest first-hand to your academic capabilities, research skills, or professional abilities.

✱ Ask potential references if they can write a write a strong letter of recommendation.
  ▪ Ask your references cordially and formally.
  ▪ Do not wait until the last minute to ask for letters. Get references to write the letters well before the deadline.
  ▪ Ask for the letters at least 4-6 weeks before the application is due.
  ▪ If a professor hints that he/she does not have much to say about you, that they have a few concerns, or do not have time, then politely thank them and ask someone else. It is possible that the professor is hinting that he/she does not feel comfortable writing a letter for you.

✱ Provide your references with very brief and clear instructions (e.g., contact person at the graduate program, title, complete mailing address, deadline)

✱ Provide pre-addressed envelopes and postage if they need to mail the letter.

✱ Letters of reference are not necessarily a high priority for your references; therefore, make the process as easy as possible for your references.
  ▪ Forms should be filled out completely (including the reference's name, address, affiliation, etc.); except for the reference's signature and ratings.
  ▪ If you are applying to multiple programs, submit your materials to the programs around the same time. This way, your references are not getting email links spread-out across weeks or months.
  ▪ Note from Plunkett: When I complete references from students, I want to complete them all at once for that student. This also helps my plan my time and keeps me organized. When the reference requests come sporadically, it is much easier for me to miss a deadline.

✱ Prepare a packet to help your references write your letters of recommendation. Include the following:
  ▪ Your full name
  ▪ A one-page letter to your reference. Your letter should include:
    • A reminder of your relationship with the reference, such as:
      o What classes you had with the reference, when you had them, and what grades you received
      o The number of hours/semesters you worked with them, what duties you performed)
    • What type of program you are applying to and why you selected that type of program.
    • A description of your strengths and why you think you will be successful in a graduate program
    • Special skills or talents
    • Statement of career interests and goals
    • A description of your weaknesses and how you have or plan to address the limitations (e.g., taking statistics class).
  ▪ A resume or vita
  ▪ A statement of purpose / personal statement
  ▪ A list of all programs, the title of the university, program, and, if appropriate the professor and description of the

program and lab for each school. Make deadlines very clear – put the earliest one at the topic. Also note if the letter is to be given to you or to the school.
- A copy of your GRE scores (if applicable)
- Your GPA (overall, major, minor)
- List of courses taken in major and grades earned, or a copy of transcripts.
- Reference forms and/or guidelines.
  - Waive your rights to read the letter or form. Recipients place more credence in letters that are not read by students. If you are in doubt about the kind of recommendation the reference will write, then ask.
- Peel off labels with the school address for each program.

✳ Send a short, polite, and friendly reminder about the deadline one week before the letters are due.

✳ Send a friendly reminder the day before the letters are due.

✳ After the application process is finished, follow up with a "thank you" card/email.

✳ After you hear back from all programs and/or make a decision, then inform your referrers about the outcome.

Sample of Completed Form to Provide to Your References

University	Program	Degree	Forms	Address if Hard Copy	Deadline	Delivery
California State University Northridge	Marriage and Family Therapy	Masters	No	Selection Committee 18111 Nordhoff Street Educational Psychology & Counseling Northridge, CA 91330	12/01/07	Mail to school
University of California Los Angeles	Clinical Psychology	Ph.D.	Yes	Jane Smith, Ph.D. Director of Psychology, UCLA 100 Westwood Blvd. Los Angeles, CA 90000	11/15/07	I will pick up
Alliant International University	Clinical Psychology	PsyD	No	Not applicable	1/21/08	Online

Note: The name of the university, degree, and program should be exact since (1) references will likely copy and paste from your form, or (2) use a mail merge to put the information into the letter they write. Thus, don't abbreviate (e.g., Cal State Northridge).

THE GRADUATE SCHOOL INTERVIEW

✳ A graduate school interview is similar to a professional job interview.

✳ Dress appropriately

✳ Be prepared to talk about your professional goals, your knowledge of the field, your strengths (e.g., personal attributes, skills), and if you are a Ph.D. candidate, your research interests

✳ Investigate the school's program before the interview so you can clearly articulate how your goals match the program.

✳ For a Ph.D. program, look at faculty members' webpages to familiarize yourself with their names, faces, and research.

✳ Know the answers to these questions before you go to the interview
- How did you become interested in this field?
- Why do you want to pursue a graduate or professional degree?
- What are your future goals? How will this graduate program help you meet your goals?
- What have you accomplished so far that strengthens your interest in the program? (e.g., course work, honor's thesis, research projects, internships, volunteer experience, work experience, awards, and publications).
- Why are you applying to this school? (e.g., faculty, curriculum, resources, field work, internships, and reputation of the institution and/or department).
- What are your research interests? (primarily for Ph.D. candidates)

✳ Oftentimes, graduate programs will arrange socials for prospective students to meet current students, faculty members, and other prospective students.
- Do not drink alcoholic beverages.
- Do not flirt or gossip.
- Do not bad-mouth other programs, departments, etc.
- Ask questions about the following – academic program, internship opportunities, graduate assistantships (teaching and research), access to faculty, job placement information, and student life resources. Do not ask questions that are on the webpage.

Sample Questions for Interviews in Counseling / Social Work Graduate Programs

✳ Why are you pursuing this degree/career?
✳ Tell us about yourself and why are you interested in this field?
✳ In the last 24 hours, what did you do to prepare for this interview today?
✳ Do you plan on working during the program? If so, how will you balance the coursework, practicum, work, and personal/family life?
✳ What on your application did you think might keep you from getting into the program? (e.g., grades, experience)
✳ What might be a weakness or limitation you might have in the graduate program or in the field?
✳ What do you do to counteract your weaknesses?
✳ What was the biggest event that happened in your life that made you who you are today?
✳ How are you feeling right now about this interview?
✳ What would make you an effective counselor/social worker?
✳ What experience have you had that led you to choose this degree/career?
✳ What is an LMFT vs. social worker? Or school counselor vs. school psychologist?
✳ What experience do you have with diversity?
✳ What does cross-cultural mean to you?
✳ Do you think that counselor/social worker should only see clients of the same ethnicity? Why or why not?
✳ Do you think that counselor/social worker should only do therapy on issues they have experienced (e.g., addiction, divorce)? Why or why not?
✳ What do you believe are important qualities for a counselor/social worker to have?
✳ What qualities do you have that would make you a good counselor/social worker?
✳ How does change take place?
✳ What therapeutic paradigm do you currently believe in?
✳ What is the most important social issue that counselors/social workers should try to remedy? Or, what is the social issue you would like to focus on?
✳ What do you think would be stressful or difficult as a counselor/social worker?
✳ Identify a problem in a school setting and how you might try to resolve it.
✳ Anything brought up in previous questions you would like to add now?

Sample Questions for Interviews in Ph.D. Programs

✳ What would you like to accomplish as a Ph.D. student?
✳ What kind of position are you interested in pursuing after your Ph.D.?
✳ Ideally, what kind of relationship would you like to have with your major advisor?
✳ As a new person in the lab, you will be under the supervision of more senior Ph.D. students? How will you handle this? What if they are doing something in the lab that you think could be done in a better way, how would you address that?
✳ What makes you anxious about pursuing a Ph.D.?
✳ What is your biggest challenge to completing your Ph.D.?
✳ What do you think makes you stand out from other Ph.D. applicants?

Potential Questions to Ask at the Interview in Counseling / Social Work Graduate Programs

✳ **Note: Do not ask a question that is already answered on the webpage for the program.**
✳ How are the practicum/internship sites selected?
✳ How would you describe the relationship between the faculty and the students in the program?
✳ What do you see as the biggest strength of this program?
✳ What is the biggest frustration for students in this program?
✳ How are faculty mentors/advisors selected?
✳ What types of jobs are recent graduates getting?

Questions to Ask of Potential Advisor in the Ph.D. program

✳ How would you describe your mentorship style?

✳ How would you describe your research focus for the next 5 years?

✳ What would you like to see me accomplish in my first year? Throughout the Ph.D. program?

✳ What do you think is the biggest mistake a student in the program can make?

✳ What are your expectations for your advisees?

✳ What do you see as my role in your lab during the first year?

✳ What do you think is the biggest strength of the program?

✳ What kinds of opportunities do you provide for co-authoring publications?

✳ How do your advisees select their thesis/dissertation topic?

✳ What is your view about your advisees working with other faculty?

✳ What type of funding do your advisees normally get? (assistantships, fellowships, etc).

✳ Is the funding guaranteed?

✳ Is there funding for travel to conferences?

✳ Are there teaching opportunities in addition to research?

Questions to Ask of Current Graduate Students in the Ph.D. program

✳ How would you describe the mentorship style of (your potential advisor)?

✳ How would you describe the relationship between the graduate students in the program?

✳ How would you describe the relationship between the faculty and the students in the program?

✳ What do you see as the biggest strength of this program/lab?

✳ What is the biggest frustration for students in this program/lab?

BEING DEFERRED OR "PLACED ON HOLD"

✳ **Deferral until you gain experience**
  - For example, some MBA programs will grant a deferral to an outstanding graduating senior applicant who needs to gain some practical experience before entering the program. In this case, the school has accepted you on the condition that you work for a couple of years before starting the MBA program.

✳ **Deferral until you complete additional coursework**
  - For example, if you are business major, but you are applying to a psychology graduate program, the school may defer your application until you take so many hours of psychology courses to gain the necessary foundation for the graduate program.

✳ **Deferral due to possible deficiency in the application**
  - Applicants may get deferred when they have possible deficiencies in their applications (e.g., GPA, admission tests scores, not the best fit with the program, etc.).
  - The admission committee may decide to look through more applications until they make a final decision on your application.
  - You can strengthen your credentials by sending (1) additional letter of recommendation, (2) most recent grades (if unavailable when you submitted your application), or (3) letter that re-confirms your interest in the program.

BEING PLACED ON A WAIT LIST

✳ The admissions office accepts a certain number of candidates from a large pool of applicants and attempts to estimate how many of these applicants will accept their offer of admission. How close they come to their target will determine how many applicants they can take off the wait list. In fact, if more applicants accept than predicted, the graduate school may not even pull a single candidate off its wait list.

✳ **Improving your chances when "wait listed"**
  - Read the school's instructions on its wait list carefully. Some programs send a form that you must fill out and return to the admissions office to remain on the wait list. If the school does not receive your form on time, the admissions office will take your name off the list.

- Call the admissions office to find out (1) how many other candidates are on the wait list, (2) the school's process for reviewing and evaluating those candidates, and (3) when they plan to notify them.
- Ask the office if additional information would enhance your chances of admission. If so, send materials that will strengthen your application (e.g., additional letter of recommendation, copy of your most recent transcript, letter re-confirming your interest in the school and highlighting any recent accomplishments). Some programs note in your application file that you called to inquire about your status.
- Call the admissions office occasionally to inquire about your status.
- Send a "thank you letter" that (1) thanks the committee for taking the time to interview you and (2) lets them know you are still very interested in the program.
- Be polite and calm to everyone you speak to in the admissions office. Be patient.

IF NO ONE ADMITS YOU

✴ Examine the reasons why you were not competitive. Was it a poorly written personal statement? Poor admission test scores? Lack of experience? Poor fit between you and the program? Did you apply to enough programs?

✴ If you are graduating, try to get a job in the field of interest.

✴ Take a graduate course at your local University on a non-degree basis just to keep your hand in and to show your commitment and ability.

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RESOURCES

FUNDING RESOURCES

✴ **Funding for graduate school**
- Determine if the graduate program has assistantships or fellowships. These ve often include tuition reimbursement and a stipend for either teaching an introductory-level course or working with a professor on a research project.
- Check into scholarships and fellowships that cover full or partial tuition.
- Contact the graduate school's admissions office, the career planning office, as well as campus newspaper and bulletin boards for information on where to locate job listings on campus.
- Check with financial aid office to make sure that you are aware of all the resources available for financial aid.
- FastWEB – Provides information on graduate fellowships/scholarships based on your profile – http://www.fastweb.com

✴ **CSUN financial aid** – http://www.csun.edu/financialaid

✴ **Scholarships**
- Scholarships can be based on need (e.g., financial), qualifications (grades, skills), or some characteristic (e.g., ethnicity, employment, religion, parents' background).
- **CSUN Matador Scholarship Program** – financial need and academic excellence. – http://www.csun.edu/financialaid/csun

✴ **Fellowships**
- Usually reserved for graduate students and not usually based on need
- Usually based on qualifications (e.g., grades, skills)

> The terms scholarship and fellowship are often used interchangeably.

- Sometimes have work requirements (e.g., research, internship, teaching)
- **Ford Foundation Fellowship Programs** – increase ethnic and racial diversity of faculty in higher education – http://sites.nationalacademies.org/pga/fordfellowships/

✱ **Paid internships**
- California Social Work Education Center (CalSWEC) – Two academic years of stipends equal to two calendar years of work-back service in public child welfare agency anywhere in state of California. – http://www.csun.edu/social-behavioral-sciences/social-work/california-social-work-education-center-calswec
- Geriatric Social Work Education Consortium (GSWEC) – http://www.csun.edu/social-behavioral-sciences/social-work/geriatric-social-work-education-consortium-gswec

✱ **Research and teaching assistantships** (usually come with a tuition fee waiver)
- Many graduate programs (especially Ph.D. programs) will offer research and teaching assistantships.
- The assistantships are usually for 20 hours a week.
- Often times, but not always, the assistantship will come with a tuition fee waiver.

FUNDED MENTORING PROGRAMS FOR CSUN STUDENTS

✱ **Presidential Scholar** – reserved for current CSUN undergraduate students with a 3.5 GPA who have earned at least 60 units and for transfer students who have earned at least 24 Northridge units
- Scholars work closely with a faculty mentor on a scholarly project. – http://www.csun.edu/financialaid/csun

✱ **University Scholar** – reserved for current CSUN students with a minimum cumulative CSUN 3.25 GPA who have earned at least 24 CSUN units but no more than 96 cumulative units by the end of Spring semester
- Scholars deeply explore their fields of interest and develop mentoring relationships with faculty members. – http://www.csun.edu/financialaid/csun

✱ **Building Infrastructure Leading to Diversity (BUILD) Promoting Opportunities for Diversity in Education and Research (PODER)**
- Undergraduate research training program where sophomores, juniors, and seniors take classes and work directly with professors on research projects that relate to health. – http://www.csun.edu/build-poder

✱ **Minority Biomedical Research Support (MBRS)** – Pairs campus researchers with students from underrepresented communities who want to become research scientists. – http://www.csun.edu/~csunmore/

✱ **Minority Access to Research Careers (MARC)** – offers students an opportunity to participate in on-campus, long-term research projects, while receiving mentoring, research support, graduate school preparation support and a stipend to travel to scientific conferences to present their research results. – http://www.csun.edu/~csunmore/

CSU FUNDING RESOURCES

✱ **Sally Casanova California Pre-Doctoral Program** –increase the pool of potential CSU faculty by supporting doctoral aspirations of CSU students who have experienced economic and educational disadvantages. – http://www.calstate.edu/PreDoc/

✱ **Chancellor's Doctoral Incentive Program** – provides student loans to a limited number of individuals pursuing full-time doctoral study at accredited universities throughout the United States
- Seeks to provide loans to doctoral students who are interested in applying and competing for CSU instructional faculty positions after completion of the doctoral degree. – http://www.calstate.edu/hr/cdip/

SOME SUMMER RESEARCH OPPORTUNITY PROGRAMS (SROP)

✱ The HACU National Internship Program (HNIP) – http://www.hacu.net/hacu/HNIP.asp

✱ Department of Education Internship – http://www2.ed.gov/students/prep/job/intern/index.html

✱ NIH Summer Internship Program – https://www.training.nih.gov/

✱ University of Michigan Institute for Social Research Summer Internship Program (SIP) – http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/careers/internship.html

✱ University Boston SURF – http://www.bu.edu/urop/about/

✱ Virginia Tech Multicultural Academic Opportunities Program (MAOP) – http://www.maop.vt.edu/Undergraduate_programs/summer_research.html

✱ Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) at the University of Texas at Austin – http://www.txstate.edu/chemistry/research/REU.html

✳ UC San Diego Summer Training Academy for Research in the Sciences (STARS) – http://grad.ucsd.edu/degrees/summer-researches/stars/index.html
✳ Mentoring Summer Research Internship Program (MSRIP) at UCR – http://graduate.ucr.edu/msrip.html
✳ UC Irvine SURF – http://www.grad.uci.edu/about-us/diversity/grad-prep-programs/non-uci-students/surf.html
✳ Google "Social Science Summer Research Program for Undergraduates", and other programs will come up.

Useful Internet Sites for Potential Graduate Students

Webpage	Description
FinAid (Financial Aid Home Page) http://finaid.org	Provides information about loans, scholarships, grants, and other types of grad school funds. In addition, information is provided about admission tests, college admissions, and career placement.
Educational Testing Service Network http://www.ets.org	Provides information and links to various admission tests (e.g., GMAT, GRE, TOEFL, PRAXIS), practice tests, scholarships, financial aid tools, tips, and resources
Minority On-line Information Service http://web.fie.com/web/mo	Provides current information about historically Black colleges and universities and Hispanic-serving institutions
National Association of Graduate and Professional Studies (NAGPS) http://www.nagps.org	Provides information on taxes, financial aid, benefits of membership, and regional/national conferences
FastWEB http://www.fastweb.com	Provides information on graduate fellowships and scholarships based upon your answers to an individual profile
Business School http://www.finaid.org/otheraid/business.phtml	Provides information about awards, loans, and advice specific to M.B.A. students, admissions testing, M.B.A. Explorer, GMAT, and loans
Law School http://www.finaid.org/otheraid/law.phtml	Provides information about awards, loans, and advice specific to law students, LSAT, admissions testing, Law School Admission Council Online
Medical School http://www.finaid.org/otheraid/medical.phtml	Provides information about loans, professional organizations, and other resources specific to medical students, admissions testing page
Pre-Med Advisor http://medplaza.com/premed	Provides information about financial aid for medical school and the MCAT
M.B.A. Explorer http://www.gmat.org	The Graduate Management Administration Council (GMAC) provides information about graduate business schools, admissions and testing, as well as tips on financing your M.B.A.
US News & World Report.edu http://www.usnews.com/usnews/edu/beyond/bchome.htm	Provides graduate school rankings in many disciplines, database of graduate scholarships, and an interactive "Answer Zone" for advice on graduate schools
National Center for Education Statistics (N.C.E.S.) http://www.nces.ed.gov	Provides statistical reports on student financing, student debt, enrollment in institutions of higher education, and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) section

OTHER RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS

✳ **National Student Exchange** – provides opportunities for you, as an undergraduate, to study for up to one calendar year at another NSE member college or university
  ▪ Extends beyond the borders of the United States to include U.S. territories as well as some Canadian provinces. – http://www.csun.edu/international/national-student-exchange
✳ **CSUN Learning Resource Center** – http://www.csun.edu/undergraduate-studies/learning-resource-center/freshman-writing-lab
  ▪ University writing lab
    • Face-to-face 30-minute writing center conferences
    • Meet with a consultant in The Writing Center (BH414)
    • Discuss writing techniques, go over WPE exam, prepare for WPE or CBEST, learn study strategies.
    • All appointments are limited to 30 minutes
  ▪ College writing labs (Humanities, Social & Behavioral Sciences)
✳ **Statistics Tutoring Labs**
  ▪ College statistics and writing tutoring – http://www.csun.edu/csbs-tutoring/tutors.html
✳ **Psychology Advising (**SH 306)
  ▪ Quick questions - psy.advisor@csun.edu; schedule appointments - (818) 677-2658
✳ **Disability Resources and Educational Services (DRES)**
  ▪ Provides services and resources for students with disabilities to ensure success – http://www.csun.edu/dres
✳ **National Center on Deafness**
  ▪ Provides communication access, leadership opportunities, scholarships, academic advisement, tutoring, and direct communication in classes for students who are deaf and hard of hearing – http://www.csun.edu/ncod/

✳ **CSUN University Counseling Services** – http://www.csun.edu/counseling/
   ▪ Services are confidential and convenient.
   ▪ Services are free to regularly enrolled students.
   ▪ Psychologists, counselors, and social workers who are experts in working with university students and college student concerns.
✳ **Associated Students' Children's Center**
   ▪ Affordable quality child care – http://www.csun.edu/as/childrens-center/
✳ **Graduation Evaluation**
   ▪ Spring and summer graduates should apply by May 1st of the year preceding their graduation. (e.g., graduating in Spring 2016, then need to apply by May 1st of 2013)
   ▪ Fall graduates should apply by Dec. 1st in the year preceding their graduation.

RESUMES/VITAS

A great resume will not get you the job, but a poor resume can sure lose you a job.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS
✳ The purpose of a resume is to introduce you and get you a job interview.
✳ The resume is a sales brochure on you – it is not an all-encompassing list of everything you have done.
✳ The resume should contain information that makes you attractive to the reader and strengthens your application.
✳ An effective resume tracks your strengths and accomplishments in such a way that a potential employer takes positive notice of them.
✳ Resumes are usually looked at for approximately 30 seconds to one-minute.

REASONS TO ALWAYS MAINTAIN AN UPDATED RESUME
✳ Job market
✳ Scholarships and fellowships
✳ Graduate school applications
✳ Track your achievements – you might forget later what you have done
✳ Self-analysis of your strengths as well as your weaknesses
✳ Asking for raises and/or promotions
✳ Introductory bio used for presentations
✳ Securing credit

TYPES OF RESUMES
✳ **Chronological** – most common type for people who have had a continuous tract of employment. Lists jobs in reverse chronological order.
✳ **Functional** – for people who have long gaps in the employment history. Highlight skills and knowledge as opposed to a chronology of job experience. The disadvantage is many reviewers are custom to chronological resumes so the inter may think you are trying to hide an undesirable work history.
✳ **Combined** – Mixes properties of both the chronological and functional resumes.

APPEARANCE OF RESUME
✳ Don't under-estimate the importance of the resume's appearance! Make the resume visually appealing and easy to read.
✳ 8.5 by11 inches, white or off-white, quality, 20-24 pound stock, 25% rag paper, with black type
✳ 1-2 pages generally – Better to make it two pages than crowding it on one page. The exception would be in the education/academic arena where a *curriculum vita* is used. If you use two pages, make sure the first page is especially impressive so that the prospective employer will want to look at the second page.

✳ Plenty of white space to make the areas more readable, have sufficient room in the margins

✳ Put extra spaces between major sections

✳ Use a conservative style of font, such as Times, New Times Roman, Century, Cambria, or Palatino; which are all serif types and considered to be traditional and business like.

✳ Avoid script fonts (e.g., **Marker Felt**, *Lucida Calligraphy*) or sans-serif fonts (e.g., Geneva, Arial, Calibri)

✳ The font should be 10-12 point size.

✳ Use only one typeface (Exception: make your headings a sans-serif typeface and your text a serif typeface)

✳ Do not underline - Words that are underlined are difficult to read by humans and computers. Underlining was for typewriters – not computers!

✳ Avoid all caps – ALL CAPS ARE DIFFICULT TO READ. USE SMALL CAPS INSTEAD.

✳ Use **boldface** and *italic* type sparingly to emphasize items

✳ Laser printed – Only use ink jet if you use special ink jet paper so as to decrease the ink from bleeding.

✳ No photographs.

✳ No graphics, drawings, or shading.

✳ No errors or erasures.

✳ No staples.

✳ Mail it in nine-by-eleven inch envelopes so it remains flat and does not get folded.

POSSIBLE RESUME CATEGORIES

✳ **Name, address, phone number, and email** – Always include first. Do not include current job phone number as a way to be contacted. This gives the impression you are willing to conduct personal business on company time. Also, you may not be able to speak as freely at work.

✳ **Education** – Include school(s), degree(s), major(s), minor(s) if applicable, and GPA if good. Can include courses that are important to the specific job, workshop training areas, or vo-tech training. Do not include colleges you attended to get your general education requirements if you (1) did not receive a degree there, and (2) received a degree from another university at a later time. The exception would be if the person or place you are interviewing has ties to that college.

✳ **Certifications** – Include if applicable to the desired field.

✳ **Experience** – Include job title, dates, employer, city, state, accomplishments, and responsibilities. There is no need to list address, phone numbers, or supervisors.
  ▪ Emphasize the accomplishments more than the responsibilities, such as ways you saved or made an employer money.
  ▪ Do not feel obligated to list every job you have ever had. List those positions that are pertinent to the position. Combine or omit short-term experience. For example, if you have worked in two or three retail stores in the last two years you might make a section called "Other Experience" followed by, "*I have two years of experience in the retail industry where the primary responsibilities included providing effective and positive customer service, maintaining merchandise displays, and sales.*"
  ▪ If you have experience related to the position and experience not directly related to the position, group the jobs together under appropriate subheadings and then list in reverse chronological order (e.g., teaching experience and other experience; or, management experience and sales experience).

✳ **Volunteer Experience, Practicums, and/or Internships** – If the experience directly relates to the career and entailed more than a one-time event then list it like a job. Include the position title, place of "employment", and responsibilities. If it is a one-time event or just a few hours then list it as community service or activity.

✳ **Skills** – Examples include: proficient on Windows or Macintosh computers, proficient on Android or IOS operating systems, word processing, database, spreadsheets, graphics programs, desktop publishing,
  ⇒   Refer to the "Skills" section of this book.

✳ **Honors** – Examples include: professional, community, and collegiate honors, scholarships, and fellowships. If the name of the honor is not self-explanatory, include a short description (e.g., 1999 Lincoln Award recipient – university student who best combines academic excellence and community service)

✳ **Professional Organizations or Activities** – You may also want to include professional conferences in this section.

* **Community Service or Activities** – Many potential employers like to see applicants who are involved in community service. Membership on a non-profit agency's board is a generally a good activity.
* **College Activities** – Include this area when just graduating or if you have graduated in the past few years. Do not include high school activities.
* **Coursework** – Include coursework if you have no experience, few activities, and need to fill in space on your resume. Include courses that relate to the target position.

QUESTIONABLE RESUME CATEGORIES

* **Job Objective** – Controversy as to whether job objective should be included.
  * Pros
    * Can modify the job objective on each resume to better fit the specific job description.
    * Gives the employer more insight into the specific goals of the applicant.
  * Con
    * By stating a job objective you might not be considered for other jobs that do not precisely match the objective.
    * Redundant with the cover letter and with the other information on the resume.
    * Job objectives are often too broadly stated (e.g., To acquire a management position), meaningless (e.g., *To acquire a position that will enhance personal and professional growth*), or too specific (e.g., *To acquire the Human Resources Director position at XYZ Corporation*).
* **References** – References should not be included on the resume. Some include the line "*Excellent character and professional references available on request.*" The author of this book would argue this statement is meaningless. Have a separate sheet of paper for your references that includes full name, title, address, and phone number of 3-5 references. Provide this sheet when asked for references. (Refer to "References" section of these notes).
* **Personal** – Most agree there is no reason to include personal items unless they have a direct bearing on your occupation. Personal items such as age, marital status, number of children, ethnic identity, religion, description of health, or gender may result in a conscious or unconscious bias.
* **Hobbies/Personal Interests** – You should only include hobbies or personal interests if they are relevant to the position you are seeking.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING THE RESUME

* List the most applicable categories first. If your education is your best attribute for the position then list it first.
* List items within each category (e.g., education, activities, experience) in reverse chronological order.
* Quantify your accomplishments. Whenever possible use numbers to focus attention, add impact, and increase credibility.
* Have more than one resume ready for different types of jobs. The order of the categories or the order of job responsibilities might be changed in order to better fit with the position.
* Be consistent in how you list categories and items.
* Do not include why you left any job.
* No mistakes. Word processor spell checkers are not sufficient. They can find a misspelled word, but they may not substitute the correct word.
* Proofread obsessively. Have others proofread your resume.
* Do not revise your resume in handwriting.
* No slang words. However, industry jargon is acceptable – especially for resumes that may be scanned
* Do not use humor on the resume.
* Do not exaggerate or falsify information – One study found that about $^1/_3$ of all job seekers lie on their resumes, which does not include lies of omission. Hence, companies are getting more methodical in checking the resume and references. A whole new industry has sprung up whose sole purpose is to check the background of job candidates, give psychological tests, and give drug tests.
* Avoid abbreviations – except two-letter state abbreviations (e.g., CA for California)
* Use words or phrases; avoid compound sentences.
* Do not state anticipated or past salary.

✳ Don't use the word "I" to describe things you have done – It is your resume, so it is obvious who did what activities.

✳ Use the past tense to describe accomplishments, responsibilities, and activities. The exception is if you are currently doing a particular job.

✳ Use action words (Refer to the "Action Words" section of the notes).

USING THE INTERNET TO POST OR SEND RESUMES

✳ Most job search sites online allow you to post your resume in Word or PDF format.
  ▪ If given a choice, post in PDF since everyone viewing your resume will see the same format. If you post it in Word, the formatting could look different if they do not have the font you selected or have different printing preferences.

✳ Electronic forms – Some resume databases create web resumes from information you enter in the e-forms. Essentially, you type answers to specific questions into designated spaces and your resume is automatically stored into a database. Employers and recruiters can access database software to search for qualified applicants.
  ▪ The advantage of using e-forms is that your resume will have all the required information as long as you complete the e-form(s).
  ▪ The disadvantage is that your resume will not necessarily highlight your creative abilities or unique strengths.

✳ **Deciding where to post your resume**
  ▪ Determine if you want your job search to be confidential or not. Some web-based resume databases only post your credentials while other databases include your name and contact information.
  ▪ Locate a web-based resume database that specializes in your industry of interest.
  ▪ Answer the following questions regarding the on-line resume posting site.
  ▪ Does the site have a good reputation? Check with colleagues in the field who have accessed the service.
  ▪ Is there a cost for posting your resume? And if so, how much?
  ▪ Does the site allow you to update your resume easily?

✳ **General considerations**
  ▪ Provide contact information (e.g., address, phone number, and email).
  ▪ Provide a key-word summary (15-30 words) that highlights your skills and qualifications. Prioritize the order of the key words with the most important skills and qualifications first. Track your resume posting activities (e.g., where, when, and what you posted)
  ▪ Update your resume once posted (e.g., skills, accomplishments, and experiences).
  ▪ Delete your resume once you have accepted a position.

VITA COMPARED TO RESUME

✳ A resume tends toward brevity/conciseness (1-2 pages), while a vita is more comprehensive because it provides much more detail about academic and research/scholarly endeavors.

✳ Many people put way too much information in the vita. Hence, the important information is lost in the quantity of information provided.

✳ Areas on the vita that are not generally on the resume include grants, publications, and conference presentations.

VITA CATEGORIES

✳ List "Contact Information", then "Education", and then other categories in order of importance for the position you are applying.

✳ Be consistent in how you list categories and subcategories.

✳ Compartmentalize your sections (e.g., Education, Scholarship, Teaching, Service, Outreach)

✳ List items within each category (e.g., Education, Experience, Publications, Presentations, Grants, Activities) in reverse chronological order.

SAMPLE OUTLINE FOR THE VITA

✱ Contact Information
  ▪ Name, phone, address, email, webpage
✱ Education
  ▪ Post Graduate Work
  ▪ Graduate degree(s)
  ▪ Undergraduate degree(s)
  ▪ Certifications
✱ Grants
  ▪ Research grants
  ▪ Teaching grants
  ▪ Program grants
✱ Scholarship
  ▪ Publications
  ▪ Journal articles
  ▪ Book chapters
  ▪ Books
  ▪ Other publications (e.g., magazine articles, research monographs)
  ▪ Manuscripts in review or revision
  ▪ Works in progress (only if you are a student and you have a very solid draft of the manuscript)
  ▪ Conference presentations
    • International/National conference presentations
    • Regional and state presentations
    • Local presentations

✱ Experience (organize these in the order of importance)
  ▪ Research experience
    • Current research projects and collaborations
  ▪ Teaching experience
  ▪ Human services/clinical experience
  ▪ Consulting experience
✱ Service
  ▪ Reviewing
  ▪ Professional organizations and offices
  ▪ University service
    • University
    • College
    • Department
  ▪ Outreach
    • Community activities
    • Invited presentations
✱ Skills
  ▪ Languages
  ▪ Computer skills
  ▪ Research/Statistics skills
✱ Honors
  ▪ Professional awards
  ▪ Community awards
  ▪ University awards

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT VITA CATEGORIES

✱ **Grants** – List your title (e.g., Principal Investigator, Project Director or Co-Director), title of the grant, funding source, amount funded, and funding period.
  ▪ Many professionals list the grants in which they had a significant role (e.g., Project Evaluator) even if they were not the Principal Investigator or Project Director.
    • Comment from Plunkett: I do this WHEN I actually help with writing the grant and the progress reports. I do not list the grant if I am just getting funding from the grant, but I did not help with writing the grant.
  ▪ Many professionals list grants that they submitted but did not get funded.
    • This is a good strategy if you are a student or junior faculty.
    • One downside is if you have numerous unfunded grants with no funded grants. It might give the perception that you are not able to acquire grants.
✱ **Publications** – There are many different forms of publications. It is best to organize the publications by type (e.g., journal articles, book chapters, books) and then by year (i.e., reverse chronological order).
  ▪ Use one standard bibliographic form for publications (e.g., APA).
  ▪ Articles that are 'in press' should be listed with your publications.
  ▪ List manuscripts under review or in revision in a separate section.
    • There is disagreement as to whether you should list the place where the manuscript is under review. On the one hand, listing the journal seems to give it more credibility, yet if the manuscript is rejected (and you change your vita when you resubmit), then readers will know it was rejected.
  ▪ List published abstracts, proceedings, and ERIC documents in a separate section. Don't mix them in with peer-reviewed journal articles because it sends a message that you don't understand the difference.
  ▪ Do not mix peer-reviewed/juried publications with 'lay' publications (e.g., research monographs, research instruments, magazine articles, newsletters). You could call this section "Other Publications."
    • Note from Plunkett: I'm never sure if people who collapse all kinds of publications together are trying to hide that they don't have many peer-reviewed publications or if they don't know the difference. Either way, it doesn't look good.

- If you are a student, then list manuscripts that are in progress.
  - Note from Plunkett: Only list manuscripts in progress if there is a VERY solid rough draft of the manuscript. I list manuscripts that are 'in progress' on my vita as a way to keep track of what I am working on. However, I take them off when submitting my vita for a job or for a grant.
  - Another note: One faculty applicant had 6 manuscripts in preparation, but only one publication two years earlier. This makes me wonder whether they can ever get the manuscripts done. In other words, it is a potential liability.
  - One last note: One faculty applicant listed publications, but just said "with…", instead of listing the author order. Hence, I did not know if the person was first, second, or third author. Also, it makes me think the person did not understand the relevance of author order.

✳ **Research Experience** – List your postdoctoral, graduate, and possibly undergraduate research (if you are a graduate student and the research is relevant to your application).
  - Provide the name of the institution, project title, dates, duties, skills, and contributions.
  - Note from Plunkett: Many candidates who had a research assistantship will list who the supervisor was, but not the project. I want to know the title of the project, but I personally feel that it is not necessary to list the research supervisor UNLESS there is some reason to believe it will help you (e.g., the supervisor is a leading scholar in the field). Generally, I believe leave the supervisor off but if s/he is important, then include in your personal statement / application letter. Also, don't list the funding source/grant unless you wrote the grant.

✳ **Teaching Experience** – List your title (e.g., teaching fellow, teaching assistant, adjunct faculty), institution, dates, and courses.
  - Some list the names of courses taught in a separate section called "Courses Taught."
  - Many advocate listing teaching evaluations
    - Note from Plunkett: I tend not to do this because people will often selectively list evaluations. I have a separate document that lists ALL of my evaluations.
  - You don't need to list what the course covers or who takes it. List a course in this format: PSY 361: Adolescence. This tells the reader it was a junior level class and focused on adolescence. Keep the vita focused.
  - If you were a teaching assistant, you do not need to list who your supervisor was for a teaching assistantship. Just list the classes you assisted with and what you did (e.g., grading, lecturing, leading class discussions).

✳ **Conference Presentations**
  - If you have a sufficient number of presentations, then organize them by type (e.g., international, national, regional and state, local) and then year (i.e., reverse chronological order).
  - Use one standard bibliographic form for presentations (e.g., APA).
  - Do not mix conference presentations with invited presentations (see section below).
  - Many advocate listing conferences attended (even when not presenting).
    - Note from Plunkett: I would only do this if you have no conference presentations or the conference you attended is very relevant to the person who will be reviewing your materials.

✳ **Reviewing** – Reviewing is a very important aspect of service to the profession. Many journals have programs (e.g., review internships) to help students and junior faculty learn how to review.
  - If you are on a editorial review board for a journal, list it in this section.
  - If you review one manuscript, but are not on the editorial review board, then call this "Ad Hoc Reviewer."
  - List the journal in which you edited a manuscript; do NOT list the title of manuscripts you reviewed
  - If you edited a book, then list the book and publisher.

SUPPORTING MATERIAL FOR THE VITA

✳ **Cover letter** – The cover letter should state the position you are applying for, how you heard about the position, a brief statement of your background, your teaching and research interests, and your personal attributes and skills.

✳ **Statement of professional interests** – This is a one page document that summarizes your professional interests (e.g., research interests, teaching interests).

✳ **Statement of research/scholarly interests** – This document is a 1-3 page statement of past, current, and future research interests. This would include your experiences with various data collection techniques, statistical analyses, and research skills. In regards to future research, describe what research you would like to do and how you might involve students in your research.

✳ **Statement of teaching interests or philosophy** – often required for an assistant professor position. For good

overviews on writing a good teaching philosophy and/or teaching portfolios, refer to the following web pages.
- How to write a statement of teaching philosophy
  http://chronicle.com/article/How-to-Write-a-Statement-of/45133/
- Frequently asked questions about the philosophy of teaching statement
  http://lib.utsa.edu/files/default/1012/frequently_asked_questions_about_the_philosophy_of_teaching_statement.pdf
- Sample teaching portfolios can be found on the following webpage:
  http://cetalweb.utep.edu/sun/cetal/resources/portfolios/samples.htm

✱ **Transcript and/or course lists** – Generally, applicants are asked to submit official copies of their transcripts.

✱ **Teaching evaluations**
- Note from Plunkett: I believe you should not selectively provide teaching evaluations; that is, leaving out poor evaluations. If your evaluations start off poor, but get better, that shows how responsive you are as a teacher. If you have a few disgruntled students in one class, that is normal.

ACTION WORDS FOR RESUME/VITA

Accomplished	Computed	Entered	Inspected	Participated	Revised
Achieved	Conceived	Established	Inspired	Perfected	Salvaged
Adapted	Conducted	Evaluated	Installed	Performed	Scheduled
Added	Consolidated	Examined	Instituted	Persuaded	Selected
Adjusted	Constructed	Executed	Instructed	Piloted	Served
Administered	Consulted	Expanded	Integrated	Pioneered	Simplified
Advertised	Contracted	Expedited	Interpreted	Planned	Solved
Advised	Coordinated	Expressed	Interviewed	Prepared	Sorted
Analyzed	Corresponded	Extracted	Introduced	Presided	Streamlined
Applied	Counseled	Facilitated	Invented	Processed	Strengthened
Appraised	Created	Familiarized	Inventoried	Produced	Studied
Arbitrated	Cut	Fixed	Investigated	Programmed	Summarized
Arranged	Delegated	Formatted	Launched	Projected	Supervised
Ascertained	Delivered	Formulated	Lectured	Proposed	Surveyed
Assembled	Demonstrated	Founded	Maintained	Publicized	Synthesized
Assessed	Designed	Generated	Managed	Purchased	Systematized
Assisted	Detected	Guided	Mapped	Recommended	Tabulated
Attained	Developed	Handled	Marketed	Reconciled	Taught
Audited	Devised	Helped	Measured	Recruited	Tested
Averted	Diagnosed	Hired	Mediated	Reduced	Trained
Budgeted	Directed	Identified	Mentored	Reorganized	Transcribed
Calculated	Discovered	Illustrated	Modeled	Repaired	Transformed
Catalogued	Dissected	Implemented	Modified	Replaced	Translated
Chaired	Distributed	Improved	Monitored	Represented	Tutored
Coached	Diverted	Improvised	Motivated	Researched	Upgraded
Collected	Drafted	Increased	Negotiated	Resolved	Updated
Communicated	Edited	Influenced	Obtained	Restructured	Utilized
Compiled	Eliminated	Informed	Organized	Retrieved	Verified
Completed	Enacted	Initiated	Overhauled	Revamped	Won
Composed	Enforced	Innovated	Oversaw	Reviewed	Wrote

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EDUCATION

Psychology – B.A. (Expected May 2007)
Child & Adolescent Development – B.A. (Expected May 2007)
California State University Northridge (CSUN)

Notice the degree, not the university is emphasized

Child Development – A.A. (May 2005)
Pierce College, Woodland Hills, CA

Child Development Site Supervisor Permit (August 2006)
Child Development Teacher Permit (June 2005)
California Commission on Teacher Credentialing

EXPERIENCE

Lead Teacher (2007 to present)
Intern – 120+ hours (Fall 2006)
Child and Family Studies Center Laboratory School, CSUN, Northridge, CA

Notice the positions, not the places of employment are emphasized

- Teach and supervise pre-K children
- Create and implement lesson plans
- Supervise and evaluate undergraduate student interns and assistant teachers

Assistant Teacher (2003 to 2006)
L.A. Pierce College Campus Child Development Center, Woodland Hills, CA

- Taught and supervised preschool children
- Implemented lesson plans

The section titled "other experience" is here because the person had a lot of short-term jobs, and wanted to disguise that he was changing jobs every few months. If this does not apply to you, then don't include this section.

OTHER EXPERIENCE

Over six years of experience in retail where the primary duties included conducting sales, providing customer service, taking inventory, arranging merchandise displays, and handling cash

ACTIVITIES

- National Association for Education of Young Children (NAEYC) (2005 to present)
- BookEnds Board of Directors (2005 to present)
- CSUN Child and Adolescent Development Association (2006 to present)
- Homeless Shelter Fundraiser (2005)

Notice the dates of membership are included

SKILLS

- Fluent in written and oral Spanish, and familiar with spoken Armenian
- Proficient on Windows, Macintosh, iOS, and Android operating systems
- Proficient in Excel, Word, PowerPoint, and Word Perfect

HONORS

- National Honor Society (May 2007)
- President's and Dean's Honor Rolls (multiple semesters)
- Extraordinary Talented Scholarship (2003/04)

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EDUCATION   **Psychology - B.A.** (May 1996)
Bigtime University, City, ST
GPA 3.81 on 4.0 scale

Workshops/Lectures
Raising Children in a Toxic Environment by Dr. Garbarino (September 1995)
Human Sexuality by Dr. Ruth Westheimer (April 1995)
Development of Children by Dr. Barry Brazelton (January 1995)

EXPERIENCE   **Child Care Worker I** (1993 to present)
Get Better Counseling, City, ST

Notice the positions, not the places of employment are emphasized

• Supervise the emergency shelter youth clients
• Facilitate public relations with State workers
• Provide crisis intervention services and one-time counseling interventions
• Conduct intake assessments

Intern - 100+ hours (1995)
Organization, City, ST
• Assisted the group educator with the youth education groups
• Assisted with drug/alcohol abuse awareness group therapy sessions

In this particular job, notice that both job titles are listed in one position. This shows the person has been promoted

After-School Program Coordinator (1992 to 1993)
After-School Program Worker (1991 to 1992)
Youth Organization, City, ST
• Created and implemented the after-school program for latch-key children
• Coordinated the after-school program and summer sports program
• Maintained client files
• Presented program reports
• Recruited youth to participate in the programs

ACTIVITIES   **Professional**
Oklahoma Psychological Association (1993 to 1996)

Community
Homeless Shelter Fundraiser (1996)   *Notice the dates of membership are included*
Youth Coordinating Council (1993 to 1996)

College
Psychology Club (1993 to 1996)
    Vice-President (1995/96)
Intramural activities (1993 to 1996)

HONORS   President's and Dean's Honor Rolls (multiple semesters)
National Honor Society (1993 to present)
Extraordinarily Talented Scholarship (1993/94)

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SUMMARY   Over five years of successful sales and marketing
Over six years of experience in bookkeeping and data entry
Excellent interpersonal and communication abilities

EXPERIENCE   **Sales Associate** (1992 to present)
Intern (120+ hours) (Spring 1992)
XYZ Organization, City, ST
- 1994 & 1995 Outstanding Sales Associate of the Year
- Designed a successful marketing plan for new product line
- Created six new accounts as well as maintained eighteen existing accounts
- Increased sales in primary sales territory by 42% in two years

This shows the person has been promoted at both jobs
- Supervised five sales representative trainees
- Enhanced customer satisfaction

Head Bookkeeper (1989 to 1992)
Data Entry (1988 to 1989)
ABC Organization, City, ST
- Successfully maintained accounts receivable for three departments
- Resolved discrepancies in employee payroll
- Assisted accountants in filing state and federal tax returns
- Created and delivered financial reports to weekly management meetings and monthly Board of Director's meetings
- Performed general office duties

EDUCATION   **Marketing – B.S.** (May 1992)   *In this resume, education is moved down because the job announcement was more interested in sales experience than degree*
Only University, City, ST
      GPA - 3.8 on 4.0 scale

Continuing Education - 50 hours in direct contact sales, enhancing customer service, and effective communication

COMPUTER SKILLS   Proficient on Windows, Macintosh, iOS, and Android operating systems
Proficient with Excel, Word, PowerPoint, Access, Pages, Word Perfect

ACTIVITIES   United Way Fundraising Committee (1994 to present)
American Business Club (AMBUCS) (1992 to present)

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EXPERIENCE

Licensed Real Estate Agent (1995 to present)
American Homes Real Estate, City, ST
- Sold real estate including houses, farms, and businesses
- Managed rental properties for clients
- Recruited clientele
- Facilitated customer relations

Typist I (1993 to 1995)
State Office, City, ST
- Composed correspondence for supervisors
- Typed reports, forms, budgets, and correspondence
- Performed general office duties such as filing, answering phones, operating office equipment in a very professional manner
- Designed flyers, announcements, letterhead, and newsletters using desktop layout programs

Secretary/Receptionist (1991 to 1993)
Big Time University, City, ST
- Supervised five student workers
- Screened applicants for youth program
- Typed reports, forms, budgets, and correspondence
- Performed general office duties such as filing, answering phones, operating office equipment

OTHER EXPERIENCE

Over three years of experience in retail where the primary duties included conducting sales, providing customer service, taking inventory, arranging merchandise displays, and handling cash

The section titled "other experience" is here because the person had a lot of short-term jobs, and wanted to disguise that he was changing jobs every few months. Don't include this section unless you have a similar situation.

EDUCATION

Anywhere Vo-Tech, City, ST
- Word Perfect
- MS Word
- MS Excel
- Lotus 1,2,3

This person has no college degree, but has vocational training and CEUs that relate

Continuing Education Units (CEUs) - 30+ hours
- Understanding gender differences in the workforce
- Intermediate and Advanced Microsoft Office
- Relating to coworkers and supervisors
- Understanding different personality types in the workplace
- Alcohol and drug training

LANGUAGE SKILLS

Fluent in Armenian, Farsi, and English
Familiar with Arabic and French

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EDUCATION

School Counseling – M.Ed. (expected May 2012)
Early Childhood Education – B.A. (May 2009)
Whatever University, City, ST

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Graduate Teaching Assistant (Spring 2012)
Education Department, Whatever University, City, ST
- Led class lectures, proctored exams, and grade papers for *ED3114: Theories of Education*

Substitute Public School Teacher (2008 to present)
Student Teaching (Fall 2008)
Whatever Public Schools, City, ST
- Provide substitute teaching for K-12 students in math, science, and English classes
- Performed all teaching activities for 22 students in 1st grade

Tutor (2008)
Whatever Reading Clinic, City, ST
- Tutored youth ages 5 through 17
- Coordinated scheduling plans

OTHER EXPERIENCE

Part-Time Assistant Manager (Went back to school) (2006 to 2008)
Store Manager (2000 to 2005)
Retail Store, City, ST
- Exceeded sales quotas each year
- Recognized for outstanding profits each year from 1991 to 1996
- Supervised eight employees
- Recruited clientele and facilitated customer relations
- Coordinated visual merchandising displays and conducted inventory

ACTIVITIES

Professional
- American Education Association (2011 to present)

Community
- Attended the "Parents as Educators" state conference (2009)
- Parents and Teachers Association (2003 to present)

University
- Student Education Association (2008 to present)
- Non-Traditional Student Association (2009 to present)

SKILLS
- Proficient in Spanish and English; familiar with spoken Italian and Portuguese
- Proficient in Word, PowerPoint, and Illustrator; familiar with Excel and Pages

LETTERS

"Never underestimate the power of carefully crafted letters"

LAYOUT
✸ Good layout creates a favorable impression.
✸ 1 page.
✸ Use the same font and paper as the resume.
✸ Use the same header on the letters as you do on the resume.
✸ Sign your full name in black ink.
✸ Never photocopied!
✸ Use standard block format.
✸ Single space between sentences and double space between paragraphs.
✸ Key points in italic and bold face type are appropriate if limited to no more than five.
✸ Do not use block justified.

IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS
✸ Do not send a "To Whom It May Concern" letter. Tailor the correspondence to a particular person, organization, and position.
✸ Address each letter completely with no abbreviations (except two-letter state abbreviations) and include the middle initial and title of the recipient.
✸ Do not precede the decision maker's name with "Mr.," "Ms.," or "Mrs." in the address. However, do use the designation in the greeting of the letter (e.g., "Dear Ms. Smith:"). Only use "Mrs." if you are sure the recipient does.
✸ Do not address a decision maker in the greeting by his or her first name.
✸ Use the proper spelling of all names and the correct company name. Call to verify.
✸ Effective letters are upbeat, concise, and direct.
✸ Keep the paragraphs short – Three or four concise sentences per paragraph.
✸ Do not explain why you are looking for a job.
✸ Use the name of the individual and/or the organization in the body of the letter.
✸ Eliminate extraneous information.
✸ Researching the organization can help fine-tune the application letter.
✸ No errors or erasures.
✸ Have someone else proofread and edit your letters for grammatical mistakes, content, and misspelled words.

THANK YOU LETTERS
✸ Send thank-you letters to everyone who has assisted you in any way – references, network contacts, informational interview contacts, interviewers, etc.
✸ **Advice meeting follow-up letter** – Send this letter within 24-48 hours after the advice meeting.
✸ **Interview follow-up letter** – Send this letter within 24 hours of the interview.

FOLLOW-UP LETTER AFTER REJECTION
✸ Always follow-up a rejection letter with an email letter that expresses your appreciation at the notification, expresses your disappointment, states your continued interest in the organization/school/program in case the person(s) they selected withdraw or don't work out.
✸ If you do not get the job or into the program you really want, do not write it off. The person who was selected may change his or her mind due to a last-minute offer or for other reasons.

ACCEPTANCE LETTER

✻ This letter is sent after a verbal acceptance of the position/program. It is used to confirm the terms of your position and to reinforce the employer's decision to hire you.

REJECTING OR WITHDRAWING AN OFFER LETTER

✻ Most job searchers and/or graduate school applicants fail to follow-through by notifying prospective employers/schools that they are rejecting a offer or withdrawing their application. Notifying prospective employers/schools of your decision (1) saves them the time and effort (e.g., calling your references), (2) allows them to move on to another candidate, and (3) leaves a good impression of your professionalism in case you apply there again.

✻ When withdrawing an application, do not state that you received a better offer. Discuss the decision in terms of a better fit at this stage in your career.

✻ Thank the interviewer/program for the offer or for the opportunity to interview.

GOOD NEWS LETTERS/EMAIL

✻ Within two-weeks of accepting a position/program, you should notify your network of your good news.

✻ Thank them for their support, state what position/program you accepted, and offer to help them in the future.

LIST OF PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES FOR COVER LETTER OR INTERVIEW

Abstract	Consistent	Enthusiastic	Independent	Organized	Skillful
Accountable	Conventional	Ethical	Individualist	Patient	Sociable
Accurate	Courageous	Exciting	Ingenious	Perceptive	Speculative
Active	Courteous	Expressive	Innovative	Perfectionistic	Spontaneous
Adaptable	Creative	Fair	Inquisitive	Personable	Stable
Adventurous	Curious	Flexible	Insightful	Persuasive	Steadfast
Analytical	Decisive	Fraternal	Inspirational	Philosophical	Strategic
Artistic	Dedicated	Free-Spirited	Intellectual	Playful	Supportive
Autonomous	Democratic	Friendly	Intuitive	Positive	Systematic
Broad-Minded	Dependable	Fun	Inventive	Practical	Team-Spirited
Charismatic	Detail-Oriented	Futuristic	Just	Pragmatic	Technological
Charming	Determined	Generous	Kind	Prepared	Tenacious
Committed	Devoted	Genuine	Kinesthetic	Productive	Theoretical
Communicative	Diligent	Global	Knowledgeable	Progressive	Thorough
Compassionate	Diplomatic	Good-Natured	Light-Hearted	Punctual	Trustworthy
Competent	Disciplined	Harmonious	Logical	Rationale	Trustworthy
Competitive	Dramatic	Here and Now	Loyal	Realistic	Unique
Composed	Dynamic	Honest	Methodical	Reliable	Versatile
Conceptual	Eager	Humorous	Nurturing	Resilient	Visionary
Congenial	Economical	Idealistic	Objective	Responsible	Warm
Conscientious	Empathetic	Imaginative	Observant	Scientific	
Conservative	Energetic	Impactful	Opportunistic	Sensitive	
Considerate	Enterprising	Impulsive	Optimistic	Sincere	

SKILLS FOR THE COVER LETTER OR INTERVIEW

Administering programs
Analyzing data, reports, etc.
Budgeting
Calculating numerical data
Communication skills
Compiling/conducting statistics
Computer graphics
Conceptualizing
Conducting experiments
Coordinating events
Data base management
Designing poster presentations
Desktop publishing
Developing charts/graphs
Editing
Entering data in SPSS
Evaluating programs
Fundraising
Handling complaints

Interpreting languages
Interviewing people
Investigating problems
Making presentations
Managing others
Managing time
Mediation
Motivating
Multivariate statistics
Negotiating
Organizing projects and/or tasks
Persuading others
Planning programs/projects
Problem solving
Programming computers
Promoting events
Public speaking
Record-keeping
Rehabilitating others

Repairing mechanical devices
Researching
Running meetings
Scheduling
Selling products/services
Speaking foreign language
Speech writing
Spreadsheets
Supervising others
Synthesizing
Teaching
Team building
Thinking logically
Trouble shooting
Updating files
Using a PC/Mac/Mainframe
Word processing
Writing articles/reports

PERSONAL TRAITS FOR COVER LETTER

Action-oriented and results-driven
Ability to delegate
Ability to establish rapport
Ability to hire and fire people
Ability to prioritize
Able to adapt textbook learning to the working world
Able to adjust to an ever-changing marketplace
Able to maintain professional standards under varied work conditions
Able to make on-the-spot decisions
Able to meet deadlines
Able to perform multiple tasks
Able to solve problems
Academic excellence in field of study
Accept and handle responsibilities
Always willing to help others
An action person
Analyze data to predict trends
Brought projects from concept through implementation
Build teams who function well without constant supervision
Calm under pressure
Committed to excellence
Conducted seminars and conferences
Confident and assertive, yet diplomatic and flexible
Diplomatic in difficult situations
Easily win people's confidence
Excellent social skills
Effective short-term and long-term planner
Effective at dealing with the public and policy makers
Effectively promote new ideas
Enthusiastic in providing quality service
Establish priorities
Experience in growth company
Experience with an industry leading firm
Familiar with modern management techniques
Familiar with technological tools

Get along well with co-workers
Give 100%
Grasp technical matter quickly
Hands-on experience
Have ten years of experience
Independent thinker, yet not afraid to ask for help or advice when needed
Initiated sweeping changes
Inspire others to better performance
Interact with a variety of people on different levels
Knowledgeable about governmental affairs
Managed a successful operation
Multi-operation experience
Numerous personal contacts for attracting business
Planned fund-raising activities
Professional and positive attitude
Proven record of success
Procured external grants and funds
Salvaged previously unprofitable operations
Set and meet goals
Skilled communicator
Success with international operations
Synthesize diverse ideas
Top management exposure
Treat others with respect and dignity
Understand customers/guests/clients needs
Understand group dynamics
Use common sense
Willing to accomplish more than required
Willing to continue education and grow
Willing to try new approaches
Win cooperation from people at every level
Won the loyalty of those who worked for me
Worked closely with top management
Work well under pressure
Work well alone or as part of a team

REFERENCES

"What someone says about you has a much greater impact than what you say about yourself."

WHY REFERENCES ARE IMPORTANT
✻ To confirm and reinforce your personal and professional strengths.
✻ Your best source of referrals. ***Referrals give instant credibility. They also earn your resume three minutes of scrutiny compared to the standard 30-60 seconds. Nobody attaches their name to a bad candidate.***
✻ Particularly important if terminated from most recent position.
✻ References can not get you a job, but poorly chosen references can cost you a job if not properly groomed.

POSSIBLE REFERENCES
✻ First, and foremost, they need to know about your abilities/skills/attributes.
✻ Former supervisors.
✻ Other high-level executives who know your contributions.
✻ Professors and university administrators who are familiar with your capabilities.
✻ Current and past coworkers.
✻ Subordinates who can verify your supervisory skills.
✻ Colleagues who have served with you on committees or task forces.
✻ Members of professional organizations who know you.
✻ Key employees of consulting firms who conducted business with you.
✻ **For graduate programs**
  ▪ In general, the best references for graduate programs are current or past professors. Ideally, these professors will be tenure-track or tenured professors (e.g., assistant professor, associate professor, full professor).
  ▪ If you get a letter from a part-time faculty member, it is best when they have a doctorate degree.
  ▪ Try to avoid getting letters from graduate student teaching assistants or graduate student research supervisors.
  ▪ The ideal faculty reference is one that you have had in multiple classes and/or in multiple roles (e.g., teacher, research supervisor, mentor, advisor).
  ▪ Some graduate programs (e.g., social work) often require a letter from a faculty member as well as a letter from a current/past supervisor.

CHARACTERISTICS OF GOOD REFERENCES
✻ Successful professional life.
✻ Self-confident and charismatic demeanor.
✻ Good oral and written skills.
✻ Enthusiastic about helping you.
✻ The reference knows the recipient of the letter or someone the recipient knows.
✻ The reference is someone who, by reputation, is known to the recipient of the letter.
✻ The reference is someone whose letterhead and title will attract the recipient's attention or give credibility to the statements–and to you.

IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING REFERENCES
✻ Make sure they have different surname than you.
✻ Have a list of five typed references available. Include name, title, full address, email, and telephone number.
✻ Always seek permission from references before listing them on an application, reference list, or resume.
✻ Reassure the references you will not abuse the use of their names.
✻ Make sure the employer is interested in you before you give them your reference list. If references are called too many times they can become apathetic, less enthusiastic, and annoyed.

✱ Ensure your references can receive calls during business hours and can privately tell about you.
✱ Provide your references with copies of your resume so that they can hand it out to others.
✱ Tell the reference the types of positions you are seeking and ask for referrals.
✱ Advise reference any time you give out his/her name. Tell the reference who will be calling, the nature of the position, your qualifications, any special areas of employer interest or concern. This allows the reference to tailor the recommendation toward the specific job position.
✱ Ask the reference to notify you when they are contacted.

NURTURING YOUR REFERENCES LETTER

✱ If you want a letter from a faculty member, do the following:
   ▪ Perform well in the class (especially above the class average).
   ▪ Act professionally in class (e.g., be on time, attend class, be respectful of others' opinions).
   ▪ Stop by their office hours so they connect a name to the face.
   ▪ Ask for their advice on education and career.
   ▪ After you leave their class, maintain contact with the professor so they remember who you are (e.g., occasional update email, stopping by their office).
✱ Provide references with resume, personal statement / career goal, transcript, etc.
✱ Send a letter expressing appreciation for being a reference that includes a one-page summary which concentrates on your positive character traits, job-related skills, and accomplishments.
✱ For graduate programs, provide filled-out forms as well as addressed and stamped envelopes.
✱ Ask the reference what information they need.
✱ Always give references at least two weeks to write a letter.
✱ Advise and thank all references when you accept a new position.

REFERENCE LETTER

✱ Addresses your unique attributes, skills, accomplishments, etc. (not generic).
✱ Persuasive and enthusiastic language.
✱ Each should be a signed original.
✱ Preferably, the reference letter is personalized to the specific individual who has the authority to hire you.
✱ Get a reference signed by your current employer.
✱ Many references will let (and some prefer) you write your own reference letter on their letterhead and then they just sign it.
✱ If the reference knows the target, then you can write your own midsection (known as the value paragraph) where your attributes are advertised, while the reference writes the opening and closing paragraphs.

BROADCAST REFERENCE LETTER

✱ A broadcast reference letter shotguns information about your attributes to many potential targets.
✱ Select a reference whose name or position will generate the most excitement.
✱ The reference's letterhead should be used (either photocopied on their letterhead, or more preferably, printed on the letterhead). If the letterhead is unavailable use at least 24-pound white bond paper.
✱ All letters should be individually signed by the reference.

REFERENCE LETTER

JOE N. COLLEGE
12345 Street Address • City, ST 00000 • (123) 456-7890 • email@whatever.com

January 1, 2000

John Smith, Ph.D.
Department Head
Philosophy Department
XYZ University
Anywhere, USA 00000

Dear Dr. Smith:

It gives me great pleasure to write a letter of recommendation for Joe N. College. I became aquatinted with Joe when he began his doctoral program in the Philosophy Department in 1993. As the Philosophy Program Department Head, I supervise Joe's teaching and academic performance. Also, I taught a class in which Joe was a student, and I have observed his presentations to student groups. My affiliation with Joe in these various settings has allowed me to observe him closely.

Joe has consistently presented himself in a professional and dedicated manner in each of his various roles – instructor, lecturer, and student. He is a very popular and respected instructor as evidenced by his outstanding teacher evaluations. He has an exciting and charismatic presentation style in the classroom, as well as during guest lectures, which keeps the students interested in the material he is covering. As a student, Joe has excelled in his course work as demonstrated by his outstanding grade point average.

Joe has many skills and personal attributes that make him a good candidate for the assistant professor position. He has good research and writing skills as evidenced by his five publications at such an early stage of his professional development. Joe has a commitment to service to the Department and College as exhibited by his roles as member of the Department Head Search Committee, Vice-President of the Graduate Students organization, and member of the College Fundraising Committee.

Because of his skills and personal attributes, it is my sincere belief that Joe will prove to be a fine asset to any university. It is for the above reasons that I whole-heartedly recommend him for the assistant professor position at XYZ University. If you have any questions concerning Joe's qualifications, feel free to contact me at (123) 456-7890.

Sincerely,

John Smith

INTERVIEW ETIQUETTE

"All the hours of preparing the resume, researching prospective employers, grooming your references, and making contacts are wasted if you do not interview well."

TWO OBJECTIVES OF THE INTERVIEW
✳ To present yourself as favorably as possible, without being dishonest.
✳ To determine whether the particular job, organization, and community are a good fit with you.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE JOB CANDIDATE
✳ Be honest and provide accurate information.
✳ Interview only with those organizations where you are genuinely interested in working.
✳ Adhere to schedules.
✳ Do not keep employers hanging regarding job offers.
✳ Accept a job offer in good faith.
✳ Notify recruiters (campus, private, etc.) and references that you have accepted a position.
✳ Notify employers who are considering you for employment after you accept another position.
✳ Claim reimbursement for legitimate expenses if the employer has agreed to pay for your expenses.

PREDICTORS OF SUCCESS
✳ Communicative abilities
✳ Personality congruence or "fit" with the interviewer
✳ Motivational achievements
✳ Job skill match and related work experience
✳ Leadership ability
✳ Good personality (outgoing)
✳ Ambition, motivation, creativity, and intelligence
✳ Teamwork capabilities
✳ Initiative and responsibilities
✳ Adaptability
✳ Work habits
✳ College grades
✳ Specific courses

> Most employers rated good work ethics (e.g., reliability, having a good attitude, proper dress, and being polite) as being the most important in hiring new employees.

IMAGE CHECK-UP
✳ **First Impressions**
  ▪ The first impression is critical. You never get a chance to make another first impression.
✳ **General Considerations**
  ▪ Freshly bathed or showered with deodorant
  ▪ Clean teeth and mouthwash
  ▪ Minimal cologne
  ▪ Natural look make-up
  ▪ Business hair style with no extreme styles or color
  ▪ Fresh haircut or style
  ▪ Neatly trimmed hair or beard
  ▪ Minimal jewelry
  ▪ Manicured nails, at a minimum cleaned and trimmed
  ▪ No chewing gum

✴ **Wardrobes**
- Dress according to the dress code of the particular culture in which employment is sought. A pre-interview visit to an employer's place of business will reveal parameters of the dress code.
- Dress conservatively – Avoid fashion fads, bold patterns, tinted glasses, and excess of accessories.
- Minimize wardrobe color.
- Cleaned and polished shoes
- Quality clothes
- Professionally cleaned and pressed clothes
- Buy wrinkle-resistant – Crumple the sleeve with hand and see if it snaps back to its original shape.
- Make sure your eyeglasses are clean.

✴ **Men's Wardrobe**
- Men should wear suits rather than sports jackets (unless the overall climate is much more laid back).
- Suit should be dark (blue, gray, or charcoal), single-breasted, well-tailored, current style, solid or pinstripe.
- White long-sleeve shirt
- Silk tie – polyester ties do not lay as well as silk ties
- Mid-calf socks (so if you cross your legs, your bare leg does not show
- Dark, polished dress shoes – Wear conservative shoes and buckles (e.g., no cowboy boots or large belt-buckles).
- Remove earrings, nose-ring, tongue stud, etc. before the interview.

✴ **Women's Wardrobe**
- Tailored suit (blue, gray, or charcoal) or tailored dress that goes to the knee or lower hemline is always appropriate. However, women can wear a coordinating jacket and skirt.
- Choose an outfit that is flattering and comfortable.
- Choose a blouse that compliments the suit.
- Focus on quality not fashion.
- Neutral/conservative hose
- Dark, closed-toe pumps
- No spiked heals
- Avoid low neckline
- Avoid long fingernails and use a subtle color for your fingernail polish.
- It is okay to dress feminine as long as you dress professional.

BODY LANGUAGE

✴ **Posture**
- Very important
- Good posture is viewed as an indication of confidence, vitality, alertness, resiliency, and enthusiasm.
- Poor posture is understood as lack of confidence, timidity, boredom, fatigue, dullness, dejection, and resignation. Do not slouch!

✴ **Speech Pattern**
- Level of sound – not too loud or soft. If they have to ask you to repeat what you said, speak up!
- Speed of speech – Do not rush the answers, but do not drag either.
- Avoid monotone discussions – include variances in highs and lows.
- Eliminate repeated words and phrases – "*Um, ah, you know, okay*"
- Laughter needs to be used appropriately
- Nervousness often makes people too serious – relax and smile

> Exhibit positive body language regarding past jobs that says "*I am proud of where I have worked*"

✴ **Gestures**
- Do not cover mouth or rub eyes – perceived as deception
- Avoid scratching neck, fidgeting, or pulling on collar – perceived as uncertainty
- Do not rest head on hands, tap fingers or feet – perceived as boredom
- Avoid folding arms and crossing legs – perceived as defensive or negative
- Avoid extravagant gesturing and no gesturing

✴ **Handshakes**
- Do not give a limp handshake or a knuckle grinder.

JOB INTERVIEWING DO'S & DO NOT'S

The Do's

✳ Prepare for the interview.
  - Know the organization's purpose, strengths, problems, major products or services.
  - Know the major competitors.
  - Know the names of the key people in the organization.
  - Know current facts of news that relate to the organization.
  - Know how you can be of value.
  - Learn the trade buzzwords – language unique to your field.

✳ Bring three extra resumes in case others in the interview would like one.

✳ Have extra resumes and reference lists in the car (or in briefcase).

✳ Bring samples of your work.

✳ Go to the bathroom before you go into the interview.

✳ Carefully review your resume before you go into the interview.

✳ Dress appropriately – the way people dress at the organization.

✳ Know what points you want to make.

✳ Be prepared to ask insightful questions.

✳ Sell your skills, interests, energy, and achievements.

✳ Relate your career goals, skills, and achievements to the organization.

✳ Listen carefully to questions and respond only to what is asked. Do not give canned speeches.

✳ Know your field's salary range and minimum you will accept.

✳ Answer the real question – Why should they hire you?

✳ Make a list of ten questions that you do not want to have to answer. Then make sure you can answer the questions with care and skill. Ex. *"Why is this 'F' on your transcript?"*

✳ Personalize the interview as much as possible. Say the interviewer's name.

✳ Be enthusiastic.

✳ Build rapport on a neutral subject, e.g., weather.

✳ Avoid discussions of race, religion, and politics.

✳ Display loyalty. Never bad mouth former employers and colleagues.

✳ Refrain from discussing any offers you have had.

✳ Treat all people courteously. Receptionists, administrative assistants, and/or secretaries can eliminate you.

✳ Maintain eye contact.

✳ Bring a minimum of materials. The more you carry into an interview the more you will have to juggle, especially when shaking hands. Do not carry a brief case.

✳ Give a firm handshake. Make sure to offer hand. Do not crunch the other's knuckles.

✳ Send a short thank you note right after the interview. Add something that will enhance your image (e.g., one of your strong points that did not come out during the interview. Express your desire to work for the organization.

The Do Not's

✳ Do not arrive late. Arrive early to verify right address and proper floor and to preclude arriving breathless and disorganized. However, do not go into the actual office/business until about five minutes before the interview. Stop and call if you think you are going to be late.

✳ Do not be dishonest.

✳ Do not accept something to eat or drink, unless it is a lunch interview. If it is a lunch interview order simple foods.

✳ Do not drink any alcoholic beverages (e.g., lunch interview). Even if your prospective employer has a drink, pass anyway. You do not have to create the impression that you never drink. Just say *"Not right now, thank you."*

✳ Do not smoke. One study asked executives, *"If you had to choose between two job candidates, each equally qualified to do the job, but one a smoker and one not, which would you choose?"* These executives chose the nonsmoker by a ratio of fifteen to one.

✳ Do not bring someone with you to the interview – distracts receptionist and could distract you, especially if the interview runs long.

✳ Do not correct the interviewer if he/she mispronounces a word. Avoid using the word for the rest of the interview.

✳ Do not read materials on the interviewer's desk.

✳ Do not ask what the organization does.

✳ Do not bring and read notes.

✳ Do not take notes.

✳ Do not look at your watch (do not wear a watch then you will not be tempted).

✳ Do not get lost in your own thoughts.

✳ Do not give long meandering responses.

✳ Do not answer a question not asked.

✳ Do not monopolize the conversation or take control of the interview.

✳ Do not interrupt.

✳ Do not be a "yes" person. If the interviewer disagrees with a comment you made, tactfully stand your ground providing that you firmly believe you are right.

✳ Do not pretend to know things you do not. There are always questions that you will not know the answer to. This is expected. If you do not know the answer, say so.

✳ Do not lose your temper – some interviews are stress interviews designed to see how you perform under pressure.

✳ Do not forget you interviewer's name. Say the name of the interviewer as you shake his/her hand to help you remember his/her name.

✳ Do not focus on your need for the job.

✳ Do not indicate you have all the organization's answers.

✳ Do not give away trade secrets.

✳ Do not just sit and wait for the interviewer to ask questions.

✳ Do not linger after the interview.

TYPES OF INTERVIEWS

✳ The Screening Interview
  ▪ The first interview with an organization is often a screening interview. This may take place at a career fair or at the organization by a member of the Personnel Department.
  ▪ Structure of the screening interview
    • Building rapport – includes introductions, discussion on neutral topics
    • Answering questions about your qualifications
    • Gaining information about the organization – first the interviewer offers information, and then the applicant has the opportunity to ask questions
  ▪ Closure

✳ Group Interviews
  ▪ Being interviewed by a group of people can occur at any stage of the interviewing process. They are generally used to (1) save time, (2) see how you perform under pressure, and (3) get multiple perspectives of your fit within the organization.

✳ General Considerations
  ▪ Group interviews often lack continuity because different people in the group may be interested in different qualifications, have different agendas, and have differing interaction styles. In addition, they may ask questions while you are still answering someone else's question.
  ▪ Sometimes, there will be a person who is assigned to be an antagonist in the group. Do not lose your temper – it may just be a test to see how you react.
  ▪ Make eye contact with all the interviewers.

AFTER THE INTERVIEW

✳ Track your interviews – Include the name of the interviewer and information regarding the interview – use the "Interview Form" in this book.
✳ Review the interview and evaluate your performance during the interview.
✳ Send a follow-up note/letter within 24 hours after the interview.
  ▪ Thank the interviewer for the meeting.
  ▪ Repeat the job requirements and how your background is an ideal match. Stress accomplishments.
  ▪ Address any concerns that may have arisen. Or, if you forgot to mention one of your key qualifications, then mention it in the thank-you letter.
  ▪ Indicate that you will follow-up with a phone call to see if and when the interviewer wishes to see you again.
✳ If it appears references will be checked, call your references and prepare them for calls from the employer.
✳ Always buy time when you receive an offer (at least 24 hours after the interview). This will give you an opportunity to reflect on your impressions of your fit with the organization.

INTERVIEW ANSWERING TECHNIQUES

✳ **SAR** – A story/anecdote that is used to illustrate one or more personal assets that are relevant to a prospective employer's needs. An effective SAR has three elements – situation, actions, and results.
  ▪ **Situation** – In answering a question, try to cite a quantifiable measure to indicate the significance.
  ▪ **Actions** – What specific actions did you take? If not obvious, why did you take each action? In most instances, no more than three or four actions should be identified along with the rationale for, and intended result, of each.
  ▪ **Result** – Try to quantify the results (dollars, units, percent increases) and include the time frame.
  ▪ Place emphasis on your skills, not on the name of companies, products, or locations where the SAR occurred.
  ▪ A SAR should be told in less than a minute.
  ▪ Utilize powerful verbs in telling an SAR.
  ▪ When presenting a SAR, remember the idea "*I did it for them, I can do it for you!*"
✳ **Mirror questions –** Mirror an open–ended question back to the interviewer that relates to the question the interviewer asked you. This question should be open ended so that the person will give you information about why he asked the question. This technique is used when it is not known why the question is asked or if the question is so general that perceptions could be misunderstood. This technique answers a question with a question.
  ▪ Interviewer: *Do you like to travel?*
  ▪ Candidate: *What kind of travel does this position require?*
✳ **Iceberg technique** – Refers to not revealing all the feelings (i.e., the mass of the submerged iceberg) associated with an apparent liability. In defending or rationalizing the matter being discussed, too often there are all sorts of things disclosed that only make the situation worse. When dealing with sensitive issues it is better to stay atop the iceberg, well removed from the emotions. The key to making the iceberg technique work is to project positive, non–defensive, seemingly straightforward, and non–evasive answers.
  ▪ Interviewer: *Why did you get fired from your last position?*
  ▪ Candidate: *Because the company was downsizing and the sorry personnel department just looked at seniority instead of who was making the strongest contribution. I did twice as much work as some of those slouchers who got to stay on.*
  ▪ Although you may feel this way, this type of response would be perceived as "sour grapes" and would probably decrease your chances at the position. The following is a more appropriate response.
  ▪ Interviewer: *Why did you get fired from your last position?*
  ▪ Candidate: *Actually the company made a difficult decision to downsize which resulted in my being let go since I had little seniority. I do have a very good recommendation letter from my past supervisor at the company.*

INTRODUCTORY/PERSONAL QUESTIONS

● **Tell me about yourself** or **How would you describe yourself?** – This is the classic opener and gives the interviewer time to size you up–if you let him. Begin with your education and years of general experience.
● **How would your spouse describe you?** – Good things, especially since by now you have discussed your resume with your spouse. Or if you are single, "*The people in my life would tell you…*"

- **What do you think your references will say about you?** – Good things, especially since by now you have discussed your resume with each. Perhaps the person would like to speak personally with your references.
- **What three words describe you the best?** Be prepared for this one. Even if this question is not asked, preparing the answer can help you prioritize the strengths you want the potential employer to associate with you.
- **What motivates you?** – Opportunity, growth, a chance to learn, nice people, fair play, etc.
- **Have you considered continuing your education?** – If you would like to continue your formal education then express this desire. If you are not actually attending or planning to attend formal classes then be ready to explain what sort of outside reading or attendance at professional seminars you undertake in order to keep yourself fresh in your chosen field. Question: "*What kind of education were you wondering about?*" or "*What is the organization's policy regarding continuing education?*"
- **What are your short-, medium-, and long-term goals? Where would you like to be ten years from now?** – Tie your answer to goals that could conceivably be realized in the interviewing organization. Limit your goals to just the short and medium range. Be realistic. A good reply is oriented toward growth in one's job through learning, experience, and accomplishment.
- **How do you spend your free time?** or **What kind of hobbies do you have?** – Be reasonable. This is not the time to mention that you like jumping out of planes, even if it is true. Pick a variety such as computers, sports, and cooking. Avoid dangerous and controversial hobbies.
- **What was the last book you read?** – Make sure you give the impression you read. Pick something that is either related to your field, self-help, or neutral. Be careful because the interviewer may have read the same book.
- **What magazines/newspapers do you read?** – This is a good time to mention a trade journal that would reinforce your interest in the field.
- **Who has influenced you the most in your life?** – Choose a family member, person in the field, or self-help person.

QUESTIONS REGARDING STRENGTHS/ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- **What is your greatest asset? strength?** – Base your answer on what you know to be the interviewer's needs. Go to your list of assets and then tie each of them to an accomplishment. Question: "*What other assets are you looking for in this position?*"
- **What was your greatest success?** – Pick one of your most significant accomplishments tied to their needs.
- **What things do you feel most confident doing?** – Stick to accomplishments and relate to the job requirements.
- **What are your most important accomplishments in your career thus far?** or **What is the most difficult assignment you have completed?** or **What is the most rewarding assignment you have completed?** – Pick the accomplishment(s) or assignment that pertains to the potential job. You know you have their interest if they ask how you did it.
- **Give an example of your creativity.** – Creativity means how you developed an idea, a new product, a new theme, or a new program, and how it improved the operation. Question: "*What kind of creativity is needed in this position?*"
- **Give an example of your innovative abilities, analytical skills, administrative skills, etc.** – Relate the particular skill to the potential position. Question: "*What kinds of innovative abilities, etc. are needed for this position?*"

QUESTIONS REGARDING WEAKNESSES

- **What is your greatest liability? weakness?** – Use a topic that in the past was a weakness, but show how you overcame it, such as organizational skills, impatience, computer skills, delegating authority, time management, etc.
- **What has been your biggest failure?** – Choose something you were later able to correct to show how it became a learning experience.
- **What would you like to improve on?** – Pick something that will not be a deterrent for this position. You can always improve on some skills like communication skills, computer skills, speak a foreign language, etc.
- **What do you not like to do?** – A possible reply: "*I am the kind of person who does whatever is necessary to get the job done. When I do run into something disagreeable, I try to do it first and get it behind me. I have no particular dislikes.*"

QUESTIONS REGARDING PAST EMPLOYMENT

- **What is your opinion of the last organization you worked for?** – Stay neutral or positive, no negatives. Try to focus on situations in which you learned and/or contributed something.
- **Have you changed jobs frequently? Are you a job hopper?** or **What were your reasons for leaving each former job?** – Work out in advance a good rationale for your moves. Do not be defensive. Be positive about discussing former companies. Talk about better opportunities, more responsibilities, and more money.
- **Have you ever been fired?** – This can be checked, so do not lie. If yes, have a good explanation worked out. Discuss differences in personalities, styles, objectives, etc. Refrain from bad–mouthing past employers.
- **How did your boss, coworkers and subordinates get along with you?** – This is a leadership and team player question. Have some examples of both. Know what it takes to be a quality leader. In preparation, think of the best people you have worked for and list their attributes in leadership. One important key to being a great manager/supervisor is to be able to delegate duties while maintaining control.
- **Describe the last disagreement you had with your supervisor?** – A person would probably not want to say "*I never disagreed with my past supervisor.*" Might be interpreted as no back–bone. Probably should discuss how you and a previous supervisor had differed on a topic and were able to reach a good compromise that benefited the company.
- **Have you helped you company reduce costs?** or **What suggestions have you offered past employers that were actually adopted?** – Link your accomplishments to the present position.
- **What were the most important problems you encountered in your past/present job?** – Prepare ahead of time. Rehearse solutions to typical job problems – irate clients/customers, personality conflicts with supervisors/colleagues, crashing computer systems. Question: "*What problems might I encounter in this position?*"
- **What was the toughest part of your last position?** – Do not repeat the word 'tough'. "*In the past…and I overcame it.*" A good reply as a supervisor or manager is, "*To surround myself with people who are better than I am in their individual specialties.*" Question: "*What particular challenges might I encounter in this position?*"
- **Did you have any frustrations in your past job?** – Catch 22 question. Do not repeat the word frustrations. Frustrations are a normal part on any job. Relate some of the bottlenecks you experienced, but more importantly, indicate what you did to overcome them.
- **What kind of day-to-day schedule did you have in your last/present job?** – Stress action, performance, and results rather than administrative work. Question: "*What kind of day-to-day schedule might I expect with this position?*"
- **How did you feel about the progress you made in your last/present position?** – Prepare ahead of time.
- **Does you present company know you are planning to make a change?** – Be careful. Your answer could come back to haunt you. "*I have grown just about as far as I can and see no further opportunities. At the appropriate time I expect to let my company know and, of course, when I am ready to move, I will do everything to make the transition as smooth as possible.*"
- **How many days were you out sick last year?** – If you have been out a lot, this could be damaging, unless you can impress upon the person that it was a one-time illness.
- **What did you like best about your last/present job?** – Identify activities that are related to the position in which you are currently interviewing.
- **Could you have done more in your last/present job?** – A possible reply might be *"One of the reasons that I am currently looking for another position is because I am ready to accept more responsibility"*
- **Why did you take the jobs that you did? Why did you leave?** – You might respond with *"I took the positions because I liked the reputation of the organizations and felt each position would enhance my professional development. I left because I had an opportunity to (increase responsibility, finish my education, etc.)"*

QUESTIONS REGARDING SUPERVISORY SKILLS

- **How many people have you hired?** – If you have hired a number of people, pick one or two who have done well thanks to your help. This question naturally relates to your ability to evaluate people. Question: "*What involvement would I have with hiring?*"
- **How many people have your fired?** – Watch out, this is another loaded question. "*Letting people go is partly the company's responsibility as well as the individual's. Something did not work and it is good to analyze why. I did have to let people go in my last job. It made me realize how important it is to make the right selections the first time around.*"

- **Are you a leader?** or **How do you motivate people?**– Give examples of how you followed leaders and how you successfully led other people. To be a good leader, you first must be a good follower. Question: "*Tell me about the type of leadership you are seeking?*"
- **How many people did you supervise in your last position?** – Do not exaggerate as this can be verified. Avoid specific numbers. Question: "*How many people would I be supervising in this position.*"
- **What kind of manager/supervisor are you?** or **How do you interact with subordinates?** – Have a few examples of accomplishments that show your management capabilities.
- **What direct supervisory experience have you had?** or **Give an example of some of your leadership skills.** – Refer to the above question.
- **What are your thoughts on promoting subordinates?** – Find out the organization's procedure for promotion. Question: "*I am happy to promote subordinates who are ready to accept additional responsibilities providing that they meet the company's policy on promotion. What is the company's policy on promotion?*"

QUESTIONS REGARDING AVAILABLE POSITION

- **Do you mind travel?** or **Are you willing to relocate?** – Tell them the truth so as to avoid problems later. Question: "*What did you have in mind?*" Once it is explained: "*I am sure we can work something out.*"
- **How much do you know about our organization?** – You better have done your homework. Ask an open-ended question back to gain more information about the interviewer's views of the company. Question: "*What do you think I need to know about your company?*"
- **How long would you stay with us?** – Prepare an answer ahead of time. Know whether the position is long–term.
- **Why do you want to work for our company?** – Base your answer on what you know to be the interviewer's needs. Describe some contribution or project that you think you can help with. Go to your list of assets and then tie each of them to an accomplishment. Your reply could be based on their reputation. Know their potential for you. Question: "*What other assets are you seeking for this position?*"
- **What do you look for in a new job?** – Be careful. Better know a little about the company and the job you are after. If not, push in the direction of excellence based on former accomplishments.
- **Do you prefer working in small, medium, or large companies?** – Remember where you are when you answer!
- **Why should we hire you?** or **What can you do for us?** or **What can you do for our organization that someone else cannot?** – Base your answer on what you know to be the interviewer's needs. Go to your list of assets and then tie each of them to an accomplishment. As for the other candidates, you really cannot answer, nor would you want to. Answer from what you feel you can do.
- **What do you like best and least about the position we are trying to fill?** – You may choose the best. As for the least: "*At this point I see no important negatives, that is why I am so interested.*" Question: "*What do you consider the pro's and con's of this position?*"
- **How long do you think it would be before you could make a contribution to our company?** or **In what way do you think you could make the biggest contribution to our firm?** – Do not be in a hurry because there is normally a period of transition to learn the ropes. "*If the transition goes as planned, I would guess relatively soon. What would you expect?*"
- **How high do you aspire to rise in our company?** – Show interest in advancement, but be cautious. "*One step at a time. Let me do a good job where I am, then if I move up the ladder – excellent!*" or "*I am seeking a challenging opportunity to grow with a company.*"
- **Would you compete against me for my job?** – Make it a neutral position. "*It is not my intent to challenge you for your position. If you were promoted and if I were qualified, of course, I would like to be considered for a higher position.*"
- **Describe your ideal job**. – Integrate the requirements of the job at hand. Do not be unrealistic.
- **Do you feel that you are over qualified for the position?** – You must find out why they feel you are overqualified. Then base your answer on the underlying reason. Question: "*Do you believe there are areas in which I am overqualified?*"
- **How do you feel about overtime** – Ask "*Is overtime a part of the current position?*"
- **You have never done this type of job before. How do you expect to succeed?** – Bring up some accomplishments that show how you tackled new things and did well. Redirect to your transferable skills.

- **What are the most important factors in (whatever job).** – If you do not have a job description, you should ask for one so that you can reply by item.
- **What things would you like to avoid in your next job?** – Be careful on this answer. Do not be negative about past positions.
- **How do you think you would fit in with our organization?** – Discuss how you feel that you fit in. Link your experience and assets to the organization's needs. Discuss how you feel that your personality seems to mesh well with, and/or compliment, those you have met.
- **You may be over–qualified or too experienced for the position we have to offer.** – "*Experienced individuals are at a premium today and a strong organization needs a strong person.*" Emphasize your interest in a long–term association with the organization and a potentially greater return for the company due to your experience.

QUESTIONS REGARDING THE JOB SEARCH
- **Are you considering any other jobs at this time?** – "*I am actively pursuing my job search.*" If you are, say so– but without detail. If not, "*I have some irons in the fire*" is enough.
- **How long have you been looking for a job?** – Do not mention an exact time period. If it has been a long time, you might mention if you have been doing any consulting, or other part–time work. "*I have just begun an active job campaign.*"
- **Why have you decided to change careers?** – Your answer could be based on growth, interest, opportunity, increased responsibilities, or greater knowledge. Relate this to the job.

QUESTIONS REGARDING YOUR EDUCATION
- **What was your grade point average?** – If you do not have a high GPA, you may want to point out that your major GPA was substantially higher, the last two years of college was substantially higher, and/or that you focused your attention on classes that peaked your interest as well as activities designed to broaden your professional experience such as editor of the campus newspaper.
- **Why did you choose to go to that college/university?** – Might discuss the quality of the institute, department, or major; incentives that you received to attend (e.g., scholarships, athletics, etc.); good student/teacher ratio; etc. Avoid rationale such as Playboy ranked it as a top ten party school, my best friends all went there, etc.
- **Did you transfer from one school to another? If so, why?** – State positive reasons for transferring. Do not say bad things about a previous academic institute.
- **What were your favorite/best courses?** – Discuss the courses that relate to the current position or to skills that could be transferred to the current position (e.g., interpersonal communication, ethics, male/female relations, etc.)
- **What were your least favorite courses? And why?** – Identify courses that do not relate to the position. Might discuss the large number of students in the course. "*Probably my least favorite courses were the general education courses that had 100 to 200 students which limited class-discussions and group work. However, I still made good grades in those courses.*" Do not cite bad teaching, unfair grading, or any other "sour grapes" reason.
- **What was the best thing about college?** – Discuss courses that were especially meaningful, leadership activities, group activities, etc. Avoid mentioning activities that are not demonstrations of your professional demeanor (e.g., partying, playing jokes, etc.)

QUESTIONS REGARDING SALARY
Do not list the salary you expect or previous salaries on your resume, cover letter, job application, etc. If possible, do not state a salary expectation during the interview. If you state a salary that is higher than the organization is willing to pay, then you may price yourself out of the position. If you state a salary position that is lower than the range then you may (1) give the employer the impression that you are not informed about the industry and your position, (2) get offered a salary lower than what they were willing to pay, and/or (3) look like you are desperate.
- **What were you making in your last job?** – "*I was well compensated in my previous company but that was a very different position than this one. What is your range for this job?*"
- **How much money do you expect from this position?** – "*I would like to make as much as I can as a measure of my contribution. What is the range for this job?*"
- **What salary are you looking for?** or **What salary are you worth?** – Do not mention a dollar figure pertaining to salary. Try to get the company to commit to a salary before you do. If possible, put off discussing salary until the

organization has decided you are the person they want. Do not ask for a salary that is not in line with what others are making in similar positions, considering your background and experience. Remember that a win–win situation for both sides is the ideal end result. Do not be pressured into accepting position at lower pay or responsibility than that which you seek.

Possible responses

- *What is your salary range?*
- *I do not think that I know enough about the position to determine what is an appropriate salary. Tell me more about what you need?*
- *I really would prefer to make that determination after I have had a chance to explore the potentials of working here and the opportunity for advancement.*
- *The starting salary is not the most important consideration. If you do not mind, let us postpone this discussion until you have a better idea of what I can do for you, and I have a chance to know a little more about the job and the organization.*

Possible salary script

Interviewer: *What kind of salary are you looking for?*
Applicant: *It is negotiable.*
Interviewer: *Well then let us negotiate.*
Applicant: *What is your salary range?*
Interviewer: *We do not have a salary range. What is your requirement?*
Applicant: *Why don't we discuss this after an offer?*

MISCELLANEOUS QUESTIONS

- **How do you work under pressure? –** Indicate that you can, then counter: "*How much pressure is involved in this position?*" Learn what is meant by pressure. If you are a pro at pressure jobs, give a few accomplishments.
- **Are you a competitive person? –** Competition is great as long as it does not sacrifice the rest of the team. It is better to indicate that you are team player. If you are competitive, relate it to the total company effort and not your personal ambitions. You can indicate that you compete against your expectations for yourself.
- **Do you mind working for someone of the opposite sex or someone younger than you? –** It is the job that counts. Stick to the job specifications and do not get sidetracked on implications. If you have worked in this situation before, tell the SAR. If not, express your lack of concern on the topic. Question: "*What kind of supervisor/manager would I be working for?*"
- **How many hours should a person devote to his job? –** Be cautious on this question. If you answer "*As many hours as necessary*" you may be asked to put in fifty or sixty "necessary" hours per week. It is probably better to answer "*between forty and fifty hours per week.*"
- **You have not been in this part of the country very long, do you think that would make a difference? –** If you adapt quickly, this is the time to say it, and given an example. Flexibility is usually valued highly by employers.
- **How do you take criticism and how do you criticize others? –** Most people have problems taking criticism, hence this question could be an attempt to discover your weakness. Emphasize positive constructive criticism. "*I would welcome the opportunity to learn how to do my job better.*" Question: "*Tell me about your employee evaluation program?*"
- **Do you mind taking some psychological tests? –** "*No. What did you have in mind?*" If this is company policy, you have no choice. Try, though, to arrange beforehand to see and review the results. This way you will learn something about yourself.
- **Are you aggressive? –** "*I feel the word assertive is a better descriptor. I want to be as assertive as needed in each situation.*" "*If you mean am I a go-getter, yes, I am. If there is an opportunity, I like going after it.*" Defuse the "tough" implications. Question: "*How do you feel about aggressiveness?*"
- **Why were you not successful in your own business? –** If you were in a business that had to be closed or sold, your answer could be "*I wanted to try my own company and discovered that I was happier in a larger organization. I was able to (sell or close) so that everyone was satisfied. I know what it takes to succeed. Will entrepreneurial skills help in this job?*"

- **Why did you get divorced?** – This is an illegal question. However, a mature answer could be, "*People grow and change. Unfortunately, our changes were in different directions.*"
- **Do you prefer working with others or independently?** – It is generally better to pick the middle-of-the-road position unless the job objectives are clearly one or the other.
- **Why are you changing fields?** – Make sure your answer is positive. Many job searchers focus on the negatives in their previous field (e.g., "*I was tired of working on computers all day.*"). Focus on benefits of the new field.
- **What important trends to you see in our industry?** – Do not try to fake it if you do not know. Of course, it is best to be prepared for this question.
- **What counseling/teaching philosophy do you prescribe to?** – Prepare an answer ahead of time. Do not answer "eclectic" because it is a meaningless term.
- **Do you have any questions?** – Do not ask "what is in it for me" questions. Stick to the following four areas.
  - ∗ Questions about the organization
  - ∗ Questions about the position
  - ∗ Eliminate concerns pertaining to your liabilities
  - ∗ Closing questions

ILLEGAL QUESTIONS

If you are asked questions on the application or during the interview that are wrong or illegal do not answer "*It is illegal to ask that question.*" You may feel good for saying this but your job opportunity is probably over. If you are upset about this then report the company to the US labor department anonymously. Leaving it blank will tell the potential employer you have something to hide or you are a nonconformist, bad with details.

- **How old are you?** – Humor can sometimes be helpful with this question. Question: *"What age person are you looking for?"*
- **Do you have a drinking problem?** – If the person presses you or appears distraught about this topic, an appropriate answer might be: "*No, is that a problem your company has encountered previously?*"

INTERVIEW COMMENTS NOT TO MAKE

- *They really did not care about their employees.*
- *The politics were terrible there.*
- *The morale was very low.*
- *I was caught in the middle of a power struggle.*
- *My supervisor was a terrible manager.*
- *There were personality conflicts.*
- *The supervisors in my last job suffered from indecisiveness.*
- *The marketing plan was not very well thought out.*
- *There was no overall vision.*
- *The last place I was at was racist/sexist/discriminatory.*
- *The pay and benefits were terrible.*
- *It was a no-growth situation.*
- *The classes were too large (too small).*
- *The program stinks and needs a major overhaul.*
- *I hated that class or program.*
- *The requirements were too tough/too weak.*