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# CAREER SERVICES GUIDE:

## EXPLORE YOUR FUTURE TODAY

**NORTHERN ILLINOIS  
UNIVERSITY**

**CAREER SERVICES**

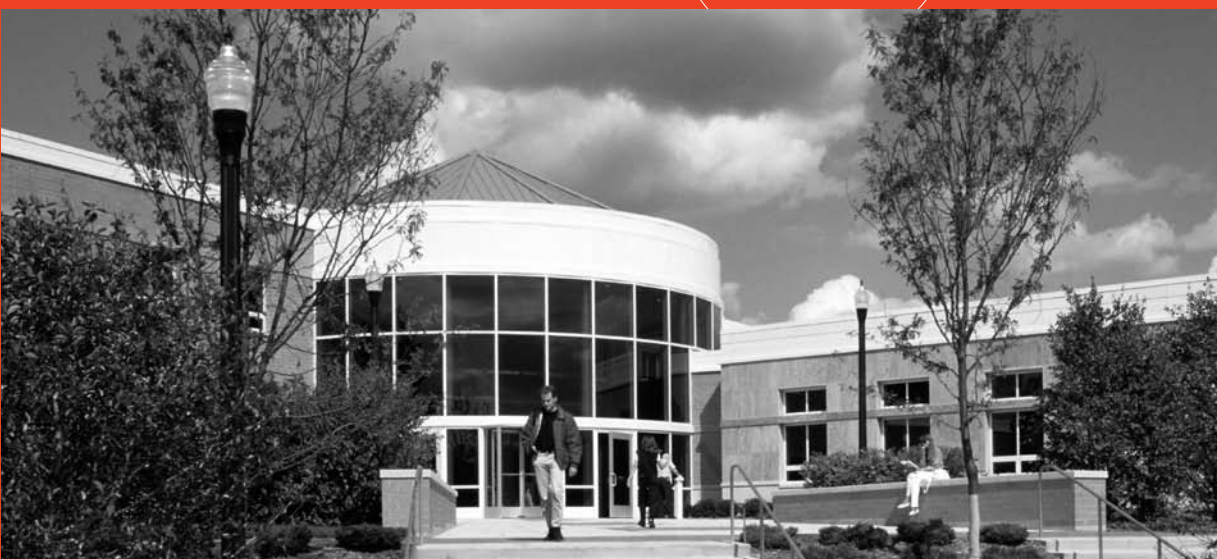
**DIVISION OF  
STUDENT AFFAIRS**

**CAMPUS LIFE BUILDING  
ROOM 220**

**(815) 753-1641**

**CAREERSERVICES  
@NIU.EDU**

**WWW.NIU.EDU/  
CAREERSERVICES**



# CAREER SERVICES

## **CAREER SERVICES AT A GLANCE...**

Services for Students and Alumni

- Individual career planning and counseling
- Internship and job search assistance
- Victor eRecruiting job search program
- On-campus interviews with over 150 employers
- Career, internship, and educators' fairs
- Résumé and cover letter consultation
- Practice interviews
- Credential services for education students and alumni
- Graduate and professional school application assistance

## **CAREER COUNSELING**

- Address plans for career success
- Identify career interests and clarify goals
- Overcome obstacles to career development
- Take career tests to assist with academic decision making

## **SPECIALIZED CAREER WORKSHOPS**

- Résumé Writing
- Interviewing
- Networking
- Job Searching
- Business Dining Etiquette
- Career Decision Making
- Careers for Specific Majors

## **CAREER RESOURCE CENTER**

- Career literature, NIU Major WebLinks, SIGI<sup>3</sup>, WinWay computerized job interview program
- Major/degree-specific career guides, employer information, salary statistics
- Résumé walk-in hours, 8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.
- Computer lab for internship/job search and résumé/cover letter preparation

# CAREER DECISION-MAKING

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Thanks to Caterpillar for  
sponsoring the printing of  
this guide.

At Career Services, we believe that choosing a career path can be summarized by the following equation:

$$\text{Self Exploration} + \text{Career Exploration} - \text{Career Obstacles} = \text{Career Choice}$$

In other words, you will be able to choose your career if you know your interests, abilities, values, as well as the job duties and required skills, and are able to

overcome obstacles you might encounter. Use this guide to start the process. If you need additional assistance, schedule with a career counselor.

## SELF EXPLORATION

When was the last time that you pondered the question, "Who am I?" For the purposes of career decision-making, the answer goes well beyond your name, year in school, and even your major. Too few people take the time to identify their **interests, values, skills and personality traits**. We have provided a list of questions to consider that will help you get started with self exploration.

- What activities do I enjoy?
- What am I passionate about?
- What have I liked or disliked about past jobs?
- What are my strengths and weaknesses?
- How will I balance my career with my family and personal life?
- How is my personality relevant to my future career?
- Where will I live after college?
- Am I willing to go to graduate school?
- What qualities do I look for or want to avoid in my future career?
- How much money do I want to make?
- How will my career choices fit with my family's vision of my future?
- How important is job security?
- How can I best achieve my career plans?
- What information do I need to choose a career?
- What do I really know about careers I am considering right now?
- What career skills do I need to acquire?
- Is career choice the only area where I have difficulty making decisions?
- How much do the opinions of others matter in my career choice?
- What kind of work environment do I want? (corporate, outdoors, retail, classroom, hospital)

**You do not need to know the answers to these questions right now.**

But it is important to be actively addressing these questions while you attend NIU.

### Activities to help you answer these important questions

- Interview someone with a job that I might enjoy
- Shadow that person on the job
- Explore books, videos, or other materials related to my career interests
- Read want ads in a newspaper or on-line
- Get involved in one or more student organizations
- Create a Career Dream File with magazine articles, photographs, and journal entries
- Talk with important people in my life about their ideas for my career options
- Visit professional organizations' websites
- Write a journal entry about one of the questions on my mind right now
- Talk with friends about their career questions
- Visit a library or bookstore; write down the name of sections that spark my interest
- Randomly select a job title from the Occupational Outlook Handbook or the Dictionary of Occupational Titles; read what it has to say
- Read course descriptions related to attractive majors
- Take an interesting class that is not required for graduation
- Visit a job fair and talk with employers
- Live on a residence hall academic interest floor

For additional ideas and for help answering all your career questions, call **815-753-1641** to schedule an appointment with a career counselor.

## CAREER EXPLORATION

An understanding of the world of work is a vital component to career decision-making. Think of this phase of career decision-making as similar to buying a car. The first step in buying a car is to gather basic information about the cars that fit your needs. After narrowing the decision to a few possibilities, you then visit a dealership to see the cars and take one or more for a test drive.

To make a career decision, you will want to follow a similar process. First, you will want to get basic information about the careers you are considering. NIU provides three extremely valuable resources for you: **The Career Resource Center**, **NIU Major WebLinks**, and **SIGI 3**

*For information, turn to the back inside cover of this Guide*

After gathering the basic information, experience your career choices by taking them for a "test drive." Two ways to "test drive" a career are **Job Shadowing** and **Information Interviewing**.

### Job Shadowing

Job shadowing occurs when someone in an interesting career allows you to watch on-the-job activities. During that time, you should ask questions, take notes, and be as unobtrusive as possible. Your job shadowing may last one day, one week, or longer. Some jobs do not allow for shadowing experiences, and not everyone will be willing for you to shadow them. However, it never hurts to ask!

### Information Interviewing

Information interviewing involves contacting people who hold interesting jobs and asking them questions about what they do. Once you schedule an interview, prepare questions in advance and be prepared to take notes. After the interview, follow up with a thank you note.

Preparation is the key to conducting a successful information interview. The steps listed below will help you plan an effective interview.

- Identify and contact an appropriate organization and contact person
- Prepare a list of relevant questions to use at the interview
- Wear appropriate business attire

There are many ways to locate employers to interview and job shadow. Consider these contacts as you prepare to conduct information interviews:

- NIU alumni
- Classroom guest speakers
- People identified through company literature, annual reports, brochures, and websites
- Faculty contacts
- Family friends and neighbors working for a company that interests you
- People featured in newspaper, trade journal, or magazine articles
- NIU Career Services references

## CAREER OBSTACLES

Below is a list of obstacles that students often encounter during the career decision-making process. Do any of these obstacles apply to you? You may wish to talk with a career counselor to discuss ways to overcome them.

### ***Lack of Self-Awareness***

- “Who am I?”
- “What am I good at and what is important to me?”

### ***Personal Concerns***

- Low self-esteem, self-doubt, lack of motivation

### ***Misinformation and Lack of Information about the World of Work***

- “What does an actuary do?”
- “What can I do with a Philosophy degree?”
- “What’s an OMIS degree?”

### ***Career and Academic Myths***

- “Only business majors gets jobs in the business world”
- “Your major dictates what you’ll do for the rest of your life”

### ***Decision Making Difficulties***

- Procrastination
- Relying solely on others’ opinions and advice

### ***Inaccurate or Irrational Beliefs***

- “I must graduate in four years”
- “My first job has to be high paying and prestigious”

### ***Practical and Tangible Obstacles***

- Financial pressures or family problems



[www.niu.edu/CareerServices](http://www.niu.edu/CareerServices)

## CAREER COUNSELING AND TESTING FOR DECISION-MAKING

You can meet one-on-one with a career counselor to discuss your academic and career options and explore your career-related values, interests, and abilities. Career Services’ counselors are professionally trained and are aware of the concerns that you face in exploring your future. **During career counseling, you will:**

- Identify your interests, work values, academic strengths and weaknesses, work-related skills, and personal goals
- Determine the best course of action to help you achieve your goals
- Discuss what you can do to resolve your concerns
- Become familiar with useful resources
- Complete career-related exercises and assignments
- Take interest and/or personality tests
- Arrange appointments to speak with people knowledgeable about majors or careers

### **Help Yourself During the Career Counseling Process**

Career counseling will only be successful if you:

- Attend all appointments that you and your counselor decide are necessary
- Be open about issues that are relevant to your career concerns
- Conduct career research and complete other tasks between appointments
- Provide feedback about what is and isn’t helpful

### **A Note about Career Testing**

Many students approach Career Services in order to “take that test that will tell me what career to choose.” While career tests may be helpful in the decision-making process, **no single test will tell you what career to choose.** The primary goal of testing is to develop a deeper understanding of your interests, values, and personality traits and how they relate to the world of work. **Not all students who seek career counseling will need testing.** We require you to discuss your concerns with a career counselor prior to taking career tests. Please note that **testing may require a modest fee.** Talk with your career counselor for more information.

# INTERNSHIPS & CO-OPS: BASIC TERMS AND POLICIES

*Search and apply  
for hundreds  
of internships on  
Victor eRecruiting.*

*Instructions  
pp. 27-28*

**Career-Related Work experience** is a gateway to the job market. Employers actively seek candidates who have relevant work experience prior to graduation. You can obtain career-related experience by participating in an internship or co-op while enrolled in NIU. As a result, you will gain real world experience, meet and network with professionals in your field, demonstrate initiative to employers, build your resume, and get a running start on your career. Many opportunities are available for all majors and you can start as early as *freshman* summer.

Career Services offers part-time (fewer than 30 hours per week) and full-time (30 or more hours per week) co-op and internship experiences. If you accept an approved full-time internship or co-op during the *fall or spring semester*, there are several things you will need to do to maintain your full-time student status during your work assignment. Career Services can assist you in making a smooth transition from school to work and back to school, and answer questions about financial aid, health insurance, housing contracts, and maintaining full-time status for your next school term.

## **Internship**

A one semester or summer work placement, paid or unpaid, full-time or part-time.

## **Co-op**

A paid work placement of at least two semesters or summers.

- *Parallel:* Combines a part-time work assignment (15-20 hours per week) with a full-time semester of coursework.
- *Alternating:* A full-time semester of work alternating with a full-time semester of coursework.

## **Transcript Notation**

You may receive university recognition, with a special notation on your official NIU transcript, stating you have successfully completed a career-related work experience .

## **Academic Credit**

Career Services does not provide academic credit for internships and co-ops. See your academic advisor to inquire about opportunities for credit.

## RESPONSIBILITIES & EXPECTATIONS

Each co-op/internship experience is unique, and requirements and expectations vary by employer.

## **Career Services Expectations**

Career Services expects professional behavior from students and employers. As professionals, students must treat their employers and co-workers respectfully and give appropriate notification of absences or termination. In return, employers are expected to provide a valuable learning environment and treat students in a professional manner.

## **Employer Expectations**

*Grade Point Average:* Some employers require a higher GPA than the 2.0 required by Career Services.

*Company Policies:* Students must conform to policies, procedures, and safety rules, and must work scheduled times.

*Supervision:* Students will be supervised at the work site and be responsible for performance and punctuality. Students who do not perform to the satisfaction of an employer may be dismissed and denied access to future internship participation with Career Services.

**Student Expectations***Documentation of Summer, Fall and Spring Placements:*

You, not the employer, must notify Career Services upon acceptance of an internship or co-op position. A Training Agreement and Evaluation signed by the employer will officially verify the position, and NIU's Registration and Records office will place a notation on the transcript.

*Credit:* Students seeking academic credit for their internship or co-op position should contact their academic advisor for specific requirements.

*Scheduling:* Students should meet with their academic advisor to design a degree plan, allowing for rotation of class scheduling to meet graduation timelines.

*Work Site Concerns/Changes:* Students should immediately contact Career Services with job description changes or unresolved work site issues.

*Maintain Full-time Student Status During Fall or Spring Semesters:* Students are required to report full-time co-op or internship placements (30 or more hours per week) to a Career Services counselor for enrollment in INTN 001. This is a non-credit enrollment designed to allow students to maintain full-time student status at no charge.

**Benefits of enrollment in INTN 001 to maintain full-time status:**

*Health Insurance Coverage:* Students are eligible to continue insurance benefits while working in a full-time Fall or Spring co-op/internship.

*Financial Aid:* Students may be able to defer repayment of financial aid obligations while working in a full-time Fall or Spring co-op/internship. Paid positions may affect financial aid eligibility.

*Course Registration:* There will be no disruption of regular course registration procedures or NIU e-mail access while working in a full-time Fall or Spring co-op/internship.

*Housing:* Career Services may assist with termination of NIU Residence Hall contracts while working in a full-time Fall or Spring co-op/internship.

*Sample Resumes  
pp. 10-12*

*Find many more  
sample resumes  
and cover letters at:*

[www.niu.edu/CareerServices/  
sample\\_resumes.html/](http://www.niu.edu/CareerServices/sample_resumes.html/)

# RESUMES, COVER LETTERS & JOB SEARCH CORRESPONDENCE

## RESUMES

A resume is a written summary of your personal history and qualifications for a particular job or type of employment. The purpose of a resume is to make the employer interested enough to want to learn more about you.

TWO BASIC RESUME FORMATS:  
CHRONOLOGICAL & FUNCTIONAL

### CHRONOLOGICAL

A chronological resume is the most common format. Sections on Education, Work Experience, and Activities are generally arranged in reverse chronological order. Most recruiters of new college graduates prefer this format because it presents an easy-to-read synopsis of a candidate's experiences, skills, and accomplishments.

### FUNCTIONAL

The functional resume de-emphasizes dates and places of employment while emphasizing qualifications, skills, and accomplishments. It typically contains functional categories such as "Leadership," "Technical Skills," and "Communication Skills." A job seeker who has held several relatively short-term jobs or who has a wide range of skills may prefer this format.

## RESUME SECTIONS

The first four resume sections listed below are essential.

### Identification

Provide your name and both your temporary and permanent addresses and phone numbers. If you have a temporary address, note the last date you expect to be there. Include your e-mail address and website.

### Career Objective

This is a brief statement of the kind of employment you are seeking. Be specific enough that prospective employers can see that your career goals are consistent with their employment needs.

If you are applying for a known position, consider using the job title of that position as part of your career objective – this sends a strong message about your interest in that particular job.

### Education

Include degree(s) received, names of schools (including city and state), graduation dates and major and minor.

Include community college but not high school experience. List the most recently attended institution first. If you include a cumulative or major GPA, use a format such as 3.2/4.0 to indicate that grading was on a 4.0 scale.

You may want to include **Relevant Coursework** by name, not number, if the courses are particularly applicable to the position for which you are applying.

### Experience

List job title, company name, city, and state of employer or organization, and dates of employment (use months and years). Describe your responsibilities; bullet points are usually best – they highlight the specific skills you learned or used on the job.

Emphasize activities or accomplishments that relate to the position for which you are applying. Depending on the position, those may include supervision, public contact, materials preparation, budget planning, sales, counseling or tutoring, and computer applications.

Use the "Resume Action Words" on page 9 to help you identify skills that employers are seeking. Avoid starting each phrase with the same verb.

If possible, include quantitative evidence of your success. For example:

*"Exceeded quota by an average of 35% for five consecutive quarters"*

*"Designed Excel and Word templates which resulted in a 40% decrease in printing costs"*

*"Selected as Top Salesperson in 2005 among a sales staff of 18"*

*"Supervised the work of six sales associates per shift."*

*"Conducted an average of 145 cold calls daily."*

## OPTIONAL SECTIONS

Optional sections may be added to support your unique situation. For example, if you are applying for a Customer Service job and you have held several positions in this field, you can include a section called "Customer Service Experience." In this section you can combine paid positions, and community organizational activities.

### Special Skills/Accomplishments:

This section may be included if you wish to highlight computer skills, foreign language competencies, certificates or licenses held, or publications.

**Honors and Awards:** Include as a separate section if you feel this information is pertinent and highlights your accomplishments, or combine with other sections.

**Professional Memberships, Affiliations, and Clubs:** Include if applicable. Recruiters are more interested in learning about your organizational activities than merely reading a list of memberships. If you aren't able to talk about your involvement in an organization, leave it off.

**Activities:** Emphasize activities that describe situations in which you developed leadership, teamwork, time-management, and organizational skills. This section typically includes student organizations and community service or volunteer activities.

### Credentials or References:

References should not be listed on the resume. Prepare a list on a separate sheet of paper and have it available at an interview. (A sample is shown on page 13.) A statement such as "References available upon request" is unnecessary.

## RESUME PREPARATION

- Try to confine your resume to one page. A second page is recommended only if you have extensive work experience. If included, place your name, e-mail address, and "Page 2" on the top of the second page.
- Prepare and save your resume in MS Word, the industry standard for documents.
- Avoid resume templates available on Word, the Internet, or from resume writing software.
- Ensure margins are at least 0.8".
- Use a common, easy to read font; 11 or 12 point Times New Roman or Arial are good choices.
- Print with black ink on white or off-white 24 pound resume paper. Every version should look as good as the original.
- Avoid italics, underlining, graphics, colors, and shading; they may confuse a scanner. If using bullets, use the simple black dots found in Word's "Bullets and Numbering" option.
- Proofread! Do not rely exclusively on a spellchecker. Have an acquaintance and a Career Services career counselor review your resume for typos and spelling errors.
- Never fold your resume or other application correspondence. Send correspondence in a document envelope with a typed return and mailing address.
- Because many employers scan resumes to search for job skills, include key words associated with your field.
- Avoid the use of the first person "I" or "My."
- Avoid abbreviations unless you are certain they will be understood.
- Do not include personal data (marital status, height, weight, gender, health status).

## REFERENCES

Most employers will not request a list of references until you have had at least one interview.

When you interview, however, it is a good practice to take with you a list of three to five names, titles, addresses, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses of references who can discuss your strengths and qualifications.

References usually include previous employers and professors; never use family or friends.

Always obtain permission from your references before you provide their names to an employer. Give your references a copy of your resume and tell them about the type of job you are seeking.

## COVER LETTERS

A cover letter must be included with a mailed resume. It relates your accomplishments and abilities to the position for which you are applying. Each letter will provide an opportunity to demonstrate your writing skills in a favorable manner.

Limit the cover letter to one page. Address each letter to a specific individual; mass-produced letters are far less effective.

Develop a basic cover letter that can be modified for the positions for which you are applying. Use the same letterhead, paper, and font as your resume.

A cover letter is a writing sample. It must be well organized and free of spelling, typographical, and grammatical errors.

### **To apply for a known position**

Identify the position for which you are applying and how you learned about it (newspaper ad, a personal referral, and company website). Draw attention to items on your resume that correspond with responsibilities on the job description. Ask for an interview.

### **To apply for a possible but unknown position (the "prospecting letter")**

Try to learn the name of the individual who will be in a position to

offer you a job or even create a job if your talents are right for the organization.

Briefly describe your interest in the company and how you learned about it. Be specific about the type of work for which you are qualified and the valuable contributions you can make to that organization.

Ask for an interview, just as you would for a known position, but also ask that your resume be referred to other departments if the contact person does not have an appropriate opening.

A cover letter is shown on page 13.

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## ADDITIONAL JOB SEARCH CORRESPONDENCE

Use the same stationery, letterhead, font, and format used for your resume and cover letter.

### **Thank You Letters**

These letters provide an excellent opportunity for you to restate your qualifications for and interest in the job. You may want to clarify some point you did not make well in the interview, or emphasize some aspect of your education or experience that makes you particularly well suited for the position. This is also a good time to confirm your understanding of the next steps in the process.

If you conclude from an interview that you are not interested in the job, a follow-up letter gives you the opportunity to remove yourself from further consideration, while maintaining a professional relationship.

Your best approach is to send a polite, direct statement that you appreciated the time and information that the interviewer shared with you but that you feel the job is not a good match for your career goals.

### **To Check On Your Application Status**

When employers do not contact you within an anticipated period of time, it is acceptable to contact them by phone. Since recruiters are often out of the office you may have to put your inquiry in a letter or e-mail.

### **When You Decline an Offer**

A message which declines a job offer in polite and professional terms is a courtesy that will keep lines of communication open for future contact with that employer.

### **When You Accept an Offer**

A job acceptance should be put in writing, even if you previously accepted the job offer in person or on the phone. Address your letter to the person who made the offer, and include the following:

Accept the offer, referring to the offer letter or phone call. Restate your understanding of the job title and assignment, salary, starting date, work location, and any provisions previously discussed. Express your pleasure at joining the organization.

Refer to any documents included with your letter. If other information such as insurance forms or transcripts are being sent later or by another office, mention this so the employer knows that you have attended to it.

# RESUME ACTION WORDS

**Tip:** Don't say what you were supposed to do (Responsible for selling shoes); say what you did (Sold shoes).  
Use the present tense of verbs for current positions, past tense for previous positions.

accomplished	delegated	interacted	redesigned
achieved	delivered	interpreted	reduced
acquired	demonstrated	interviewed	refined
adapted	designed	introduced	reinforced
administered	detailed	investigated	reorganized
advertised	detected	launched	repaired
advised	determined	lectured	reported
allocated	developed	led	researched
analyzed	devised	logged	resolved
applied	diagnosed	maintained	responded
appraised	directed	managed	restored
approved	dispensed	marketed	revamped
arbitrated	distributed	mediated	reviewed
arranged	drafted	moderated	revised
assembled	earned	modified	routed
assessed	edited	monitored	scanned
assigned	eliminated	motivated	scheduled
assisted	encouraged	negotiated	screened
attained	enforced	obtained	secured
audited	enhanced	observed	selected
awarded	enlisted	opened	served
balanced	ensured	operated	serviced
briefed	entered	ordered	set up
budgeted	established	organized	settled
built	estimated	oversaw	simplified
calculated	evaluated	participated	sold
cataloged	examined	performed	solved
chaired	exceeded	persuaded	spoke
charted	executed	planned	streamlined
coached	exhibited	prepared	structured
coded	expanded	presented	studied
collaborated	expedited	presided	summarized
collected	facilitated	prevented	supervised
communicated	familiarized	prioritized	supplied
compiled	forecasted	processed	supported
completed	formulated	produced	systematized
conducted	gathered	programmed	surveyed
consolidated	generated	promoted	synthesized
constructed	guided	proposed	taught
consulted	handled	protected	tested
contacted	helped	provided	trained
contracted	hired	publicized	translated
contributed	identified	published	transported
controlled	implemented	purchased	tutored
cooperated	improved	qualified	updated
coordinated	increased	received	upgraded
counseled	informed	recommended	utilized
created	initiated	reconciled	validated
critiqued	inspected	recorded	verified
debugged	installed	recruited	volunteered
decreased	instructed	rectified	wrote

## RESUMES

**Rebecca Smith**  
rsmith1234@aol.com

1234 Greenfield Rd., Apt. 23  
DeKalb, IL 60115  
815-756-5555

After May 15, 2006  
1234 N. Lake Shore Drive  
Lake Villa, IL 60646  
847-555-5555

- Objective** Position in which creative and communication skills are directed towards media and public relations
- Education** Bachelor of Arts in Communication Studies, May 2006  
Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL  
Emphasis: Media Studies  
GPA 3.4/4.0
- Related Coursework** Associate of Science, August 2003  
McHenry Community College, Crystal Lake, IL  
Media Production I, II, III Principles of Public Relations  
Media Management Principles of Advertising  
Scriptwriting Intercultural Communication  
Corporate Scriptwriting Communication & the Sexes
- Experience** Intern WTTW Chicago, IL Summer 2005
- Worked with producer on weekly "Wild Chicago" program
  - Researched and identified Chicago area events, individuals and establishments to be featured on show
  - Assisted with location shoots
  - Collaborated with editors in preparing film, resulting in creative 30-minute features
- Production Worker CNN DeKalb, IL January 2005 - May 2005
- Assisted with the production of local news for CNN station
  - Identified stories and filmed interviews for local newscast
- Assistant Manager Classic Cinemas Fox Lake, IL December 2002 - Present
- Work with technical aspects of film and projectors
  - Initiated internal and external promotions resulting in a 10 percent increase in patrons on weekdays; 20 percent increase on weekends
  - Manage orientation and on-going training program for staff of 8-12 cashiers to ensure greater productivity
- Achievements** New Member Coordinator, Alpha Delta Pi, Northern Illinois University  
Golden Key National Honour Society  
American Business Women's Scholarship

**George Zolowski**

123 Hedgewood Drive  
Chicago, Illinois 60842  
847-555-5555  
gzolowski@hotmail.com

- Objective** To employ technical and management skills as an Industrial Engineering Technologist
- Education** Bachelor of Science, May 2006  
Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois  
Major: Engineering Technology
- Senior Design Project:** Developed an Automated Manufacturing Lab incorporating automation, robotics, and digital video technology.
- Related Courses** Metrology  
Automated Manufacturing Systems Fluid Power Technology  
Hazard Control & Safety in Industry CNC Programming  
Industrial Data Processing PLC Programming  
Plastics Materials & Processes Computer Aided Design  
Basic Manufacturing Processes
- Computer Skills** AutoCAD R14, 2000 Microsoft Office WIN 3.1, 95, 98, 2000  
Programming in C Surf CAM 2000 Visual Basic  
Adobe PageMaker & PhotoShop Framework 2.4
- Experience** Hollywood Casino-Aurora, Inc. Aurora, Illinois  
Surveillance Agent July 2003 - May 2005
- Protected company assets via closed circuit television by ensuring that employees followed company policies.
  - Provided surveillance of company property with emphasis on gaming areas.
  - Observed and recorded any emergency medical situation or criminal activity and reported to the Illinois Gaming Board.
  - Detected cheating by a person or persons at gaming devices.
- Greater Painters Inc. Cicero, Illinois  
Supervisor Summers 2001 - 2003
- Led team of painters at both interior and exterior job sites.
  - Involved and collected financial obligations of customers.
  - Coordinated window and wood replacement, paint, primer, scrape, and concrete/stucco repair.
- Subway Sandwiches & Salads Hillside, Illinois  
Franchise Manager September 2000 - December 2001
- Recorded inventory on afternoon shipments.
  - Made hourly drops from cash register to safe.
  - Supervised customer service, food preparation, and cleaning.
- Awards and Activities** USOAR Award Scholastic Achievement for undergraduate research  
American Society of Mechanical Engineers, 2003 - present
- Vice President 2004; Secretary 2003

**Nicholas Ruiz**  
nicholasruiz@aol.com

Until December 15, 2005  
123 Neptune East  
DeKalb, IL 60115  
(815) 753-5555

Permanent Address  
9876 Plant Drive  
Naperville, IL 61107  
(815) 555-5555

**OBJECTIVE**

A position as Department Manager at Altman Blanchards

**EDUCATION**

Bachelor of Science in Textiles, Apparel & Merchandising, December 2005  
Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL

Associate of Science, July 2004  
College of DuPage, Glen Ellyn, IL

**WORK EXPERIENCE**

Internship/Sales Specialist, Maverick Inc., Villa Park, IL, May 2005 - August 2005

- Trained with senior sales representative for three months
- Prospected for new accounts through direct contacts and cold calls
- Answered up to 50 customer telephone inquiries daily
- Managed sales floor of three employees

Sales Representative, Latimore Fashions, Glen Ellyn, IL, May 2004 - May 2005

- Worked in sales, customer service and inventory control
- Assisted customers with merchandise selection and purchases
- Designed local print advertising and coordinated ad placement

Sales Associate, Jim's Ace Hardware, Naperville, IL, May 2002 - May 2003

- Increased sales of power tools by 23 percent through use of persuasive sales techniques
- Resolved customer complaints and negotiated replacement claims with manufacturers
- Employee of the Month, August 2002

**COMPUTER SKILLS**

- Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Publisher; SAS, HTML, QuickBooks Pro

**ACTIVITIES**

Program Chair, Fashion Industries Organization, Northern Illinois University,  
Fall 2004 - Spring 2005

- Scheduled seven employer presentations, four company visits, and three faculty panel discussions

Member, Golden Key National Honour Society

**Jill Scott**  
123 Pine Street  
DeKalb, IL 60115  
(815) 555-5555  
jscott123@hotmail.com

**OBJECTIVE**

A position in the Social Service profession

**EDUCATION**

Bachelor of Science in Psychology  
Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL  
May 2006  
Overall GPA: 3.1/4.0

**SKILLS**

Computer: MS Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Lotus 123, PageMaker  
Foreign Language: Conversant in Spanish  
Certifications: First Aid and CPR

**SOCIAL SERVICE EXPERIENCE**

Developmental Aide (Intern), Opportunity House, St. Charles, IL,  
Sept. 2005 - Present

- Organize and conduct recreational activities for 6-10 developmentally disabled adults
- Assist staff in conducting personal hygiene and social skills workshops
- Participated in 2-hour training sessions in Communication Skills, Counseling the Developmentally Disabled, and Crisis Intervention Techniques

Orderly, St. Thomas Aquinas Hospital, Woodstock, IL, Summers 2002 - 2004

- Transported wheelchair bound patients to hospital departments
- Delivered items to patients and departments
- Answered phones and staffed the front desk, pharmacy and gift shop during employee breaks

Volunteer, Thomas Center for the Homeless, Brookville, IL, Dec. 2001 - May 2002

- Logged over 120 volunteer hours
- Served meals to residents during weekends and holidays
- Provided recreational activities for preschoolers
- Named "Volunteer of the Month," January 2002

**CAMPUS ACTIVITIES**

Hall Council Member, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL, Aug. 2003 - May 2004

- Attended meetings, established and voted on residence hall policies and procedures
- Volunteer, DeafPride, DeKalb, IL, Oct. 2003 - May 2004
- Promoted Deaf Awareness Week, performed "sign-sync" songs before an audience of 500
- Conducted residence hall tours to prospective students
- Provided information about activities, departments and services

Member, American Sign Language Club, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL,  
2000 - 2002

- Assisted interpreters with signing skills, interacted with deaf people in the community

Open House Tour Guide, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL, 2001 - 2002

- Conducted residence hall tours to prospective students
- Provided information about campus activities, departments and services.

## INTERNSHIP RESUMES

### Lauren J. Myers

123 Mayberry Lane  
Genoa, IL 60134  
815-555-5555  
Myers2007@aol.com

#### OBJECTIVE

A summer internship using the French and German languages

#### EDUCATION

Bachelor of Arts in French

Bachelor of Arts in German

Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL

May 2007

May 2007

GPA: 3.5/4.0

#### SPECIAL SKILLS

Fluent in French and German

Computer: MS Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Web Page Design fundamentals

Certifications: Basic First Aid and CPR

#### LANGUAGE RELATED EXPERIENCES

German/French Tutor, January 2004-May 2004

University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI

- Provided assistance with the University's Sports Teams in German and French
- Provided assistance with essays, homework, and extra studying
- Monitored academic progress to determine tutoring effectiveness, and created individualized tests and assignments to enhance tutoring experiences

German/English Tutor, School Years 2000-2002

International School of Munich, Munich, Germany

- Provided individualized English tutoring and instruction to two German high school students
- Tutored a Polish grade school student in both English and German language studies

#### EMPLOYMENT

Coffee Shop Manager, August 2004-Present

Kishwaukee Hospital, DeKalb, IL

- Manage all coffee shop operations, assist customers with purchases, and maintain inventory

Server, May 2004-August 2004

Romaini's, Geneva, IL

- Used computer system to improve speed of food preparation and serving
- Worked with a team to ensure customer satisfaction

Sandwich Artist, August 2003-May 2004

Subway Sandwiches and Salads, Batavia, IL

- Assisted customers with menu selections and prepared orders
- Managed customer transactions and balanced cash drawer

#### ACHIEVEMENTS & ACTIVITIES

Munich Summer Program Fellow: National Award Recipient for Advanced German

Received 5/5 on German AP test; 4/5 on French AP test

International Honor Society and National Honor Society

Columbia University participant in Research Project for Bilingual and Trilingual

Students

Key Club, Language Tutor, and Lazarus Homeless Shelter

### Imir Husain

1155 B Stevenson Towers  
DeKalb, IL 60115  
(815) 555-5555  
imirhusain2007@gmail.com

#### OBJECTIVE

A challenging internship in Finance using my leadership, communication, and analytical skills

#### EDUCATION

Bachelor of Science in Finance, December 2007

Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois

Minor: Statistics & Probability

GPA: 3.63/4.00

Relevant Coursework: Calculus I, II, & III, Probability Theory, Business Statistics, Financial and Managerial Accounting, Micro and Macro-Economics, and Business Law

#### HONORS

- Northern Illinois University Dean's List (3 Semesters)
- University Honors Program
- Phi Eta Sigma National Freshman Honor Society
- Golden Key International Honour Society - Outstanding Sophomore recognition award

#### WORK EXPERIENCE

Residential Community Advisor, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL, January 2005 - Present

- Assist residents with personal and academic concerns
- Coordinate programs that address the academic and personal needs of 45 residents
- Enforce university regulations, document inappropriate activities and write judicial reports
- Received Leadership, Communication Skills and Crisis Intervention training

Resident Hall Operations Staff, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL, August 2003 - December 2004

- Assisted with training new employees, verified student residency and issued visitor passes
- Monitored hall activity and reported problematic situations
- Completed paperwork for key requests, sorted mail for 1000+ residents, answered phones and assisted students with questions and concerns

McDonald's Team Member, DeKalb, IL, August 2002 - May 2004

- Assisted with training and supervision of new crew members
- Processed customer transactions, maintained balanced cash drawer
- Attended Shift Management training classes

#### ACTIVITIES AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Member, NIU Financial Management Association, February 2004 - Present

- Participated in IRS Tax Assistance Program
- Attend meetings and other events

Vice-President, NIU Actuarial Club, February 2004 - Present

- Correspond with club members, faculty and representatives from other associations and from private industry
- Plan any functions held on campus.

#### TECHNICAL SKILLS

Windows, Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint and FrontPage), and HTML

COVER LETTER

**Salvatore Martinez**  
 123 Elm St.  
 DeKalb, IL 60115  
 (815) 555-5555  
 salvatoremart@hotmail.com

September 30, 2005

Mr. Paul Alexander, Director  
 Human Resources  
 Allen Manufacturing Company  
 185 Broad Street  
 Stamford, CT 06901

Dear Mr. Alexander:

Your opening paragraph will capture the reader's interest if you come to the point quickly. State that you are applying for a specific position or type of position. If you are applying for a known position, state how you learned about it. Explain why you are interested in employment with this company or organization.

Your middle paragraph(s) should address the employer's hiring needs. A good cover letter will refer to the job description, if it is available, or to facts about the employer. Don't repeat information that appears on your resume, but refer to your relevant qualifications and how they match this particular employer's job requirements.

In your closing paragraph, refer the reader to your enclosed resume and state your interest in scheduling an interview.

Sincerely,

Salvatore Martinez  
 Enclosure

- **Style note:** Your margins should be approximately even on all four sides. Your cover letter should use the same paper, letterhead, and font as your resume and reference page.

To examine sample cover letters, visit:  
[www.niu.edu/careerservices/sample\\_resumes.shtml](http://www.niu.edu/careerservices/sample_resumes.shtml)

REFERENCE LIST

**Salvatore Martinez**  
 123 Elm St.  
 DeKalb, IL 60115  
 (815) 555-5555  
 salvatoremart@hotmail.com

REFERENCES

**Benjamin Simon, Sales Manager**  
 Chicago Supply Company  
 876 N. Michigan Avenue  
 Chicago, IL 60611  
 (201) 555-555  
 bsimon@csc.com

**Dr. Amy Krumboltz, Professor of Management**  
 Management Department  
 Northern Illinois University  
 123 Barsema Hall  
 DeKalb, IL 60115  
 (815) 753-5555  
 wkrumboltz@niu.edu

**Mary Rogers, Sales Representative**  
 Innovative Products Company  
 1357 W. Adams Street  
 Chicago, IL 60611  
 (201) 444-4444  
 maryrogers@innovativeproducts.com

Guidelines for References

- Three to five references are optimal.
- Ask a reference's permission before giving his or her name to an employer.
- Provide your references a copy of your resume so they can provide more comprehensive comments about your qualifications.
- Include the reference's job title, address, email address, and work telephone number. Only include a home telephone number if the reference has no work number.
- The most effective references are those of former employers, individuals functioning at the same level as those to whom you are applying, or college professors or advisors who are familiar with your work. Never use a family member as a reference, even if you have worked for a family-owned business.
- Your reference sheet should use the same paper, letterhead, and font as your resume and cover letter

# JOB SEARCH STRATEGIES

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## CONDUCTING AN EFFECTIVE JOB SEARCH

Finding a job requires you to identify strategies that are likely to be effective for your major or field.

Not all strategies work for all career areas. The idea is to identify direct connections between you and the employers in whom you are interested.

We strongly recommend you schedule an appointment with a Career Services career counselor for assistance in developing an optimal job search strategy for your field and personal situation.

The purpose of this section is to describe the most common approaches to finding a job upon graduating from NIU.

Additional handouts, Internet links, and directories are available on the Career Services webpage ([www.niu.edu/CareerServices](http://www.niu.edu/CareerServices)) and the NIU Major WebLinks ([www.niu.edu/CareerServices/weblinks/](http://www.niu.edu/CareerServices/weblinks/)).

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## RECOMMENDATIONS BEFORE YOU START

### **Get Organized**

With the assistance of a Career Services career counselor, make a plan and keep records of your activities. Record all the correspondence you send or plan on sending (resumes, cover letters, e-mail inquiries, on-line applications, and thank-you notes).

Record the name, title, address, phone number, and e-mail address of every person with whom you come into contact in your search. Make a plan, keep track of everything you do, and stick with it.

### **Take Numerous Approaches**

The more approaches you take, the greater your chances of being interviewed and hired. Do not rely exclusively on any one job search strategy (Internet job search sites, on-line company applications, networking, newspapers).

### **Know Your Prospective Employer**

Conducting effective research gives job seekers a decided edge over the competition. The more information you have about potential employers, the better you will be able to demonstrate your knowledge during an interview.

### **Be Proactive**

Many jobs are not advertised on the web, in newspapers, or with campus recruiting services. In addition to responding to advertised positions, be proactive by making your interest and availability known to companies and agencies of interest to you – whether or not you have found a job posting.

### **Know Yourself & Sell Yourself**

Identify the qualities and experiences you possess that prospective employers seek. If you don't have a clear picture of what you have to offer an employer, you won't be able to make a compelling argument for being hired.

A Career Services career counselor can help you identify and articulate your "selling points."

### **Show your Gratitude**

During the course of your job search you will come into contact with individuals who provide valuable advice and support. A simple expression of appreciation in the form of an e-mail message or thank-you note can go a long way.

## SOURCES FOR FINDING JOBS

### NETWORKING: PROFESSIONAL & PERSONAL CONTACTS

Research reveals that approximately 50 percent of all job offers are a direct result of networking. Networking involves communicating your availability to as many people as possible – in person, in letters or via e-mail. Who should you contact? Everyone you know!

- Family, neighbors, and friends
- Current and former bosses, co-workers, teachers, coaches, and school counselors
- Acquaintances from places of worship, health/country clubs, and other organizations
- Business people and community members with whom you and your family have had dealings (lawyers, bankers, realtors, insurers, accountants, health care providers)

Call, e-mail or write your networking contacts and let them know that you are nearing graduation and looking for work. Provide them with a copy of your resume and the areas of work that interest you. Ask them for recommendations, assistance, or referrals.

**Remember** - You are not asking for a job or a “hand out”– you are seeking counsel and advice. Your contacts may be aware of jobs to which you can apply, but more often they will provide suggestions, referrals or leads that can result in an application for employment or an interview. Provide your contacts with occasional updates – positions to which you have applied, and interviews you have scheduled or completed.

Requests for advice are seldom considered inappropriate or an imposition. Instead, your contacts will likely be flattered for being approached. Most people have received wise counsel and helpful career advice in their lifetime and look forward to the opportunity to share their experience, know-how and contacts.

### Networking With Strangers

A stranger is just a person you haven't met yet. While job searching you should view all people you encounter as potential “networking contacts.” For that reason, you should always have a business card and/or resume close at hand.

Share with people your career interests and job availability. Possible “contact points” include parties, weddings, sporting events, golf courses, libraries, professional conferences, Chamber of Commerce activities, philanthropic organizations, family and high school reunions – anywhere you come into contact with people and are willing to strike up a conversation.

## CAMPUS RECRUITING

Every semester employers come to campus to interview students graduating within the current academic year for entry-level professional positions. Occasionally, recent graduates will also be included on interview schedules.

Campus Interviewing Orientations are offered within the first few weeks of each semester. Attendance is a requirement for participation in campus recruiting. Students who miss scheduled orientations are required to make an appointment with a staff member to review the procedures.

Students and alumni with a working knowledge of NIU Campus Recruiting and Victor eRecruiting are at a distinct advantage.

*Employers expect that if you are applying for a job with them, you know what they do and why you want to work for them.*



[www.niu.edu/CareerServices](http://www.niu.edu/CareerServices)

## VICTOR ERECRUITING

Refer to pages 27 and 28 of this guide.

## JOB FAIRS

Job Fairs are ideal opportunities to meet with a large number of prospective employers in a single setting in one day. The NIU Job Fairs are open to students and alumni seeking professional career opportunities. The following are some helpful tips to make your job fair a productive experience.

### JOB FAIR PREPARATION TIPS

#### Learn Who's Attending Ahead of Time

- Visit the Career Services webpage ([www.niu.edu/CareerServices](http://www.niu.edu/CareerServices)) for information on companies attending the job fair.
- Develop a list of employers with whom you plan to speak. Research their employment opportunities and company products and services.
- Keep in mind all the factors to consider regarding the job. They include location of employment, type of position, job responsibilities, and corporate culture.
- Send a cover letter and resume (via e-mail or ground mail). Describe your educational and career background, qualifications, and experiences that best relate to the position requirements and the company.
- Assure employers that you will attend the fair and that you look forward to meeting them there.

#### Prepare a 45 Second Verbal Summary of Your Qualifications

- Plan to engage in brief, formal interviews with employers regarding your qualifications and their employment needs.
- Review your resume and be prepared to present a 45 second summary of your educational and career background, qualifications, work experiences, and career interests.

- Describe how your skills match those of the position in which you are interested. Promote your skills, abilities and experiences.
- Be prepared to ask relevant questions and schedule interviews with employers later in the day or in the following weeks.

#### Dress and Act the Part

- First impressions are critical. Dress in conservative, well pressed, business attire.
- Approach employers with confidence and assertiveness.
- Don't forget to smile.
- Don't chew gum, drink, or eat.
- Don't ask about salary and benefits unless the employer prompts the conversation. If so, offer realistic salary expectations.
- Arrive as close to the beginning of the job fair as possible – some recruiters leave before the stated closing time.

#### Bring the Right Things With You

- Bring an ample supply of resumes and a list of references.
- Bring your calendar or date book in order to schedule interviews.

#### Have an Action Plan for the Day of the Job Fair

- Visit first the employers of primary interest (your "A-List"). Then visit with all employers whose positions look interesting.
- Record notes in between each employer contact – preferably on the recruiter's business card or company literature. Use these notes when writing thank-you letters, conducting interviews, or evaluating job offers.

*Please Note:* Some companies will not collect resumes at job fairs. Instead, they attend job fairs to promote their jobs, answer questions, and direct interested candidates to their company website job page.

*Career Services Job Fairs  
are located in the  
Convocation Center.*

*Campus Recruiting  
interviews are conducted in  
Campus Life Building  
Room 260.*

**Learn What's Going to Happen Next**

- As you leave each employer, ask about the next step in the interview process and how you can advance your candidacy.
- If the employer suggests that you call if you are interested in the position, always do so within two days.
- Ask for a business card from all recruiters with whom you speak. Shake their hands and thank them for their time.

**Follow Up With Your Job Leads**

- Write a thank you letter to each recruiter who discussed positions in which you were interested.
- In the letter, remind the recruiter that you met at the NIU Job Fair and reiterate your qualifications and interest in the position. Include a copy of your resume and any documentation requested at the job fair.

*Please note:* You may be eligible to attend other university job fairs, as well as privately operated fairs generally located in or around large cities. If you can not attend the fairs, visiting their websites will provide information about which companies are hiring. See the NIU Major WebLinks for numerous job fair sites ([www.niu.edu/CareerServices/weblinks/](http://www.niu.edu/CareerServices/weblinks/)).

**PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS, JOURNALS & NEWSLETTERS**

NIU Major WebLinks and Founders Library provide information on thousands of professional associations.

Memberships in professional organizations, reading professional journals and newsletters, and networking at professional conferences and conventions are all excellent sources of up-to-date information about job prospects in your field.

**EMPLOYMENT BULLETINS**

Career Services subscribes to the following National Employment Bulletins:

- Jobs for Liberal Arts Graduates
- Jobs in Writing, Editing and Communication
- Current International Jobs
- Jobs in Visual Arts
- Jobs in Performing Arts

To view the bulletins on-line:

1. Go to **www.graduatejobs.com**
2. Choose the "subscribers" button
3. Type in the UserName: **nillinoisuni**
4. Type in the password: **cpp60115**
5. Choose the bulletin of interest to you. The job listings are separated by region of the country with a multi-region section at the end.

**ACADEMIC DEPARTMENTS**

NIU academic departments and personnel are also an excellent source of job leads. Check departmental bulletin boards for position announcements. Talk to faculty about contacts and networking opportunities. Contact departmental alumni networks, and attend alumni panel presentations.

**NEWSPAPERS**

A small percentage of available jobs are advertised and filled through newspaper classified advertisements. NIU Major WebLinks contains links to many U.S. newspapers.

When responding to a newspaper listing, follow the application instructions to the letter. As always, tailor your cover letter and resume to the particular position and company to which you are applying.

Be wary of any listings that are vague or make unrealistic claims.



*Going to the job fair or an on-campus interview?*

*Dress professionally, bring extra resumes, and turn off your cell phone*

## JOB SEARCH SITES ON THE INTERNET

### NIU Major WebLinks: [www.niu.edu/CareerServices/WebLinks/](http://www.niu.edu/CareerServices/WebLinks/)

WebLinks provides a wealth of information about occupations, employers, professional associations, job fairs, newspaper classified ads, Internet job search sites, salary information, and more.

#### Sites on the Internet

There are hundreds of general interest and specialty job sites available on the Internet. NIU Major WebLinks contains links to many of these sites.

Although a useful tool for some job seekers, most college graduates report that they have limited success with such sites as Monster, Careerbuilder, Hotjobs, and the like.

You may find specialty job sites to be more valuable than “megasites”. NIU Major WebLinks contains links to hundreds of “niche sites” in business, education, social services, government, the arts, and more.

Internet job search sites should represent just one of many job application processes. We recommend that you avoid any sites that require fees, subscriptions, or paid memberships.

#### Apply On-Line to Employers of Interest

Most employers include a “Job,” “Employment”, or “Career” site on their company’s homepage. In addition to applying for jobs, visiting these sites is an excellent source of information critical to a “targeted” job search. Prior to applying for jobs on-line, you should:

- Read annual reports, newspapers, magazines, journal articles, and business and trade periodicals for information pertinent to the employers of interest.
- Visit the NIU Major WebLinks for a list of Internet sites that provide employer information.

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## CHARACTERISTICS EMPLOYERS SEEK IN CANDIDATES

What do employers want to see when they begin evaluating college candidates for employment?

In addition to being academically prepared in their discipline, as it pertains to their employment, candidates should possess the following attributes and skills:

**Communication skills** that demonstrate solid verbal, written, and listening abilities. Capstone presentation skills include the ability to respond to questions and seriously critique presentation materials.

**Computer/Technical aptitude** based on the level required for the position being filled. Computer ability is now perceived as a core skill, equal to reading, writing and mathematics. Expected basic skills include Word, a spreadsheet application (Access or Excel) and PowerPoint.

**Leadership and Management skills** involve the ability to take charge or relinquish control according to the needs of the organization.

**Teamwork** involves working cooperatively and collaboratively with different people while maintaining autonomous control over some projects.

**Interpersonal abilities** allow a person to relate to others, inspire others to participate, or resolve conflict between co-workers.

**Personal traits** include qualities such as initiative, motivation, flexibility, adaptability in order to handle change and ambiguity, a strong work ethic and reliability, honesty and integrity, and the ability to plan and organize multiple tasks.

# JOB INTERVIEW SKILLS

## FIRST IMPRESSIONS & INTERVIEW MANNERS

- Arrive a few minutes early for your interview, but not so early that you have time to get nervous. Greet the interviewer by name with a smile and a firm handshake.
- Always use the courtesy title (Dr., Mr., or Ms.) when speaking to your interviewer, regardless of age. Only use an interviewer's first name if s/he asked you to do so.
- Is your name difficult to pronounce? Be prepared to politely correct a mispronunciation or to say your name if the recruiter is having trouble pronouncing it.
- Listen carefully to an interviewer's questions, then develop your answers adequately without talking too much, getting off the subject, or skipping from point to point without continuity.
- If you are answering questions with a simple "yes" or "no" or with very brief statements, the recruiter isn't getting enough information to assess your potential.
- The interviewer's body language may help you determine how you are coming across. Good eye contact and smiles from the recruiter usually mean you are communicating well. Puzzled or bored looks may indicate that you need to respond with more details or enthusiasm.
- Your body language is important in an interview. Avoid broad, fidgety, or similarly distracting gestures with your hands. Try to keep your hands in a relaxed position on your lap or on the arms of your chair.
- Eye contact is critical; it demonstrates qualities of self-confidence and genuine interest in the conversation.
- Never smoke or chew gum in an interview. Unless you are suffering from "dry mouth" it is usually best to decline drinks.
- Do not swear. Avoid the use of slang or overly casual language. Job-related jargon, even if it is used correctly, is a mistake if it's clear that the recruiter does not understand its meaning. Save it for your technical interview, if there is one.
- Never complain about a former employer, professor, colleague, or fellow student. You don't want to give the impression of being the kind of person who blames other people for your problems and mistakes.
- Don't ask about salary, vacations, holidays, retirement plans, benefits, or similar issues in a first interview. The first interview is a time to learn about the job and communicate your ability to do that job. Compensation will be discussed in a second or third interview.

*Being selected for an interview is evidence of an employer's interest in you, but it does not guarantee a job. Depending on the job market, an employer will interview at least three or more people for every job they have to fill. Increase your odds of success by paying attention to important details about interview preparation.*

We're on the Web!

www.niu.edu/  
CareerServices

*WinWay Interview Program  
is available in the Career  
Resource Center.*

*Use it independently or in  
preparation for a practice  
interview with a Career  
Services career counselor.*

## INFORMATION YOU SHOULD HAVE BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

Learn all you can about an employer before you request an interview. This confirms your interest in working for them and will prepare you for interview questions.

When it is time to ask questions, avoid obvious ones that a well-prepared candidate should already know ("What business are you in?", "What products do you manufacture?", "How long has this company been in business?").

The list that follows includes information that is available on the Internet, in company literature, or in business publications. It isn't necessary that you know all of the following, plus you may need information not listed here which is relevant to the job you are seeking.

- Size of the company, number of employees, divisions and subsidiaries
- Location of home office
- Ownership: public or private
- Length of time in business
- Computer systems, languages used
- Reputation of the company
- Who is the competition
- Geographical locations of plants, stores, and sales outlets
- Recent items in the news
- Potential growth for the industry
- Percent of annual sales growth the last five years
- Present price of company stock
- Array of product line or services
- Potential new markets, products, or services
- Various price points in the product or service line
- Organizational structure by product line and function
- Relocation policies
- People you know in the firm
- Formal versus on-the-job training
- Typical career path in your field

## KNOW WHAT TO EXPECT IN AN INTERVIEW

There are basically five types of interview questions:

### 1. Credential questions

"What was your GPA?" and "How long did you work at XYZ Company?" are examples of questions whose purpose is to place objective measurements on features of your background.

### 2. Experience questions

This type of question includes "What did you learn in that class?" and "What were your responsibilities in that position?" Their purpose is to evaluate features of your background.

### 3. Opinion questions

"What would you do in this situation?" and "What are your strengths and weaknesses?" These types of opinion questions help the interviewer to subjectively analyze how you would respond in certain situations.

### 4. Dumb questions

This type of question includes "What kind of animal would you like to be?" or "How many ping pong balls could fit in a Volkswagen?" Its purpose is to get past your pre-programmed answers to find out if you are capable of original thinking. There is not necessarily a right or wrong answer, since it is used primarily as a test of your ability to think on your feet.

### 5. Behavioral questions

"Can you give me a specific example of how you did that?" "What were the steps you followed to accomplish that task?" "Tell me about a time when you were on a team, and one of the members wasn't carrying his or her weight." These are the types of behavioral questions you might encounter.

Behavioral questions are becoming increasingly popular with interviewers who are trained to recognize past performance as the most reliable indicator of future performance.

## BEHAVIORAL VS. TRADITIONAL INTERVIEWS

Behavioral interviews are structured to elicit information about how an applicant has responded to previous challenges or opportunities in order to determine how that person will act in the future.

If you have training or experience with traditional interviewing techniques, you may find the behavioral interview quite different in several ways:

Interviewers who employ behavioral interviewing techniques are trained to objectively collect and evaluate information. They work from a profile of desired behaviors that are needed for success on the job.

The interview is a more structured process that will concentrate on areas the interviewer determines to be important to the job, rather than allowing you to concentrate on areas you may feel are important.

Instead of describing a work-related scenario and asking how you would behave, the interviewer will ask you to describe how you did behave in comparable situations.

The interviewer will ask you to provide details and will not provide an opportunity for you to theorize or generalize about events.

You may not get a chance to deliver any prepared stories or examples.

Most interviewers will take copious notes throughout the interview.

Your answers will be tested for accuracy and consistency. If you are an entry-level candidate with no work-related experience, the interviewer will look for behaviors in situations similar to those of the targeted position:

*"Describe a major problem you have faced and how you dealt with it."*

*"Give an example of when you had to work on a team project."*

*"What class did you like the most? What did you like about it?"*

**Follow-up questions** will test for consistency and determine if you exhibited the desired behavior in that situation:

*"Can you give me an example?"*

*"What did you do (or say)?"*

*"What was your role?"*

*"What was the result?"*

You will notice an absence of such questions as: *"Tell me about yourself"* or *"Tell me about your strengths and weaknesses."*

Behavioral interviewing is designed to minimize personal impressions that can affect the hiring decision.

By focusing on the candidate's actions and behaviors, rather than misleading subjective impressions, interviewers can make more accurate hiring decisions.

## BE PREPARED FOR A BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEW

Review the job description carefully. The behaviors you may be asked to discuss are frequently imbedded in the position description or qualifications.

- Recall recent situations that show favorable behaviors or actions, especially involving course work, work experience, leadership, teamwork, initiative, planning, and customer service.
- Prepare short descriptions of each situation. Be ready to provide details if asked.
- Be sure each story has a beginning, middle, and end. Be ready to describe the situation, your action, and the outcome or result.
- Be sure the outcome or result reflects positively on you (even if the result itself was not favorable).
- Be honest. Don't embellish or omit any part of the story. The interviewer will find out if your story is built on a weak foundation.
- Be specific. Don't generalize about several events; give a detailed accounting of one event.



[www.niu.edu/CareerServices](http://www.niu.edu/CareerServices)

### *Reminder:*

*Post-Interview and Job Fair thank-you letters are a must. They may be what tips the scale in your favor when a hiring decision is made.*

**Northern Illinois University  
Career Services**

815-753-1641  
CareerServices@niu.edu

A possible response to the question, "Tell me about a time when you were on a team and a member wasn't pulling his or her weight" might go as follows:

*"I was assigned to a team to build a canoe out of concrete. One of our team members wasn't showing up for our lab sessions or doing his assignments.*

*I met with him in private, explained the frustration of the rest of the team, and asked if there was anything I could do to help. He told me he was preoccupied with another class that he wasn't passing, so I found someone to help him with the other course. He not only was able to spend more time on our project, but he was also grateful to me for helping him out. We finished our project on time, and got a 'B' on it."*

The interviewer might then probe:

*"How did you feel when you confronted this person?" "*

*"What was your role in the team?"*

*"At what point did you take it upon yourself to confront him?"*

You can see why it is important that you not make up or "shade" information, and why you should have a clear memory of the entire incident.

## IMPROPER OR ILLEGAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Improper interview questions are those that do not address the nature of the job or a candidate's ability to perform the job, or those that are not asked of every candidate. They are illegal only if the information is used to make a hiring decision.

Due to Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity legislation, most recruiters now know what they can and cannot ask candidates. However, if you are confronted with a question you think unreasonable, it is best to deal with the underlying issue (inquire about why it was asked) rather than become defensive or hostile.

You may report to a Career Services staff member any behavior or line of questioning you believe to be improper. As an Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity Employer, Northern Illinois University expects all employers recruiting on campus to comply with the same principles.

For more information about illegal questions, see the handout titled Improper or Illegal Interview Questions available at

[www.niu.edu/CareerServices/handout/ImproperQuestions.pdf](http://www.niu.edu/CareerServices/handout/ImproperQuestions.pdf)

## INTERVIEW ATTIRE

**First impressions** are crucial in an interview situation. The clothes you wear, your hairstyle, everything that a recruiter knows about you before you say hello are all part of that important first impression.

If you haven't bought a suit yet and aren't sure what to look for, ask a salesperson or knowledgeable person to help you choose a good quality, multi-seasonal, conservative business suit.

Remember that the latest style can go *out* of style very quickly. You want a garment that says "smart," not "trendy."

Recruiters don't expect you to have a large career wardrobe, just an appropriate one, so don't feel at a disadvantage if you have to wear the same suit to more than one interview with the same employer. Unless your suit is highly distinctive, they aren't going to remember anyway. You can vary the look of a suit with a tie,

jewelry, or change of shirt or blouse (always spotless and wrinkle-free).

Buy as good a suit as you can afford. Good quality can stand up to repeated wear and dry cleaning longer than a poorly made garment.

Interviewing is a sit-down activity, so be sure to sit in front of a mirror before you make your purchase. If the jacket gapes or pinches, or the skirt or pants are too short, keep shopping.

**Hair:** Need a job-search confidence boost? Get a great haircut! You don't have to choose an ultra-conservative style, but you do need to help the recruiter focus on what you're saying and not your "college casual" haircut. Your hairstyle needs to "travel" well. Off-site interviews may not allow time for major restorations.

(Continued on page 23)

*(Continued from page 22)*

**Fragrance:** Perfume and cologne can be overwhelming in a small office. Avoid them entirely.

**Accessories:** Don't wear anything that jingles, glitters, or otherwise attracts more attention than you do. Keep it simple.

**Socks & Stockings:** Gentlemen—wear dark socks that cover your legs when you sit down. Ladies—choose a stocking color similar to or just slightly darker than your own skin tones.

## TELEPHONE INTERVIEWS

Employers conduct telephone interviews for a variety of reasons. Employers use the telephone to interview potential employees when they want to screen and/or evaluate candidates they have not seen in person. They may also be assessing the candidate's telephone skills for positions that particularly require that skill.

As soon as you start sending out resumes and application letters, you are in the job market. Usually you will have no advance warning before you receive a call from an employer who is interested in following up on your application.

Employers know students are often in class or working during normal business hours, so calls may come as early as 6:45 a.m.

Tell others who answer your telephone that you may receive job-related calls. Persuade rude roommates, forgetful message takers, and proud parents who brag shamelessly to "just take a complete message." Get your own line if necessary.

Use an answering machine or voicemail to record a brief, professional message.

### Things to keep by the phone

- A notepad and pen
- A copy of your resume and cover letters you have recently sent. You may need to refer to information you have included.
- An appointment book that includes your class schedule

### When the call comes

Answer the phone with a simple "Hello" or with your name.

Are there distracting background noises? Ask the caller to give you a minute to close the door, turn off the stereo, or tell others present that you have an important call.

If the call comes just as you are headed off to class or you are in a noisy environment, tell the caller that you are eager to talk but that s/he have reached you at a bad time. Ask to call back in a few minutes or another time, and return the call as agreed upon.

### Ending the call

The caller will explain the next step (usually a follow-up meeting or letter). If not, politely ask what you should expect.

Offer to send extra copies of your resume, transcripts, references or other materials that might be helpful.

Before the interviewer hangs up, be sure you have his/her full name, job title, address, and phone number. Confirm that you have the correct spelling of the person's name.

Immediately send a thank-you letter for the phone interview and refer to topics that were discussed.

If you conclude from the conversation that the job is not right for you, your follow-up letter should thank them for their time and interest, then state that the job is not a good match for your skills and interests and decline further interviews for that position.

### Things to remember

- Speak clearly. Avoid slang and "fillers" such as "you know," "uh," and "like."
- Ask questions and be enthusiastic.
- Don't chew gum, eat, drink, or smoke.
- Don't put a caller on hold for more than a few seconds.
- Avoid answering call-waiting.
- Be certain that the interviewer's question is completed before you respond.
- Practice by having a Career Services career counselor or friend interview you on the phone.

*Concerned about your interview attire?*

*Schedule a practice interview with a Career Services career counselor.*

## QUESTIONS APPLICANTS MAY ASK

### FIRST INTERVIEWS

- What would a normal working day be like in this position?
- How would you describe my initial responsibilities?
- During training, are employees rotated through functional fields?
- How many entry-level positions do you normally fill each year?
- What is your retention rate for this particular position?
- What characteristics do you notice in people who are successful in this line of work?
- Do employees progress at different rates? Is there a structured career development or promotions program?
- How much travel does this job require? Is a car provided?
- How will my performance be evaluated?
- What are the opportunities for advancement?
- What criteria are used to determine increased responsibilities for a promotion?
- What analytical and interpersonal skills are needed in this position?
- Will I be expected to resolve issues independently, or will there be opportunity to consult with others?
- How would you differentiate the company from its major competitors?
- How is the present economic situation affecting your organization?
- Have you previously hired NIU grads? Are they still working with the company?
- How soon could I advance?
- What are some of the department's ongoing and anticipated projects?
- What kinds of decision-making responsibility could I expect after one year's experience?
- What are the reporting relationships in this department? In the company?
- Do employees normally work many hours of overtime?
- Are flexible work schedules permitted?
- Are there opportunities to transfer between functional areas of the company?

### Ask the Human Resource Manager:

- How many employees are currently working in this same position? Has this number increased or decreased recently?
- Are any evening/weekend courses or professional development activities available or recommended for new employees? How does the company support employee development?
- How often are performance reviews given? Who will evaluate my performance?
- How frequently are professional employees relocated? How much input does the person have?
- What kind of orientation or training do new employees receive?
- What community services or activities are available in the area?
- What is employee turnover rate?
- Do you have literature that outlines the benefits package that the company offers?

### Ask prospective co-workers:

- What do you like best/least about working for this department/company?
- What is a typical day like for you?
- Do you feel you can express your ideas and concerns?
- How long have you been with the company?
- What can you tell me about housing in the area?

### SECOND INTERVIEWS

#### Ask your prospective supervisor:

- How does this department relate to other departments in achieving the goals of the entire organization?
- How much contact does the staff have with management?

*Interviewing off-campus?*

*Be nice to each person you meet at the company. Everyone you talk to will get to offer an opinion about your attitude and character.*

## QUESTIONS YOU SHOULD BE PREPARED TO ANSWER

- Why should I hire you?
- What are your greatest strengths and weaknesses?
- How would you describe yourself?
- How do you think a friend or professor who knows you well would describe you?
- What motivates you to do a good job?
- How do you determine or evaluate success?
- In what ways do you think you can make a contribution to our company?
- What two or three accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction? Why?
- How has your college experience prepared you for a career in \_\_\_\_\_?
- Why did you select NIU?
- What led you to choose a major in \_\_\_\_\_?
- Which college subjects did you like best? Least? Why?
- Do you have plans for continued study? An advanced degree?
- What is your GPA? Do you think it is a good indication of your academic achievement?
- What have you learned from participation in extracurricular activities?
- What are your long- and short-range career goals?
- What do you see yourself doing in five years?
- What are the most important rewards you expect from your career?
- What do you expect to be earning in five years?
- What qualifications or qualities should a successful person in your career field possess?
- Describe the relationship that should exist between a supervisor and subordinates.
- In what kind of work environment are you most comfortable? How do you work under pressure?
- Describe the ideal job for you following graduation.
- Why do you want to work for us?
- What two or three things are most important to you in a job?
- What criteria are you using to evaluate the company for which you hope to work?
- Do you have a geographical preference? Why?
- Are you willing to relocate?
- How much on-the-job travel are you able to do?
- Are you willing to spend at least six months or longer as a trainee?
- Why do you think you might like to live in (the city or town) where our company is located?
- Have you ever worked as a part of a team, and how did you like it?

### Behavioral Questions

- Have you ever worked with someone that you did not get along with as part of a team? How did you handle that situation?
- Describe how you handled a short deadline project that was given to you at the last minute.
- Tell me about a time when you had to deal with a difficult person. What was the situation? What did you do?
- Give me an example of any major problem you faced and how you solved it.
- Tell me about a time when you failed to meet a deadline. What were the repercussions? What did you learn?

*Always convey the impression that you're glad to be interviewed. Recruiters won't be interested in candidates who are not genuinely excited about the company and position for which they are applying.*

## THE SECOND INTERVIEW

First interviews help recruiters determine which applicants show the greatest potential for contributing to the goals of that organization. Second interviews are a matter of selecting the best from the best.

If an employer wants to see you for a second interview you will get a phone call (or perhaps an e-mail message) usually within two weeks of your first interview, though that can vary with the volatility of the job market.

Second interviews will typically require a half day to a day for a local interview; one or two days for interviews that require long distance travel.

Application procedures for some employers require more than two interviews, but for most entry-level positions two is the norm .

### More People, Harder Questions, Higher Expectations

The substance of a second interview will depend on the type of job for which you are interviewing. If the job is technical in nature you can expect that at least one and possibly several people will want to talk to you about your technical expertise.

Interviews for jobs that require supervision of others will probably include an opportunity for those who will be supervised to talk to you about your expectations and management style .

In short, a second interview is a time for you to exchange very specific and detailed information about the job and your ability to fill that role.

Aptitude tests and drug tests are sometimes administered as part of the second interview.

Salary negotiations may begin during the second interview, but let the employer decide the right time to introduce this subject. You may not actually see any salary or benefits information unless and until a job offer is made. Do your salary research, know what to expect, and be patient.

### Reimbursement

Employers generally reimburse candidates for normal travel and hotel expenses; some will make all of your travel arrangements for you.

You should know an employer's travel policies and their reimbursement plans before you agree to a second interview that you may not be able to afford on your own.

Reimbursement policies and procedures vary, but most organizations understand that candidates may not have the cash or credit cards to support long distance travel, and they do their best to provide reimbursement before the end of the visit or very shortly thereafter.

Demonstrate your good business sense by keeping careful records, documented with receipts, of all reasonable expenses. Unreasonable expenses include flying first class, expensive restaurants, and entertainment not arranged by the employer.

Room service meals are usually an unreasonable expense, but an employer would not expect you to leave a hotel in search of a restaurant when you are in an unfamiliar city, especially if you arrive late in the evening. Use the hotel restaurant when it is the most reasonable choice, and charge the meal to your room to simplify reporting your traveling expenses.

### Most Frequent Mistake: Lack of Company Knowledge

The Internet has made it easier than ever for job seekers to learn about prospective employers. It may come as a surprise, then, that 44 percent of executives recently surveyed said the most common interview pitfall for today's candidates is insufficient company research.

The survey was developed by Accountemps temporary staffing service. It was conducted by an independent research firm and includes responses from 150 executives with the nation's 1,000 largest companies.

Executives were asked: "Which do you think is the most common mistake candidates make during job interviews?" Their responses:

- 44% Little or no knowledge of the company
- 23% Unprepared to discuss career plans/goals
- 16% Limited enthusiasm
- 5% Lack of eye contact
- 3% Unprepared to discuss skills or experience
- 2% Late arrival
- 7% Other

"The more information candidates have about potential employers, the better prepared they will be to demonstrate this knowledge during the interview," said Max Messmer, chairman of Accountemps and author of *Managing Your Career For Dummies*.

Messmer points out that prospective employees should be able to answer the following key questions before the first meeting with a hiring manager:

- *What business is the company in?*
- *What products and services does it sell?*
- *Who are its primary competitors?*
- *What current industry issues or events are of interest to the company?*
- *What are the company's mission, vision and values?*

According to Steve Kenney, Accountemps director of permanent operations, candidates preparing for an interview can locate most of the information they'll need on the Internet.

"Most company web sites include press releases, product and service information, and profiles of the firm and its executives; publicly held corporations also post detailed financial information online," Kenney said. "In addition, a keyword search on targeted sites will typically locate articles written about the company."



## Quick Start Guide

### Victor eRecruiting can help you build a career

- Access information about employers offering internships and co-op experiences; full-time, part-time, and temporary employment
- Contact employers directly or schedule interviews through the Campus Recruiting program
- Upload one or more versions of your resume and other job search documents
- Include your resume(s) in electronic resume books
- Research cities and industries, or obtain a profile of an occupation

### Complete Your Profile

- Log into your eRecruiting account [Username = your z#, Password = birthdate (mmd)]
- Select **View/Edit Profile Data** under the **Profile** tab on the navigation bar [first time users will be taken right to profile]
- Select the desired view: **Personal Info**, **Academic Info**, **Career Preferences**, **Continued Academics** or **Administration**
- Click the **Edit** link at the top of the section you wish to edit
- Update your profile information
- Click **Save**

### Upload Your Documents

- Log into your eRecruiting account
- Select **Upload a Document** under the **Documents** tab on the navigation bar
- Choose the document type on the **Upload a Document** page and click **Next**
- Click **Browse** to select your document
- Choose the correct document and click **Open**
- Click **Upload**
- Use a Word or RTF (Rich Text Format) file
- When status is ready, click document name to view

### Publish a Resume to a Resume Book

- Log into your eRecruiting account
- Select **Publish a Resume** under the **Documents** tab on the navigation bar
- View the Resume Books in the **Additional Resume Books** section
- Choose your resume from the **Publish Resume** dropdown on the coordinating Resume Book entry
- Click **Save** at the bottom of the page

### Search for Jobs and Internships/Co-ops

- Log into your eRecruiting account
- Select **Job Search** under the **Jobs & Internships** tab on the navigation bar
- Select one of the searches in the **More Searches** box based on type of job you are searching
  - Example 1: If you are searching for an internship, select Co-op/Internship Job Search
  - Example 2: If you are looking for a teaching position, select Education Job Search
- Keep search criteria simple by selecting 1 or 2 important criteria to define your search
- Click **Search**
- Click on the **Job Title** to view the details of the job
- For other quick, easy job searches, select **1-click Searches**, which can be found on your home page or on the search screen

### Search for Employers

- Log into your eRecruiting account
- Select **Employer Search** under the **Employers** tab on the navigation bar
- Locate the **Employer Search** section
- Search alphabetically by selecting the first letter of the employer name
- Search for a specific employer by typing the name of employer in the **Employer Name** field
- Search for an employer by industry by selecting one industry or multiple industries in the **Industry** field
- Click **Search**
- Click on the **Employer Name** to view the employer profile

### Create a Saved Search

- Log into your eRecruiting account
- Select one of the searches listed
- Choose search criteria
- Click **Search**
- Choose the **Save Your Search** at the top of the list of jobs that is shown
- Name the search in the **Saved Search Name** field
- Choose the **Yes** option to receive e-mail notifications of job matches
- Select **Posted by my Career Center Only** or from **All Available Sources**
- Click **Save**
- When you receive e-mail notification of a job entered into eRecruiting that meets your criteria, you should login to eRecruiting
- Select **Job Search** under the **Jobs & Internships** tab on the navigation bar
- Select the appropriate **Saved Search** located in the Saved Searches box on the search screen

### Apply for a Job

- Log into your eRecruiting account
- Search for Jobs (*See **Searching for Jobs** section on previous page*)
- Select a **Job Title** from **Search Results** page to open the Job Details
- Locate **How to Apply** section at the bottom of the Job Details page\*
- Click **Apply**
- Select a **Resume, Cover Letter** or **Other Document** that meets the requirements
- Click **Submit**

\*Some employers request an application method other than through Victor eRecruiting. If so, follow the application directions.

### Sign up for an Interview

- Log into your eRecruiting account
- Select **Your Active Applications** under the **Applications** tab on the navigation bar
- The status of your active applications is displayed in the **Employer Decision** column
- Once an employer has **Accepted** your application and the interview sign-up date has arrived, you may sign up for an interview slot
- Click on **Details...**
- On the Application Details page, under **Employer Decision**, click on **Sign up for Interview**
- On the Interview Sign Up Page, find the schedule date you would like to sign up for and select the **Time** radio button associated with the time slot you desire
- Click **Save** and your slot will be reserved
- Confirm your interview by clicking "**Your Upcoming Events**" under the **Calendar** tab

### Search for a Career Center or Employer Event

- Log into your eRecruiting account
- To browse all events, select **Career Center Calendar** under the **Calendar** tab on the navigation bar.
- To find events on a specific day, use the **Monthly Overview** and click on the desired numeric day link.
- To search for a specific event by event type or employer name, select **Calendar Search** under the **Calendar** tab on the navigation bar
- Search using the **By Event Type** drop down box to search for a specific type of event
- Search by **Employer Name** to search for events hosted by a specific employer
- From any calendar search results, click on the **Event Name** for more event details

# VALUABLE CAREER RESOURCES

## SIGI<sup>3</sup>

**SIGI<sup>3</sup>** is a computerized career guidance and information system that integrates self-assessment with in-depth and up-to-date career information. **SIGI<sup>3</sup>** is easy to use and provides students and alumni with a realistic view of the best educational and career options for future success.

**SIGI<sup>3</sup>** can help you:

- Clarify your work-related values
- Search and create a list of occupations based on values, interests, work skills, and your major field of study
- Obtain up-to-date information and printouts on hundreds of occupations
- Determine education and training requirements for each occupation

## NIU MAJOR WEBLINKS

[www.niu.edu/careerservices/WebLinks](http://www.niu.edu/careerservices/WebLinks)

**NIU Major WebLinks** provides extensive occupational and job search information.

Designed for NIU students and alumni - the WebLinks contains thousands of links, including:

- Occupational and professional information
- General and specialty job sites
- Company and industry information
- Salary surveys
- Job Fairs: local and national
- Newspaper help-wanted sections
- Chicago area and Illinois business and job links
- Government jobs
- Job sites for diverse populations

## CAREER RESOURCE CENTER

**Campus Life Building, room 235**

**Monday through Friday from 8:30 am – 4:00 pm.**

Do you need career decision making assistance or career information? Don't know where to start? Visit the Career Resource Center (CRC) and a helpful staff member will provide a tour, show you printed and computerized resources, and (if desired) schedule you for an appointment with a career counselor.

The CRC offers:

- Career staff who will critique your résumés and cover letters, answer your questions, and point you in the right direction
- Literature describing NIU academic majors, job descriptions, graduate school programs, and more
- Computers for use in researching careers and jobs, and writing résumés and cover letters

## WINWAY INTERVIEW PROGRAM

Available for independent use in the Career Resource Center, the **WinWay Interview Program** provides answers to the most commonly asked interview questions. You'll learn how to answer questions regarding your experience, self-evaluation, education, and knowledge of company. You can view hints about hundreds of questions and then watch and hear the sample answers.

# 4-YEAR PLAN FOR NIU STUDENTS

## FRESHMAN YEAR

- Meet with your departmental academic advisor for course selection.
- Enroll in UNIV 101 (University Experience) or CAHC 211 (Career Planning). These classes focus on college adjustment and career decision making.
- Visit the Career Resource Center to read about occupations of interest.
- See NIU Major WebLinks for information that may help you make important academic decisions.
- Unsure about your major or career goal? Schedule a career counseling appointment at Career Services.
- Talk to classmates, academic advisors, professors, and family members about careers and majors.
- Getting excellent grades? Join the NIU Honors Program (Campus Life Building, room 110, 753-0694).
- Visit Career Services for part-time or temporary jobs.
- View [www.hr.niu.edu/employment](http://www.hr.niu.edu/employment) to see on-campus job postings.
- Visit the Study Abroad Office (Williston Hall, room 417, 753-0304) to explore opportunities to study in other countries.

## SOPHOMORE YEAR

- Review the preceding options.
- Explore internship and co-op opportunities on Victor eRecruiting.
- Attend the Internship Fairs.
- Visit the Student Association Office (Campus Life Building, room 180) to join one or more of NIU's 200+ student organizations.
- With your academic advisor's help, select an appropriate major and perhaps a minor.
- Continue coursework and activities that will develop computer, leadership, and communication skills.

## JUNIOR YEAR

- Review the preceding options.
- Get involved in student or volunteer organizations: Join committees, run for office, and assume leadership roles.
- Obtain career-related experience through internships or part-time jobs.
- Surf the Internet and NIU Major WebLinks for information about careers, organizations, and companies of interest to you.
- Considering graduate school? Meet with your academic advisor or a Career Services career counselor.
- Consider taking CAHC 211 (Career Planning), designed to prepare juniors and seniors for their job search.
- Continue to use Career Services' Victor eRecruiting job search program.

## SENIOR YEAR

- Early in your senior year, schedule a career counseling appointment to review job search strategies.
- Attend Career Services workshops on résumé writing, interviewing and job search strategies, or schedule an appointment with a Career Services career counselor.
- Review the job search information available on the Career Services home page.
- Explore NIU Major WebLinks to research employers and find job posting links.
- Fine tune your communication, leadership, and computer skills via paid work experience, volunteerism, internships, and active involvement in student and community organizations.
- Watch your e-mail messages for job opportunities or career-related announcements from Career Services.
- Participate in Campus Recruiting.
- Attend job fairs.

