

# CAREER DEVELOPMENT GUIDE

## CAREER SERVICES



3302.3 C.B. Hedgcock

Phone: (906) 227-2800 | Fax: (906) 227-2807

careers@nmu.edu | [www.nmu.edu/careerservices](http://www.nmu.edu/careerservices)

[www.nmu.edu/CareerServices/Handshake](http://www.nmu.edu/CareerServices/Handshake)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/CareerServicesNMU](http://www.facebook.com/CareerServicesNMU)

Instagram: @NMUCareerServices

Pinterest: [www.pinterest.com/NMUCareerService](http://www.pinterest.com/NMUCareerService)

Twitter: @NMUCareerService



### CONTENTS INCLUDE:

- Handshake
- Resume building
- Part-time student employment
- Preparing for a job fair
- Deciphering the business dress code

# Northern Michigan University Career Services

## CAREER DEVELOPMENT GUIDE

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[www.nmu.edu/careerservices](http://www.nmu.edu/careerservices)

[www.nmu.edu/careerservices/Handshake](http://www.nmu.edu/careerservices/Handshake)

**Services Offered:**

- **Web Site** – [www.nmu.edu/careers](http://www.nmu.edu/careers) Contains information on hundreds of job opportunities for after graduation, resume writing part-time job listings and internship opportunities for current students, information on upcoming events, links to hundreds of job-related web sites, and much, much more!
- **Handshake** – [www.nmu.edu/careerservices/Handshake](http://www.nmu.edu/careerservices/Handshake) Contains postings for all jobs – full-time, part-time on-campus, part-time off-campus, summer jobs and internships. Upload your resume to apply for jobs online and for employers to view. View the list of employers that are visiting campus and sign up for information sessions and on-campus interviews. Sign up to attend job fairs, workshops and other career-related events.
- **Staying Connected** – Staff in Career Services work closely with staff in the Academic and Career Advisement Center (ACAC) and Orientation in order to assist students with important career decisions.
- **Job Search Workshops** – Throughout the academic year, staff in Career Services host workshops for classes, student organizations and residence hall groups. Topics include resume writing, interviewing skills, internships and summer employment.

**It’s Never Too Early to Start!**

For students just beginning their college career, as well as for those who are graduating and entering the job market, the following job fairs and events are sponsored during the academic year by Career Services:

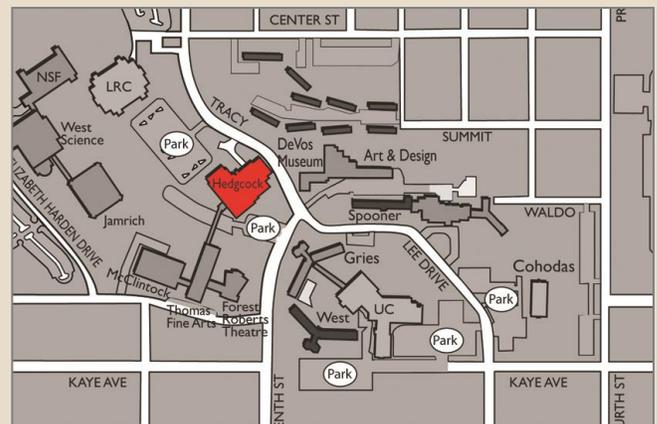
- ◆ **Construction Management & Technology Career Fair** – Scheduled for early fall (during Homecoming Week), geared specifically towards students choosing construction, electronics, technology and related majors.
- ◆ **Fall Semester Job Fair** – Held in October, hosts various organizations from the Midwest with an assortment of job opportunities.
- ◆ **Summer Employment Fair** – Takes place each February, invites local, regional, and on-campus departments with seasonal, full-time and part-time opportunities and internships.

**Have your resume reviewed before the fair – Contact Career Services to make an appointment!**

Visit <http://www.nmu.edu/careerservices/jobfairs> for additional information on upcoming NMU job fairs and others held throughout the United States.

*Call our office today to set up a time to visit with one of our advisers, have your resume reviewed, practice your interview skills or discuss any topic related to your career pursuits!*

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Marquette, MI 49855-5329  
Phone: 906-227-2800; Fax: 906-227-2807  
Web site: [www.nmu.edu/careers](http://www.nmu.edu/careers)  
E-mail: [careers@nmu.edu](mailto:careers@nmu.edu)





# CAREER AND JOB SEARCH TIMELINE

## FRESHMAN ACADEMIC FOCUS

- Establish strong academics.
- Explore majors and minors if you're undeclared. (Complete FOCUS 2!)
- Visit Career Services to get familiar with the office.
- Create career goals and talk about them with an adviser.
- Attend the Major Expo and Career Week.
- Review the course bulletin if you have decided on a major.
- Develop your profile on Handshake.
- Follow Career Services on social media.
- Start to assemble your resume.
- Have your resume reviewed by Career Services, upload into Handshake.
- Build a work history with part-time employment.
- Research possible internships.
- Explore clubs and student organizations.
- Establish yourself in Superior Edge, or pursue resume building opportunities.

## SOPHOMORE SOLIDIFY MAJOR/CAREER

- Narrow your choices for a major and a minor.
- Research possible occupation(s), identify desirable candidate characteristics, set goals.
- Attend the annual job fairs to network with employers.
- View job postings in Handshake.
- Investigate possible internships.
- Expand your comfort level with emerging technologies.
- Check in with Career Services.
- Attend Career Week events.
- Attend the Study Abroad Fair.
- Begin building your networking contacts, create a LinkedIn profile.
- Use LinkedIn's Find Alumni Tool for career exploration.
- Begin to tailor your part-time and summer employment to the career field in which you are interested.
- Continue adding resume building experiences, to include meeting Superior Edge requirements.

## JUNIOR GAIN EXPERIENCE

- Make a resume review appointment with Career Services.
- Join student and professional organizations related to your field.
- Develop leadership skills; seek leadership positions with a student group or organization to which you belong.
- Volunteer, especially in opportunities related to your field.
- Investigate or complete an internship.
- Attend the annual job fairs.
- Learn about the on-campus interview process.
- Research specific careers, companies, and/or graduate schools which interest you.
- Practice your interview skills —set up a mock interview with Career Services.
- Consider a job shadow experience to observe someone working in your career field.
- Attend the Study Abroad Fair.
- Keep your Handshake profile and resume up-to-date.
- Continue adding resume building experiences, to include meeting Superior Edge requirements.

## SENIOR JOB SEARCH/PREPARATION

- Make a resume review appointment with Career Services.
- Update your resume in Handshake.
- Attend all job fairs.
- Make sure you know which employers are recruiting on-campus.
- Set up job search alerts in Handshake.
- Complete an internship.
- Stay organized with deadlines for applications and graduate schools.
- Practice your interviewing skills.
- Prepare your "elevator speech."
- Continue to research potential employers.
- Update your LinkedIn profile and join the NMU Alumni LinkedIn group to begin connecting with alumni.
- Stay connected with NMU professors, advisers, and others.
- Identify references for employment and graduate school opportunities.
- Make sure you complete all edges in Superior Edge.

## CAREER SERVICES

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[www.facebook.com/CareerServicesNMU](https://www.facebook.com/CareerServicesNMU) \* Instagram: @NMUCareerServices \* LinkedIn Group: "Northern Michigan University Career Services"  
[www.pinterest.com/NMUCareerService](http://www.pinterest.com/NMUCareerService) \* Twitter: @NMUCareerService (#NMUJobs #UPJobs #UPInternships)

# PART-TIME STUDENT EMPLOYMENT

## Can a Part-time Job Really Improve My Grades?

Research shows that students who work part-time while going to college tend to get better grades, on average, than students who do not work. There are, however, some important things to keep in mind when considering a part-time job:

- Whether you decide to work on- or off-campus, it's recommended that you work no more than 20 hours a week. Students who work between 15 and 20 hours a week tend to get better grades than students who don't work. Please note that per university policy, if you work on campus, you'll be limited to 20 hours per week.
- Make sure to evaluate how much time you actually have to dedicate to a part-time job. Consider not only your class time, but also your study time, extracurricular involvement, family obligations, etc. Make sure that you also leave "sanity" time for yourself. Then determine how many hours a week you will be available to work.
- Consider your skills, experience, and interests before you apply for a position. There are lots of different types of opportunities both on- and off-campus. Do you like working with children? Are you good with computers? Are you athletic? Do you enjoy helping other people? Do you like preparing meals? Apply for those positions that interest you and for which you have the skills.

15 – 20 Hours/Week  
is Optimal!



Don't be frustrated if you can't find a part-time job related to your major. You can always supplement your employment experience with an internship or summer job that is geared towards your field of study. Regardless of the position you obtain, you will be gaining valuable job skills, such as communication, time management, accountability, etc. In addition to these essential qualifications, there are other benefits to having a part-time job, including:

- Establishing a work history to include on your resume
- Acquiring employment references
- Developing contacts to assist with your full-time job search
- Experiencing less debt upon graduation
- Becoming a more integrated member of the on- and/or off-campus community
- Meeting new people
- Achieving higher grades in school

During your search for a part-time job, make sure to check out our job lists often! You can visit Handshake ([www.nmu.edu/careerservices/Handshake](http://www.nmu.edu/careerservices/Handshake)) to view current on- and off-campus opportunities and to get on-campus applications. We post all jobs within the Upper Peninsula on our Twitter ([@NMUCareerServic](https://twitter.com/NMUCareerServic)). We encourage you to apply for all positions for which you qualify and are of interest to you. You should also follow up with the employer about a week or so after the application is submitted to make sure it has been received and that you are being considered for the job. Make sure to check your Financial Aid statement to see if you have received Federal Work-Study – some positions on-campus may require it. For more information on Federal Work-Study, review the questions on the next page or contact our office.

Just because you filled out an application doesn't mean you're guaranteed a job. Finding the right job takes effort and patience. Many departments receive a number of applications for the jobs they advertise. It takes them some time to review the applications, conduct interviews, and select the right person.



**The key concept to learn from any job is to make the most of your employment experience. Learn as much as you can, share your thoughts and ideas, seek feedback on your performance, take advantage of leadership opportunities and special projects, and network with the individuals you meet. You may find that your part-time job is one of the most rewarding aspects of your college experience!**

# FEDERAL WORK-STUDY FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**What is Federal Work-Study?** Federal Work-Study refers to either federally funded or state funded programs where the government subsidizes a portion of the student's wages. In order to qualify for Federal Work-Study, you must complete and submit the appropriate financial aid forms (available in the Financial Aid office, 2107 C.B. Hedgcock). Students are considered for Federal Work-Study based on financial need. Questions regarding financial aid should be directed to the Financial Aid Office at 227-2327.

**I have been awarded Federal Work-Study as part of my financial aid package. What do I do now?**

When you apply for a job, make sure that you indicate on your application form that you qualify for Federal Work-Study. When an employer enters you into the payroll system to get paid, your Federal Work-Study award will be applied. This applies to on campus and off campus jobs with Federal Work-Study.

**Do I get a paycheck for working or does the money just go right towards my student account?**

Federal Work-Study funds are intended to help offset your educational and living expenses, but the money is not credited to your student account. You will receive a paycheck each pay period you work and it is up to you to apply it to your expenses. All paychecks are based on your hourly Wage and the number of hours you worked that pay period.

**How do I find a Federal Work-Study job on campus?**

Career Services (located in 3302.3 of the C.B. Hedgcock Building) posts on-campus part-time jobs in Handshake (<http://www.nmu.edu/careerservices/Handshake>)

If you have Federal Work-Study you can apply for any on-campus jobs, whether they require Federal Work-Study or not.

The job postings provide information on the hourly wage paid, the typical duties for the position, the contact person or department, and how to apply for the job. Job applications are available Handshake (in the Resource Library), on the Career Services website ([www.nmu.edu/careerservices](http://www.nmu.edu/careerservices)) and in the Career Services office.

Students are encouraged to apply for all positions for which they qualify and which interest them. We encourage students to follow up with the employer a week or so after the application is submitted to make sure it has been received and that s/he is being considered for a job. Federal Work-Study does not guarantee you a job, so you must play an active role in your job search process.



## How many hours a week can I work?



In support of your academic success, students employed on campus may not work more than 20 hours a week during the regular academic year and during breaks. Your employer should consider the amount of your Federal Work-Study award when determining your weekly work schedule if you want to spread your award out over the entire academic year.

## What happens if I use all my Federal Work-Study funds before the end of the academic year?

Once you reach your Federal Work-Study award level, your employer will be responsible for paying 100% of your wages after that point. Due to budgetary constraints, some departments can't afford to pay 100% of the student's wages and may have to release you from the department. Others may continue to employ you for the remainder of the academic year. If you are concerned about this, you should work with your employer to develop a schedule that allows you to spread your Federal Work-Study award throughout the entire academic year.

## I have two jobs on campus. Do both of them draw from my Federal Work-Study funds?

Yes. Remember to inform both supervisors so they can help you monitor how quickly you are using your Federal Work-Study award.

Each job counts toward the 20-hr max per week during the academic year and breaks.

## Am I guaranteed a Federal Work-Study position each year?

Because Federal Work-Study is part of your financial aid package, you will need to submit the necessary financial aid paperwork each year in order to determine your level of financial need. Contact the Financial Aid office at 227-2327 to determine the deadlines for submitting financial aid paperwork. Having a Federal Work-Study award does not guarantee you a job.

## Can my Federal Work-Study funds be applied to an off-campus job?

The Off-Campus Federal Work-Study program at NMU has provided some students the opportunity to apply their Federal Work-Study awards to off-campus jobs through a limited number of local community service organizations. When such jobs are available, they will be posted in Handshake ([www.nmu.edu/careerservices/handshake](http://www.nmu.edu/careerservices/handshake)).

## Can I still work on campus if I don't qualify for Federal Work-Study?

Absolutely! While some departments require student applicants to have Federal Work-Study, many do not. The job listings in Handshake will indicate whether or not Federal Work-Study is required, and you can apply for any position that doesn't require Federal Work-Study or has Federal Work-Study preferred.

If you have any additional questions related to student employment, feel free to visit Career Services in 3302.3 of the C.B. Hedgcock Building, call us at 227-2800 or email us at [careers@nmu.edu](mailto:careers@nmu.edu).

**Being awarded Federal Work-Study does not guarantee you a job – you must play an active role in your job hunt!**

# RESUME BUILDING

*There are many ways to prepare an effective resume.  
The following tips have proven successful for students in the past.*

## Remember that a resume can serve many purposes, including:

Acting as an initial introduction of your professional credentials when applying for a job.

Supporting an application for promotion or additional responsibilities in your current position.

Serving as an easy reference when filling out job applications.

Highlighting your professional career.

**To an employer, your resume should answer the following three questions:**

1. What skills do you have which will benefit the company/organization?
2. From reading your resume, how do they know that you have these skills?
3. What sets you apart and makes you different from the others who have applied for this job?

## ESSENTIAL RESUME CONTENT

When creating a resume, **certain information MUST be included**, regardless of your major or the position for which you are applying, **such as education and employment history**.

- **Include and highlight contact information**, such as your name, phone number, e-mail, and mailing address with boldface type. If you will be moving soon, use the two-address format to ensure employers will be able to contact you wherever you are!
- List only **colleges or universities from which you have received a degree or are currently attending**. Include what kind of degree (e.g., Associate, Bachelor's, or Master's degree) and the month and year it was earned. If you are still working on your degree, list it as "expected" or "anticipated" along with a date, unless you are within one semester of graduating.
- If you have a cumulative **GPA of 3.0 or higher, it is to your advantage to list it**. Also a GPA of 3.5 or above qualifies you to be an "Honors Graduate" at NMU, so be sure to denote that if it applies, too.
- Emphasize accomplishments you have earned in your positions as opposed to listing duties. **Show the employer what you have ACHIEVED** at your jobs – this helps to set you apart from other applicants. Provide detail in bullet point format. Look at the job description of the position for which you are applying, and try to find related accomplishments at your previous positions. Give examples of when you performed job duties and add details.
- **Highlight numbers and dollar values**. Emphasize things like the number of employees you've trained or the amount of money you saved the company. **Actual numbers are more effective than general phrases**. Good example: "Supervised five employees and increased sales by over twenty percent."
- Always **list any certifications and licenses** you hold, but make sure they are current! If you list a skill, be sure you can come up with a way to prove it to employers. **Don't exaggerate and never, ever lie**.

## RESUME FORMATTING GUIDELINES

- **Avoid using a template**, word processing wizard, or other resume software programs – it is better to create your OWN resume!
- There are cases to be made for a longer resume, but in the majority of cases, **keep it to one page**. If it is difficult for an employer to find what they need (your education, experience, etc.) they will discard it before they even finish reading.
- Use standard **8½ by 11 inch good-quality paper** in ivory, white or other light colors. Avoid flashy "look at me" colors and use the same paper for your cover letter. (Career Services will print copies of your resume and cover letter on high-quality paper, for free!)
- Use **11 or 12 point font** if possible. A smaller size can be too difficult to read and anything larger than 12 is too big. Don't use more than two fonts, and never use

script fonts – a **basic, modern font like Helvetica or Arial** works well. Simplicity and consistency go a long way to making your document look professional.

- **Avoid using graphics, decorative fonts, pictures, and flashy colors** – your resume is a professional tool, and these things can distract employers from finding key information.
- It is a good idea to **save a copy of your resume in PDF format**. This ensures that your formatting looks the same on any computer. And **back up your work!** One good way is to submit it to Handshake ([www.nmu.edu/careerservices/handshake](http://www.nmu.edu/careerservices/handshake)).
- Submit electronic resumes with your name as part of the document name– it is easier for an employer to find your resume if it’s called “John Maki Resume.pdf” rather than “Resume.pdf”.
- **Avoid folding your documents!** If mailing documents, use a 9” x 12” mailing envelope (available from the post office, campus bookstore, or an office supply store), rather than a letter-size envelope. If you are taking resumes to an interview, use a folder or portfolio to keep them flat.

### OPTIONAL RESUME CONTENT

There may be other things that you might want to include in your resume.

Remember that your resume is your way to market yourself to an employer. You may want to include additional headings such as: Certifications/Licenses, Relevant Coursework, Volunteer and/or Leadership Experience, Computer Skills, or Interests and Activities. Depending on your experiences and the space available on your resume, you may decide to omit certain headings or add others not listed here.

- **An objective is usually appropriate for entry-level positions and should be as specific as possible.** For example, “To obtain the position of software engineer with Microsoft, Inc.”
- Consider including **relevant coursework** (usually 4-6 classes which directly relate to your major) to show employers what skills you have learned throughout your education.
- Employers look very highly upon **membership in an organization and demonstrated leadership skills**, as well as civic involvement, community service, and volunteer activities. List all current or recent extracurricular activities in which you have been involved.
- **Technology experience** is also something to include. List everything that you have had practice with, like Microsoft Office, Adobe Photoshop, Dreamweaver, etc.
- *If* there is room on your resume, you could illustrate that you have interests outside of your classes and work. You never know, maybe you and the interviewer have something in common.
- Do not list references on your resume! **Create a completely separate References page** for this information (see page 20 for more details).

## HANDY CONTENT TIPS

- **Tailor your resume for each job** – when your resume reflects the job responsibilities and required minimum qualifications of the position for which you are applying, your resume can serve as a great marketing tool to promote you as the right person for the job. To make it easier to apply to different types of jobs, have multiple versions of your resume saved on your computer. You can also keep a “master list” on your computer of your previous positions, bullet points, and other information – then just cut-and-paste to make a custom resume each time. **Remember, with resumes, one size does not fit all!**
- **Your resume is a living document.** As you gain skills and experience, make sure to update your resume. It is a good idea to regularly review your resume to make sure that the listed information is current.
- Write **clear, concise statements** when listing credentials. A bulleted list reads easier than paragraph form.
- The most commonly accepted resume format is the **reverse chronological format**. List your most recent education and work experience first. There are cases to be made for other formats (skills-based or functional), but those are less commonly used.
- Use **LOTS of action words**, like “prepared”, “organized”, and “excelled” (see the Helpful Action Words page for more), but make sure to mix it up to keep the reader engaged. Using the correct tense is also important (for example; in a current position, you may use action words in present tense such as “preparing”, “organizing” and “excelling”).
- Avoid slang words or terms employers may not be familiar with. Make sure that your terminology is **understandable to the average person**.



**KEEP IT UP-TO-DATE!**

For more information about how to format your resume, or if you would like to view sample resumes by major, visit the Resource Library in Handshake ([www.nmu.edu/careerservices/handshake](http://www.nmu.edu/careerservices/handshake)) or the Career Services website (<http://www.nmu.edu/careerservices/resumeassistance>).

**Consider attending one of the Career Services Resume Workshops! For the current workshop schedule, visit the website at [www.nmu.edu/careerservices/workshops](http://www.nmu.edu/careerservices/workshops).**

# HELPFUL ACTION WORDS

**Employers look for accomplishments**, evidence that you actually did something in the jobs you've had and the experiences in which you've participated. For this reason, it is important that whenever possible you begin each line in your resume with a verb that describes what you did. For example: "**Supervised** 15 part-time employees.", "**Allocated** \$10,000 in financial resources across the department.", and "**Provided** comprehensive customer service throughout work shift."

Achieved	Coordinated	Generated	Observed	Researched
Acquired	Correlated	Guided	Obtained	Responded
Acted	Counseled	Handled	Offered	Restored
Adapted	Created	Headed	Operated	Revamped
Addressed	Critiqued	Helped	Ordered	Reviewed
Administered	Cultivated	Identified	Organized	Scanned
Advised	Dealt	Illustrated	Originated	Scheduled
Advocated	Defined	Implemented	Overcame	Schemed
Aided	Delegated	Improved	Oversaw	Screened
Allocated	Delivered	Increased	Participated	Set goals
Analyzed	Designed	Indexed	Perceived	Shaped
Answered	Detected	Influenced	Perfected	Skilled
Anticipated	Determined	Initiated	Performed	Solicited
Applied	Developed	Inspected	Persuaded	Solved
Appraised	Diagnosed	Instituted	Planned	Specialized
Approved	Directed	Integrated	Practiced	Spoke
Arranged	Discovered	Interpreted	Predicted	Stimulated
Assembled	Displayed	Interviewed	Prepared	Streamlined
Assessed	Documented	Introduced	Presented	Strengthened
Assisted	Drafted	Invented	Prioritized	Stressed
Audited	Edited	Inventoried	Produced	Studied
Authored	Enabled	Investigated	Programmed	Substantiated
Briefed	Enforced	Judged	Projected	Succeeded
Brought	Enlisted	Kept	Promoted	Summarized
Budgeted	Established	Launched	Proposed	Synthesized
Built	Estimated	Learned	Protected	Supervised
Calculated	Evaluated	Lectured	Proved	Supported
Charged	Examined	Led	Provided	Surveyed
Checked	Exceeded	Lifted	Publicized	Sustained
Clarified	Excelled	Located	Published	Symbolized
Classified	Expanded	Logged	Purchased	Talked
Coached	Expedited	Maintained	Queried	Taught
Collaborated	Explained	Managed	Questioned	Theorized
Collected	Explored	Manipulated	Raised	Trained
Communicated	Expressed	Mapped	Ran	Translated
Compared	Extracted	Mastered	Ranked	Upgraded
Complied	Facilitated	Maximized	Rationalized	Utilized
Composed	Fashioned	Mediated	Read	Validated
Conceived	Financed	Memorized	Reasoned	Verified
Conducted	Fixed	Mentored	Recorded	Visualized
Conserved	Followed	Minimized	Received	Won
Consulted	Formulated	Modeled	Reduced	Wrote
Contracted	Founded	Modified	Referred	
Contributed	Gained	Monitored	Related	
Converted	Gathered	Narrated	Relied	
Cooperated	Gave	Negotiated	Reported	

# WHAT DO EMPLOYERS VALUE IN A CANDIDATE?

While it is impossible to know what each and every employer is looking for in a candidate, there are some common characteristics and experiences most employers value when evaluating a candidate. According to a survey of NACE (National Association of Colleges and Employers) members, these are the attributes employers are looking for:

- The ability to verbally communicate with those inside and outside the organization
- Able to work in a team structure
- Ability to make decisions and solve problems
- Able to plan, organize, and prioritize work
- Ability to obtain and process information
- Ability to analyze quantitative data
- Technical knowledge related to the job
- Proficient with computer software programs
- Able to create and/or edit written reports
- Ability to sell or influence others



**Additionally, employers may be looking for:**

- Demonstration of a sense of timeliness, flexibility, adaptability, and dependability
- Applicants who are not bound to a specific geographic region
- A show of initiative or self-starters. If a problem comes up, don't ask how to fix it - just fix it and report the results
- Active listening skills
- Conflict resolution skills

**Make a resume  
review  
appointment:**

**Handshake  
(906) 227-2800  
careers@nmu.edu**

## FINISHING TOUCHES

**Always remember to proofread your resume!** Don't simply glance over your finished document to check for errors. One mistake can eliminate you from consideration for a position. The quality of your resume reflects the quality of your work and your level of professionalism. If you make a mistake on something as important as your resume, will you do the same at your job? It's best to have someone with strong English or writing skills review your resume. Consider making a one-on-one appointment with Career Services staff - it's quick and easy, and could be the difference between a rejection and an interview.

# SAMPLE RESUMES

While reviewing the samples below, keep in mind that they are just that, samples. Your resume, depending on your background, experiences, preferences, etc. may look very different.

---

## Full Name

Address ♦ Phone ♦ Email

<b>OBJECTIVE</b>	An objective is optional. The objective should be a concise description of the goals of developing the resume, no longer than 1-2 sentences. It is appropriate to be a career statement, but it may also be specific to the jobs for which one may be applying.
<b>EDUCATION</b>	<p>Always include current education or most recent degrees first. If a master's or bachelor's degree is completed, it isn't necessary to include high school information. GPA is not necessary, but, if it is above a 3.00, one may want to use it. Example:</p> <p><b>Master of Public Administration</b>, Expected in May 2019 <b>Bachelor of Science in Biology</b>, May 2017, 3.95 GPA; Graduated Magna Cum Laude Northern Michigan University, Marquette, Michigan</p>
<b>EXPERIENCE</b>	<p>Always list experiences in reverse chronological order (most recent listed first). Include detail regarding the responsibilities of the positions instead of merely listing title and dates of employment. Avoid using "I" and "I am" in the descriptions. Example:</p>
<b>EXPERIENCE</b>	<p><b>Student Supervisor, All-Campus Tutoring – August 2017 to present</b> <i>Academic and Career Advisement Center</i> <i>Northern Michigan University, Marquette, Michigan</i></p> <p>Responsible for supervising other tutors in All-Campus Tutoring (ACT) and to provide one-on-one and group tutoring sessions for students using the free services. Specific duties include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Selecting, training, supervising and evaluating all ACT tutors.</li><li>• Scheduling tutor staff for walk-in tutoring in the ACT center.</li><li>• Provide tutoring in math and sciences.</li></ul>
<b>SKILLS AND ABILITIES</b>	<p>Although this section is optional, it is a good way to briefly outline other areas that may not be evident in the education or experience sections above. Here you may include computer skills, people skills, accomplishments, certifications, etc. A bulleted list is appropriate and easier to read than a paragraph. Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Certified Tutor – College Reading and Learning Association</li><li>• Fluent in Spanish</li><li>• Able to work in group situations</li></ul>
<b>VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE</b>	<p>This section speaks to non-paid experiences that one feels important for an employer to know, especially if the non-paid activity directly relates to the position to which one may be applying. Some use "campus involvement" as the section title, but that is limiting to only college experiences.</p>
<b>INTERESTS</b>	<p>This section is optional and, if trying to keep the length of the resume to one page, should be the first item eliminated. You may include personal interests, or hobbies, this can be especially helpful to show informal experience and involvement that may compliment your knowledge or understanding of the job.</p>

*The following is a sample of a resume without work experience.*

---

**Full Name**  
**Address ♦ Phone ♦ Email**

**OBJECTIVE**            Seeking an entry-level position in retail sales at a clothing store.

**EDUCATION**            **Northern Michigan University**  
Marquette, Michigan

- Undeclared
- First Year Student
- Anticipated Graduation Date: May, 2020

**High School Diploma** – May, 2014  
City, State

- Include what types of classes you took;
- What your interests were;
- GPA if it is at least a 3.0/4.0
- Honors you received/Honor Societies you were a member of

**ACCOMPLISHMENTS**    Although I have no prior experience in retail sales, I believe the following accomplishments show that I can learn quickly and work efficiently:

**Computer Skills**

- List software and other computer skills in which you are proficient

**Customer Service**

- Choose another part of the responsibilities of the job you are applying for
- Volunteer at a nursing home once per week
- Participated in Make a Difference Day in 20xx and 20xx

**Working with Others**

- Began a weekly study session for middle school students
- Volunteered in the kindergarten classes in 20xx

**Another Heading**

- Choose another part of the responsibilities of the job you are applying for or a topic in which you have a lot of experience

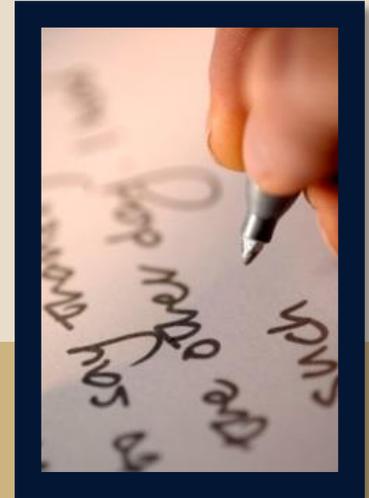
**INTERESTS**            This section is optional and, if trying to keep the length of the resume to one page, should be the first item eliminated. You may include personal interests, or hobbies, this can be especially helpful to show informal experience and involvement that may compliment your knowledge or understanding of the job.

## COVER LETTER/LETTER OF APPLICATION

A cover letter, a letter of application, or letter of interest are usually the same thing. It is simply a professional introduction of you and your credentials, and a statement of your professional career interests. Relatively short and to-the-point, a cover letter packages your qualifications, experiences, and strong points into a **one-page** document that serves as a cover for your other material.

Cover letters allow an employer to find out if you can communicate effectively in writing, as well as give you a way to explain how your education and experience fits the position requirements. You should present yourself in a way that shows the employer you have much to offer, and that hiring you would be beneficial to their organization.

Often the hardest part of the cover letter is simply getting started. Harry Dahlstrom, author of *The Job Hunting Handbook* recommends the following approach to drafting your cover letter. Think of your letter as a way to sell yourself to the employer. Use the AIDA formula – Attention, Interest, Desire, Action – to convince the hiring employer that you are the best person for the job.



Open with something that **grabs the attention** of the hiring manager, usually a statement that tells them why you are writing – I would like to apply for [insert position name here], etc. Then, **explain what makes you special** – piquing their interest. For example, you could talk about any relevant internship or volunteer experience, or special skills and abilities. It helps to look at the job posting and relate the job requirements to what you have to offer.

You then **create a desire to schedule an interview** by describing accomplishments that pertain to the job. These accomplishments should back up what you said in the previous paragraph. Again, look at the job description and relate the requirements to your accomplishments – for example, if a requirement is “Proficient in use of Excel” then you could say, “I created Excel spreadsheets for tracking purchases, which reduced time spent on inventory by twenty percent.”

Lastly, you’ll **call them to action by asking for that interview** or follow-up. This would be a good place to restate your contact information (cell phone or email address are typical) and to thank the reader for their time and consideration.

**If you’re stuck, there are some great online resources to try:**  
Purdue OWL (Online Writing Lab): <http://owl.english.purdue.edu>  
The Daily Muse: <http://www.thedailymuse.com/category/job-search/resumes/>

# SAMPLE COVER LETTER

*Do not simply copy this sample letter. Use your own words and writing style.*

## Your Address

Should include your complete street address, city, state, and Zip Code (do not include your name) followed by the date after two blank lines.

## Mailing Address

Should include the complete name, title and address to whom you are sending the letter. If you are submitting your cover letter via email, you may not need to include this address block.

## Salutation

It is key that you address your letter(s) to an individual. Avoid sending "To Whom It May Concern" letters, and make sure to correctly note the person's title (Dr., Mr., Ms., etc.)

## First Paragraph

Simply state the reason you are writing. Name the position (or the type of work) for which you are applying, and mention how you found out about the job for which you are applying.

## Second (and sometimes third) Paragraph

State, in two or three sentences, why you feel you are qualified. Mention (BRIEFLY) relevant work/internship experience, and emphasize skills you possess which will contribute to your effectiveness. Sell yourself. Note your accomplishments and more importantly, state why the employer should hire you. **Do not simply restate information that the employer can get from your resume.**

## Closing Paragraph

Refer the reader to your enclosed resume, and restate your strong interest in the position. Thank them for their consideration, and mention that you hope to hear from them soon.

## Closing

A simple "Sincerely", followed by some blank lines for your signature, followed by your full name

1401 Anystreet  
Anytown, Anystate 00011

January 1, 20xx

Dr. Wonderful Employer  
Assistant Superintendent  
Great School District  
111 Street  
AnyTown, AnyState 11111

Dear Dr. Employer:

Please accept this as my letter of application and supporting material for the position of **Special Education Teacher** with the Great School District. I learned of this position through your advertisement on Northern Michigan University's Career Services' web site, and I believe that my academic preparation and work experiences have prepared me well for the challenges this position offers.

As you will note by my enclosed resume, graduating from Northern Michigan University (with honors) with a **Bachelor of Science degree in Special Education** with a certificate in Learning Disabilities has allowed me to develop the background necessary to be a success in this position. My educational background has been enhanced by my successful student teaching experience with the Marquette Public School District, and my volunteer activities with Big Brothers and Big Sisters of the greater Marquette area. These experiences have allowed me to develop both the technical skills and human relation skills necessary to be a vibrant and consistent contributor to the success of your school district.

I believe a brief review of my resume will highlight the strong match between my qualifications and your position. I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss my background, education, and experiences with you, and I am available at your convenience to travel to AnyTown, AnyState in order to discuss my candidacy in greater detail. You may contact me at (212) 111-1111 or email at (INSERT PROFESSIONAL EMAIL). Thank you for your consideration, and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Marvin A. Student

# THANK YOU LETTER

Thank you letters are documents that express your appreciation to the person/people for the time they took to interview you and consider your candidacy. As is the case with your cover letter, **do not simply copy the wording from the sample below. Use your own words!**

## HINTS

- Make it very brief.
- You can send a thank you card if you feel comfortable doing so. Generally, the more personal relationship you have with the interviewer, the more acceptable a thank you card will be.
- **They are “required”. If you don’t do one, people will remember.**
- Send your thank-you letter within 24 hours of your interview.
- Note the date of your interview in your letter. It will help the recipient remember who you are.
- Re-state your strong interest (if you have one) in the position, and highlight your qualifications once again.
- Thank everyone by name with whom you interviewed. Individual letters aren’t necessary, but are often appreciated.
- A thank-you card or typed letter is best. An email should be sent as a last resort.

### Your Address

*Should include your complete street address, city, state, and Zip Code, NOT YOUR NAME, followed by the date after two blank lines.*

### Mailing Address

*Should include the complete name, title and address to whom you are sending the letter.*

### Salutation

*Dear Mr./Ms./Dr., etc. and their LAST NAME.*

### First Paragraph

*Express your sincere appreciation; naming all people with whom you interviewed and the position for which you interviewed*

### Second (and sometimes third) Paragraph

*Reemphasize your strongest qualifications and how you meet the requirements of the position. Draw attention to the match between you and the job. Show how your past work experience matches the job for which you are applying.*

### Closing Paragraph

*Reiterate your interest in the position, and offer to provide any additional information if needed. Restate your appreciation.*

### Closing

*A simple “Sincerely”, followed by some blank lines for your signature, followed by your full name*

6000 Anystreet  
Anytown, Anystate 77777

January 21, 20xx

Dr. Wonderful Employer  
Assistant Superintendent  
Great School District  
111 Street  
Anytown, AnyState 11111

Dear Dr. Employer:

Thank you very much for the opportunity to interview for the **Special Education Teacher** position with your school district on January 15<sup>th</sup>. I enjoyed meeting you and Ms. Employer #2, and I especially enjoyed learning more about the challenges and opportunities this position has to offer.

My enthusiasm for the position has been strengthened considerably as a result of my interview with you, and I am confident my education and experiences continue to match those required of your posted position. As you will recall from my interview, my experiences as a student teacher with the Marquette School District and my volunteer experiences have given me the knowledge necessary to meet the growing demands of this position and your school district, and I am confident I will be able to make significant contributions to your students.

I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate my very strong interest in the position and in working with you and your staff. Please feel free to contact me at (YOUR PHONE NUMBER) if I can provide you with any additional information. Again, thank you for your time and consideration, and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Marvin A. Student

# REFERENCES

Every job-seeker, whether they are looking for a full-time job, part-time job, internship, or summer job, should have a group of people lined up who have agreed to speak on the candidate's behalf – in other words, a list of references. Your references serve a number of important functions, depending on their relationship to you.

FUNCTION	DETAILS
Verify Employment	In many cases, references do little more than verify that you were employed during the months and years listed on your resume.
Comment on Job Performance	More often, a person listed as a reference will be asked to comment on your performance. This could be performance related to a job you have listed, or involvement in a group, organization, club, etc.
Provide Letters of Recommendation	Many times, those listed on your reference page will be asked to provide a letter of recommendation. These letters typically document your job performance and can, at times, comment on your non job-related skills (interpersonal, problem solving, etc.).

## WHO SHOULD BE LISTED

Many job-seekers frequently struggle with deciding who they should list when providing reference contacts to a prospective employer. While there is no standard format that dictates who should be listed as a reference, job-seekers frequently include the following:

- Previous employers
- Current supervisors
- Faculty
- Colleagues/co-workers
- Group or organization president or chairperson

## WHO SHOULD NOT BE LISTED

There are some people you should not include when deciding who to list as a reference. Generally, you should avoid listing:

- **Family members** or **future family members**, even if you've worked for your fiancé's uncle.
- **Big names**, avoid listing someone in order to show how "important" you are. For example, just because the University president knows your name does not mean you can list his or her name as one of your references.

## HOW A REFERENCE PAGE SHOULD LOOK

How you document the contact information for each of your references with potential employers depends on the instructions provided by the employer. Do you have to supply letters of recommendation (also known as letters of reference)? Or, can you simply provide the contact information for each of your references? There is no one correct answer – it really depends on the position. There is, however, one piece of advice that will probably help you – **create a reference page that you can send to a potential employer.**

A reference page simply lists all the contact information for each one of the people who have agreed to speak on your behalf. This usually includes, for each reference:

- Name
- Title
- Full mailing address
- Work telephone number
- Email address

Only list personal or home contact information if your reference person gives you permission to do so, otherwise it's best to list their work contact information only.

You may choose to list their relationship to you to clarify for the employer's benefit, this is not necessarily required.

Make sure to verify this information is current. It shows attention to detail. Failure to do so could create missed opportunities, or demonstrate a lack of attention to important details. Misinformation could suggest that this reference is not current enough or familiar enough with you to give accurate information.

Always check in with references and let them know you are applying for a position/ opportunity. They will know to expect to be contacted, and can prepare to respond. Plus, it's simply courteous.

Here is a sample of how a reference page can look:

---

### **Lisa M. Student**

2600 Garfield #07 • Marquette, Michigan • 49855-2607

Phone: (906) 227-0000

Email: LisaM@nmu.edu

### **REFERENCES**

Dr. Robert T. Johnson

Associate Professor – Department of English

Northern Michigan University

1401 Presque Isle Ave.

Marquette, MI 49855

Email: rtjohnson@nmu.edu

Telephone:

(906) 227-0001

Ms. Rosalie Algonquin

Owner

Marquette's Finest Apartments, Inc.

123 Third St.

Marquette, MI 49855

Telephone:

(906) 227-0002

Dr. Charles Church

Principal

Hiawatha Hills Area High School

2424 Church Road

Raco, MI 49715

Telephone:

(906) 227-0003

# HANDSHAKE

Handshake ([www.nmu.edu/careerservices/Handshake](http://www.nmu.edu/careerservices/Handshake)) is a service that can help you find a great job by enabling you to:

- Search and apply for job opportunities online 24/7, including:
  - Part-time on-campus jobs (including work-study positions)
  - Part-time off-campus jobs throughout the Marquette area
  - Full-time jobs
- Manage multiple resumes, cover letters, and other employment-related documents
- Sign up for on-campus interviews
- View and RSVP for job fairs, workshops and other career events
- Much more!

Below you'll find the answers to some of our most frequently asked questions:

## **Students - How do I activate my account?**

1. Head to the login page: [www.nmu.edu/careerservices/handshake](http://www.nmu.edu/careerservices/handshake)
2. User Name: NMU Username
3. Password: NMU Password

## **Alumni - How do I create an account?**

1. Head to the login page: [www.nmu.edu/careerservices/handshake](http://www.nmu.edu/careerservices/handshake)
2. "Click Here to Register!"

## **Soon-to-be NMU Students - How do I activate my account?**

You will not have access to Handshake until you are registered for classes (after orientation). You can view all job postings within the Upper Peninsula (including part-time on-campus and off-campus jobs) on our Twitter (NMUCareerServic). After you register for classes, you will receive an email welcoming you into Handshake.

## **How do I upload a resume?**

1. Click your "name" at the top right-hand corner of the screen
2. Click "documents"
3. Click "Add New Document"
4. Drag and drop PDF or click "Select from computer"
5. Name the document and select the document type
6. Click "Add Document"

*Note: When uploading more than one resume, please make sure that your most generic resume is your default. Your default resume is the document that employers can view when searching the system.*

## How do I find what jobs are available on campus (or are federal work-study jobs)?

1. Select “Jobs” from the top white menu bar.
  2. Click “ON-Campus” right under the search bar
    - a. If you are looking for **federal work-study jobs**, make sure to click the blue highlighted button “Filters”.
    - b. In the “Job Type” drop-down menu, make sure to select “Work-Study”.
    - c. Click “See jobs” once you’ve selected all the filters you want.

**NEED A  
JOB?**

## How can I see what employers will be interviewing on-campus?

1. Click “Jobs” tab on the top white menu bar
2. Click “On-Campus Interviews” on the blue top menu bar
3. If this is a Preselect schedule, you will be requesting to be interviewed.

If this is an Open schedule, you will be allowed to choose an open interview timeslot.

## Where can I see a list of upcoming job fairs, workshops, and information sessions?

1. Click on the “Events” tab on the top white menu.
2. You can search by Upcoming events, event search, and fair search and see a calendar view.
3. To view details about the event (employers registered) or to RSVP, click on the Career Event’s name.

## Can I see what events I have registered for and jobs I have applied for?

1. Click the “Events” tab on the white menu bar, on the right-hand side there are 3 categories to look at
  - a. Your upcoming events – These are the Career Events and workshops that you are currently signed up for.
  - b. Your upcoming Career Fairs – These are job fairs that you are currently signed up for.
  - c. Your upcoming Interviews – This shows any interviews, information sessions, or waiting lists that you are signed up for.

## Can employers log in and see my profile?

1. Go to “your name/picture” and “My Profile.”
2. You can view/edit any profile information here.
3. On the right-hand side of your profile page the first box tells you if you are public to employers or not.
4. If your profile is private there will be a green button that allows you to make it public. You can also see the employer view.
5. If it is set to yes, employers will be able to see your profile and resume. This means employers can find you when they are searching for applicants.

**“Allow Employer  
Viewing” is a great,  
low-effort way to make  
sure employers can  
find you!**

**Some other tips to help you get the most out of Handshake:**

1. Save jobs to your Favorites by clicking the star on the posting. You can view it later on the right-hand sidebar.
2. Save a search to quickly access it from the right-hand sidebar by clicking “Create search alert”
3. For more tips and answers to your questions, visit [www.nmu.edu/careerservices/faq#Handshake](http://www.nmu.edu/careerservices/faq#Handshake)

**One of our favorite features is the “Save Searches” function. Simply run a job search with your desired criteria (*try running one for “Part-Time On Campus” jobs*). Then click “Create Search alert”. It will save the search and you can customize it to send you alerts whenever new jobs are posted!**

# PREPARING FOR A JOB FAIR

A great place to market yourself as a potential employee is at local job fairs and other career events. However, job fairs are not just for graduating students looking for full-time employment. There are many types of job fairs where employers are looking to fill various kinds of positions. Here on NMU's campus, Career Services hosts events such as the **Construction Management and Technology Career Fair**, the **Fall Semester Job Fair**, the **Summer Employment Job Fair**, and a **Winter Semester Job Fair** throughout the year to help you find what you are looking for.



A job fair can be your first exposure to an employer; an employer with whom you may like to work for in the future. For this reason, attending a job fair can be an intimidating experience. But with a little advance preparation, a job fair won't be all that frightening. Here are a few tips:

- Visit the Career Services web site at [www.nmu.edu/careerservices](http://www.nmu.edu/careerservices) or in Handshake ([www.nmu.edu/careerservices/Handshake](http://www.nmu.edu/careerservices/Handshake)). We post a list of attending companies along with a brief summary about the organization. Be sure to check the web site often because sometimes employers will register at the last minute.
- Research the companies who will be attending. Almost all businesses have a website, and it may impress the recruiter if you are knowledgeable about their company.
- Dress professionally. While a job fair isn't exactly an interview, first impressions are lasting ones. A suit is not required, but it gives the employer the sense that you are serious about finding a job, and may be a high-quality employee. For more information on dressing professionally, see the "Deciphering Business Dress Code" section.



**One of the most common negative comments from employers is "Sloppily dressed students." Don't be 'that guy' in the PJs, the hoodie or even jeans— dress for success!**

# WHAT TO DO AT THE JOB FAIR

- **Bring plenty of resumes.** You can leave them with employers to refer to later when they return to the office. If you don't have a completed, error-free resume, call the staff in Career Services to make an appointment to have your resume reviewed before the job fair.
- **Bring a folder or folio** to carry your resumes and company material you may collect. Many bring loads of information about the organization, the positions they offer, and the products they produce. Also, **keep a pad of paper and a pen with you** for taking notes.
- You can go with a friend, but remember to **circulate by yourself**.
- **Grab every business card you can**, so you have a way to follow up with contacts later.
- Place your **name tag** on your right side. This makes it easier for an employer to see when shaking your hand.
- Always **shake hands firmly** while maintaining good eye contact and posture. Use body language to convey confidence and interest. **Extend your hand and say: "Good morning/afternoon. My name is ...."** The employer will usually take it from there.
- Many employers stay until the very end in order to meet as many students as possible, so **don't leave early**.
- **Always maintain a friendly and positive attitude**, even at the end of the day when you're tired.
- **Meet everyone.** Stop by each employer who is at the job fair. Don't worry if they don't seem to be hiring people with your major. You never know who or what they know! The first question out of your mouth should be: **"What kind of employment opportunities does your company offer?"**
- Don't waste time standing in lines waiting to visit employers. Those lines may be shorter later in the day.
- **After the fair, send a thank you note and your resume to the employers you talked to** using the address and other information from each business card you collected during the fair. There is a sample letter in the Resume section and the staff in Career Services is always more than willing to help, too.



**For more event preparation tips, visit  
[www.nmu.edu/careerservices](http://www.nmu.edu/careerservices)**

# INTERVIEWS - FROM A TO Z

So you completed your resume, put it into Handshake ([www.nmu.edu/careerservices/Handshake](http://www.nmu.edu/careerservices/Handshake)), onto several hot web sites, e-mailed it to a number of companies, and mailed it to a few others. Now the moment you've been waiting for – the phone call from the organization you would love to work for and they want you to interview with them for your dream job! You feel a sense of panic rush over you. What will they ask? What will you say? How do you know what to ask them? Well, you can relax knowing there are a number of things you can do to help prepare yourself for that big interview. So breathe easy and read on.

## WHAT ORGANIZATIONS WANT TO KNOW

A mistake that a number of people make in preparing for an interview is they simply review their resume and gather their list of references. What many people don't realize is many organizations today are relying less on questions that come straight from the resume like, "So tell me about your responsibilities as a hotel desk clerk," and more on questions like, "So tell me how you handled a difficult customer when you worked as a desk clerk." This type of question is known as a **behavior-based interview question** and gives the employer **insight into how you might respond in certain situations**. The underlying premise of behavior-based interviewing is that your past behavior is the best indicator of your future behavior. Organizations want to know not only that you have the technical knowledge to perform the job but also **how** you will perform on the job. So if you are interviewing for a supervisory role, you might be asked, "Describe how you would handle an employee who comes to you complaining about another coworker," and if you are interviewing for a sales position you might be asked, "Tell me about a time you had to persuade a previous boss or professor to your way of thinking." Anticipating what an organization wants to know about you will help you to prepare yourself for the interview. See sample interview questions in the section "Sample Interview Questions."

## PREPARING FOR THE INTERVIEW



In order to prepare for an interview and help you feel less anxious about the experience, it's helpful to spend some time thinking about how you would respond to certain questions. To start, **consider some of the skills that would be important for the position for which you are interviewing**. For example, if you are interviewing for a marketing position, some important skills for the job would be the ability to communicate effectively, project management skills, teamwork, or creativity. With these skills in mind, **think about previous work experiences and/or classroom experiences you've had where you demonstrated these skills**. (Experiences with a campus or

community organization are acceptable, too). Maybe you demonstrated communication skills through the many presentations you were required to give as a part of your coursework, or maybe your professor asked you to speak at a campus-wide event because she was so impressed with

your speaking abilities. An example of project management skills might be the time your boss at the restaurant asked you to evaluate the possibility of bringing in live music on weekends. You had to consider the costs, the revenue, the space required, the audience it would attract, the competition in the community, etc., and make a recommendation based on what you learned. Many times, we don't realize the skills we are developing on the job and in the classroom. **Don't sell yourself short when you think about your skills and abilities.** Chances are you've accomplished more than you think.

Take the time to practice talking about yourself and your accomplishments. You'll show confidence and why you are a good fit for the position. Do a practice interview with a friend, or with a staff member in Career Services.

It may be helpful for you to write down some of these examples to help clarify them in your mind. You don't want to memorize responses to potential interview questions (you want your responses to be natural), but you will likely feel more comfortable going into the interview if you've considered how you may respond to some of the questions. See the "Interview Cheat Sheet" worksheet on page 35.



If you are about to graduate or have recently graduated, you should also be prepared to speak of your interest in this particular career, what classes you felt benefited you the most and why, what coursework you enjoyed most/least, campus activities, etc. All candidates should be prepared to state why they want the job, why they are interested in the organization, how their knowledge and skills will contribute to the organization, successes/failures, and why the organization should hire them. See sample questions in the section "Fifty Questions Recruiters Ask College Students."

### **DO YOUR RESEARCH**

Part of your interview preparation should also include researching the organization you are interviewing with. Visit the organization's web site (if they have one) and learn as much as you can about its products, services, employees, mission, etc. If they don't have a web site, ask the organization for a copy of its annual report, or any general information or marketing materials. Reviewing this information will help you demonstrate your knowledge of the organization during the interview. It will also help you to formulate some questions to ask during your interview process.

If you don't have a whole lot of interviewing experience or would like to improve your interviewing skills, contact Career Services for assistance at 906-227-2800. You can discuss interviewing strategies or arrange for a practice interview to get feedback on your strengths and areas for development.

## IT'S ALL ABOUT ATTITUDE

There are many things about an interview that you can't necessarily control. One thing that you can control is the "a" word – **Attitude**. Attitude can have a significant impact on the success of your interview. It's important that you go into an interview feeling confident (not arrogant) about your abilities and what you have to offer an organization.

- When you meet or are introduced to someone, shake his/her hand firmly.
- Look the interviewer in the eyes when you respond to questions.
- Sit straight in your chair.
- Smile and be friendly during the process.
- Know that you have a lot of skills and strengths to offer. Focus on these strengths and don't be so concerned about what you can't do. Most organizations are aware that candidates come to them with some expertise that will need to be enhanced through formal and on-the-job training.



## ADDITIONAL TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL INTERVIEW

In addition to preparing for an interview, there are a number of other things you can do to make yourself feel more comfortable and confident the day of your interview, and to help ensure a positive interview experience.

- Ask your organization contact for the names and titles of the individuals who will interview you that day. This will help you to understand the roles/perspectives of your interviewers, and may help you determine what types of questions would be appropriate to ask them.
- Make sure you know where you are going before the day of the interview. If you are unfamiliar with the location, drive to it (or take a cab) from where you are staying and time yourself. Allow extra time if you will be traveling in rush hour traffic. Plan to arrive within a block or so about 30-45 minutes prior to your interview. This will give you a chance to relax, prepare, and be sure you will be on time.
- The night before an interview, do things that help you to relax. Try to get a good night's rest.
- Bring extra copies of your resume and reference list with you. Bring a padfolio or notepad with your questions so you can make notes.
- Arrive approximately 15-20 minutes early for your interview. Don't be late, but don't arrive too early - it may make you appear too anxious or may inconvenience the staff.
- Be prepared for a meal interview. Some employers will take you to breakfast/lunch/dinner as part of your interview experience. For tips on how to handle a meal interview, see the "Dining Etiquette" section.
- At the end of your day, be sure to ask what the next steps in the process will be, such as "When can I expect to hear from you?" or "Will there be a second interview process?" This information will give you the organization's decision time frame, so you don't spend weeks wondering what is going on.
- Turn off your cell phone!

## WHAT TO ASK EMPLOYERS

Think of the interview as your opportunity to learn as much about the employer as you can. You can learn a lot of things simply by observing the environment. Are the employees dressed casually or in suits? Do they seem relaxed or stressed? Does the furniture look comfortable and inviting or more stiff and formal? Is it noisy? Is it clean? Did people appear prepared to see you? Before you go to an interview, you need to decide what type of environment you'd like to work in and try to observe those things that will help determine if the organization could be a fit for you.

Asking questions is another way to learn more about the environment and the position. Below are some additional items to consider. Remember, you want to ask those questions that will help you make a decision about whether or not this is the right opportunity for you.

**Come prepared with a short list of questions. If you don't, you may be viewed as ill-prepared or uninterested – not a good way to get a call back!**

Depending on the job (and the interviewer), an interview can typically take anywhere from 30 to 90 minutes. Most interviewers try to save you at least five-ten minutes to ask questions of them. Be sure you come prepared with a short list of questions to get answered. If you don't ask questions, you may be viewed as not having done your homework or as not really being interested in the job. You want to come up with questions that are important to you.

Stay away from asking questions about salary. Only discuss your salary expectations if the interviewer brings it up first. A human resources person should be able to give you a packet of information regarding employee benefits (this may not be offered to you during a first interview).

## WHEN ALL IS SAID AND DONE

When your interviews are completed, be sure to send a thank you letter to each individual who interviewed you. Even if you don't think you'd accept an offer from the company, it is still a nice and expected touch. Make sure the names and titles of the individuals are accurate and spelled correctly. If you interviewed with more than one person, thank everyone by name with whom you interviewed. Individual letters aren't necessary, but individual recognition is!

## DINING ETIQUETTE

During your job search process, don't be surprised if a prospective employer takes you to lunch or dinner as part of your interview process. Employers like to take candidates out of the more standard "office interview" setting to see how you respond in a more social setting. Employers also know that meal interviews tend to make the candidate feel more relaxed, and perhaps more likely to comfortably provide information about himself/herself. Here are some important hints on how to handle a meal interview situation. Bon Appetit!



DO

- **Arrive on time.** Treat this breakfast/lunch/dinner interview as you would any other interview. Unless the employer is providing transportation, make sure you know the location of the interview meal and arrive 5-10 minutes early. If you arrive before your host, you will have a few minutes to relax and gather your thoughts before he/she arrives.
  - **Feel free to ask questions during the meal.** Just like a regular interview, take this opportunity to educate yourself about the company, the position, and other areas of interest to you.
  - **Sit up straight.** Just because a meal interview seems more relaxed than a regular interview does not mean it's okay to let your posture slide. Be aware of your body language and make sure you look professional.
  - **Thank your host.** When the meal is complete, make sure to thank your host for his/her time and the meal. If this is the only interview you have with this individual, make sure to send a thank you letter.
- 
- **Order the most expensive item on the menu.** Unless your host recommends something to you that is on the expensive side, stick with a meal priced in the more "moderate" range. You will feel a little more than awkward if you order the Surf & Turf and your host orders the Caesar salad.
  - **Order something you've never eaten before.** This isn't the time for a great food adventure. Stick with foods you know you like to avoid being served something you're afraid to put in your mouth. Also, stick to ordering foods that are easily eaten with a knife and fork. Pastas and large sandwiches may invite disaster, so try chicken, fish, salads, and meats instead.
  - **Order alcohol.** Your best bet is an iced-tea, water, or soda. Even if your host orders a drink, it is always better to order a nonalcoholic beverage. Alcohol (even a small quantity) can make you less sharp and more apt to do or say something you wouldn't normally do or say. If your host orders a bottle of wine for the two of you or encourages you to order a drink, it's okay - just sip small quantities and make your drink last the whole meal.



DO NOT

- **Smoke.** If you are a smoker, don't smoke before, during, or after the meal – not even electronic cigarettes! If you smoke on your way to the meal, you are likely to smell like smoke when you get there, which could be a real turn-off to your host. It's also rude to get up and leave to take a smoking break during the meal. Pick up another habit for the day – like smiling.
- **Groom yourself at the table.** Freshening your makeup is a no-no. It's also not okay to put eye drops in your eyes or to comb/brush your hair. Save any grooming for the washroom only.
- **Lick your utensils or your fingers.** You don't want it to look like you are starving to death (even if this is the best meal you've had in a while). Stay away from foods that might tempt you to lick your fingers (like French fries, chicken wings, mozzarella sticks, etc.).
- **Feel like you have to clean your plate.** It's probably better to leave a little food on your plate. And don't push it around to make it look like you've eaten more than you have.
- **Ask for a to-go container.** Even if you have plenty of food left on your plate, the meal interview is not the time to take care of your meal planning for the week. Save the doggy bag for casual or informal dining.

**Call or stop by the Career Services office for a list of sample interview questions or to schedule a practice interview appointment.**

**3302.3 C.B. Hedgcock  
(906) 227-2800**

**[careers@nmu.edu](mailto:careers@nmu.edu)**

**[www.nmu.edu/careerservices](http://www.nmu.edu/careerservices)**

**[www.nmu.edu/careerservices/  
Handshake](http://www.nmu.edu/careerservices/Handshake)**

## SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Below are common interview questions that you could expect during a job interview. Some of the questions and helpful answers are taken from Harry Dahlstrom, author of *The Job Hunting Handbook*.

### 1. Tell me (us) about yourself.

Give a brief (30-60 second) pitch about yourself. After your pitch, give the interviewer a copy of your resume and your list of references. You may also want to ask for a copy of his or her business card at this time; you can use this later to write a thank you note.

### 2. Why did you choose to interview with our organization?

Show that you have done your research about the company by explaining how the skills that you have are a good fit to the company. Do not mention anything about salary or benefits that the company offers.

### 3. What do you consider to be your greatest strengths?

Recall the key points of the job posting. Choose the top few (2-4) requirements for this position and give supporting examples to show how you excelled. For example, you could say, "I have always exceeded my sales goals each year and have earned bonuses because of that." Another example: "When I have deadlines, I don't just strive to meet the deadlines. Instead, I prefer to complete the project well ahead of schedule."

### 4. What are your weaknesses?

Choose one or two weaknesses that are not part of this job description. Show how you have tried to improve on these weaknesses. For example, if you state that you get nervous public speaking, also state that you took a public speaking course to help you through it.

### 5. Have you ever failed at anything? If so, what did you learn from that experience?

Remember that everyone fails. The important thing is to focus on the lesson you learned. Describe the event, describe the goal you hoped to achieve, describe the failed outcome, explain what went wrong, and explain the lesson learned from the failure. Make sure it is not related to the job you are interviewing for. For example, state how you failed at downhill skiing but you signed up for an instructional skiing course to help you improve. You want to show that you can overcome obstacles.

### 6. Of what accomplishment are you most proud?

You can choose a professional or personal accomplishment for this answer. You can tell how you followed through on a professional concept - from start to finish. Or you may talk about your marriage, birth of a child, or how you helped someone in need.

### 7. Have you ever spoken before a group of people? How large was the group? How did you do?

Everyone has spoken before a group of people. If you did well, state that you did well and why you did well (you were well-prepared, you practiced, etc.). If it did not go well, state what you did to improve for the next time (took a public speaking course, signed yourself up for open-mic night, etc.).

### 8. Why should we hire you? Or, why should we hire you over another candidate?

Tell about all of the skills you have to offer - you're a quick learner, you are open to trying new things, you always give 100%, you're a team player, you're not afraid of hard work, etc. Also state that you want to work for this company and why (see question 2).

### 9. Have you had difficulty getting along with a co-worker and how did you handle it?

Explain the difficulty between you and your co-worker and how you were able to fix it. Remember - make this positive - focus on the outcome, not the problem.

### 10. Have you had difficulty getting along with a supervisor and how did you handle it?

Don't give a clear yes or no answer to this question. Either way will get you in trouble. State simply that there were times we had slight disagreements, but we worked through them because we worked well together and had the utmost respect for each other.

**11. Give some examples on how you were successful working as part of a team.**

I am successful and enjoy working as part of a team. I can also work independently. Give a few examples of when you worked with a team to accomplish something.

**12. What qualities/qualifications do you have that will make you succeed in this position/company?**

Recall the key points of the job posting. Choose your three to five best qualities that relate to the top few requirements of this position and try to give supporting examples to show how you excelled. For example, you could say, "I have always exceeded my sales goals each year and have earned bonuses because of that." Another example: "When I have deadlines, I don't just strive to meet the deadlines. Instead, I prefer to complete the project well ahead of schedule."

**13. What motivates you to put forth your best effort?**

You will want to choose something that relates to this particular job. For instance, you can say that you worked on several teams to help others implement your software and you were motivated by the challenge of finishing ahead of schedule, by making your customers happy and by completing the job as a team. Talk about internal motivators rather than external ones (deadlines, paycheck).

**14. What do you think it takes to be successful in an organization like ours?**

You can choose a few generic traits – hard working, a team player, and detail-oriented. Then choose something specific to the company. For example, if this position is in sales, you may want to say "experience and success in the sales industry."

**15. Give an example of a situation in which you provided a solution for your supervisor.**

Give an example of something that is somewhat related to the position in which you are applying. Think about a time at work when there was a problem or issue. How did you help?

**16. Give an example of a time in which you worked under the pressure of a deadline.**

You may explain that you work better under pressure and that you enjoy working in a challenging environment. Explain the time frame, what you did to stay organized and on top of the deadlines and tell how early you finished the project.

**17. Describe a situation in which you recognized a potential problem as an opportunity.**

**What did you do?**

State that the process of getting the problem fixed is where the opportunity laid – you learned throughout the process. This could be a webpage error that you didn't know how to fix. Along the way to fixing the error, you learned more about webpages that you wouldn't have learned if this problem didn't occur.

**18. By providing examples, demonstrate that you can adapt to a wide variety of people, situations and/or environments.**

Reiterate that you are flexible and able to adapt to new surroundings. Give an example of each if you can – how you adapted to a variety of people, situations and environments. You could include how you babysit young children often throughout high school and one of your first volunteer outings in college was at a nursing home. Explain what you learned from both sets of people. Give another example of a situation and environment in which you adapted.

**19. What effective leadership qualities do you think are important? Provide examples of past experiences.**

You may choose from several qualities – organized, career-driven, encouraging, flexible, and more. Explain how you have each of these qualities and how they have helped make you successful.

# INTERVIEW CHEAT SHEET

(Adapted from [the Daily Muse](#))

Company \_\_\_\_\_ Position \_\_\_\_\_

Date and Time \_\_\_\_\_ Location \_\_\_\_\_

Who I Am Meeting... \_\_\_\_\_

<p><b>What is it that I love about this position?</b> List the specific things about this company and/or job that make it a great fit.</p>	<p><b>What do you need to know?</b> List questions you would ask about the company and/or job at the interview.</p>
<p><b>What skills will I bring to the position?</b> List the key skills and experiences that make you perfect for this company and/or job.</p>	<p><b>Which of your accomplishments would you like to highlight?</b> List your specific projects and achievements that relate directly to this job that you would like to highlight in the interview.</p>
<p><b>What challenges do you feel you will need to address?</b> What are the questions that the interviewer(s) will pose about my background and how will I tackle them?</p>	<p><b>What are things that I had better not forget to mention?</b> List contacts you have at the company, fun facts about yourself, or anything else to mention.</p>

## Interview Checklist

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Directions to the interview     | <input type="checkbox"/> Note pad and pen(s)         | <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency Kit:          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cash (parking, emergency, etc.) | <input type="checkbox"/> My interview cheat sheet    | <input type="checkbox"/> Tissues or handkerchief |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Copies of my resume             | <input type="checkbox"/> Business or contact cards   | <input type="checkbox"/> Brush or comb           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> List of references              | <input type="checkbox"/> My phone (turned to silent) | <input type="checkbox"/> Spot remover pen        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Work samples or portfolio       | <input type="checkbox"/> Granola bar or snack        | <input type="checkbox"/> Extra nylons or tights  |

## **Post-Interview Notes**

1. Are there any follow-up activities you must remember to complete?
2. To whom will you send thank-you notes?
3. What did you really love about the interview?
4. What red flags are flying?

## PHONE/ZOOM INTERVIEWS

### For a **telephone interview**:

- Make sure your phone is fully charged.
- Select a quiet place with no distractions.
- Prior to the phone call, arrange all of your materials for easy viewing.
- After your interview, be sure to follow-up with the company.

### For a **Zoom interview**:

- Set up Zoom software and practice before the interview to make sure it is working properly.
- Set up the computer camera for proper angle, lighting, distance and sound. A bright light coming from a window or a poorly positioned lamp can lead to an unnecessary glare. A fan or loud heater can also cause a distracting noise. Close all windows and doors. Also, close all chat programs and emails on your computer.
- Make sure your clothing looks neat and professional. Avoid clothing that has distracting patterns. Additionally, whites will detract from your appearance. Instead, opt for darker colors with a sleek, professional look.
- Make sure your background looks neat and professional. While interviewers realizing that they are “meeting” you in your home, having a distracting puppy or sloppy bookshelf in the background can bring unwanted attention.
- Remember to smile and look directly at the camera when answering. Practice making eye contact with the camera. Don’t focus your glance at the image of the person on the screen. This will make it appear as though you are looking down. One trick is to tape a photo of somebody next to the web cam lens.
- Look at the screen only when the employer is speaking.
- Make sure there are no distractions while the interview is taking place.
- Prepare prior to the interview – read through your resume, memorize dates and figures, etc.

## DECIPHERING BUSINESS DRESS CODE

Did you know that some recruiters actually formulate their first impressions of a job candidate based on the shoes the candidate is wearing? It may seem unfair, but your clothes, including your shoes, say a lot about the person you are. Therefore, understanding what is and isn't appropriate for business dress in today's work world is an important "first step" to landing the job you really want.

You may be saying to yourself, "If an employer doesn't like the clothes I'm wearing then I don't want to work for them anyway." While you may honestly feel that way, that attitude may keep you from getting the opportunity you'd really love. It's important to understand that while some employers have adopted a more casual work environment, most have stuck with the concept of traditional and conservative dress for job fairs and interviews. Depending on the industry, you may have the chance to express yourself more freely once you've actually landed the job.

So how do you know what's appropriate dress for that big interview or the important job fair? Knowing the expectations of the employers is key to understanding what to wear. Many organizations will expect "professional business dress" while others may encourage "business casual." What is the difference and how do you know what shirt to grab with that suit? Just follow the tips below to learn everything you need to know to put your "best shoe" forward.



## **Business Casual Attire**

There may be times when you are told to dress "business casual" for a specific event. Perhaps you are attending an employer sponsored reception, or you are interviewing at an organization on a Friday, which has become a "casual" day for many industries. The important thing to note is you should never assume it is okay to dress business casual unless you have been told to do so. And if you aren't sure what's appropriate, don't be afraid to ask. While business casual has come to mean a number of different things, below are some general guidelines:

### **Feminine**

- Casual pants or skirts are fine. Khakis may be viewed as too casual for women so do some research before wearing them. Your skirt should be knee length - don't wear anything shorter than what you would wear to an interview. No sundresses.
- Long-sleeved shirts or blouses are considered more formal than short sleeves. Knit sweaters or sweater sets are also considered business casual. Make sure shirts are not too tight and don't expose too much skin.
- Wear leather shoes with a low or flat heel. Tennis shoes and sandals are too casual. A nice open-toed shoe may be appropriate in the summer.
- Pantyhose or tights aren't always necessary for business casual. Take into consideration the company culture.
- If you are planning to wear leggings or tights, make sure that your dress or top is long enough to cover you appropriately.
- Jewelry should be conservative. A nice watch, rings and earrings are fine. Consider removing additional piercings on your ears and face.
- Inappropriate or possibly offensive tattoos should be covered.
- Makeup should be natural. Nails should be trimmed and if you wear polish choose a conservative color.
- Avoid perfume or use it **very** lightly.
- If you need to, carry a small purse that matches your outfit (no backpacks). A briefcase should not be necessary at a business casual event.
- Keep in mind it is better to be overdressed than underdressed.

### **Masculine**

- Neatly pressed khaki pants are a safe choice.
- A long-sleeved shirt is considered more formal than a short sleeve golf shirt.
- Ties typically aren't needed for business casual events. If it is likely to be a more formal event, it wouldn't hurt to wear a conservative tie and just remove it if you arrive and most men aren't wearing one.
- Wear leather shoes and socks that match your pants (Not athletic socks i.e white) and pull up over the calf. Athletic shoes, hiking boots and sandals are not appropriate (even in the summer). Your belt should match your shoes.
- Jewelry should be conservative. A nice watch and rings are fine. Consider removing additional piercings on your ears and face.
- Inappropriate or possibly offensive tattoos should be covered.
- Do not bring a backpack.
- Keep in mind it is better to be overdressed than underdressed.

## Professional Business Attire

Most organizations will expect you to dress in professional business attire for an interview and job fairs, unless you are instructed to do otherwise. It's important to have at least one, and if possible, two interview suits in your closet. While this may cost you a little money, it is an important and wise investment. And by changing shirts or ties, you can make one suit go a long way. Here are some guidelines for professional business attire:



### Feminine

- A tailored suit in a conservative color such as black, navy blue, brown, beige, or grey. Pant suits are acceptable, particularly in an industrial or manufacturing facility. If you aren't sure what's acceptable in the organization do some research on the company culture.
- Your skirt length should be conservative – nothing above the knee and no high slits. Practice sitting in your skirt and looking in the mirror to see how an interviewer will see you. Too much exposure is frowned upon.
- Your top should be cotton or silk, and a light color that compliments your suit. Too much exposure is frowned upon.
- Wear low-heeled, conservative pumps. No spiked heels, no sandals, and no flashy beading or stitching. And make sure they are comfortable – you don't want to be limping around during your interview process.
- Jewelry should be minimal. A simple watch, rings, small earrings and a necklace are okay. Consider removing additional face and ear piercings.
- If you decide to wear pantyhose, it would be a good idea to carry a spare

just in case.

- Makeup should be natural and subtle. Be sure to visit a mirror to check for lipstick on your teeth.
- Skip the perfume or keep it **very** light.
- You can carry a slim purse, padfolio, or a small briefcase, but not all three because you will look too cluttered. No backpacks!

### Masculine

- Your business suit should be a two-piece matched suit or a sport coat with matching slacks in a conservative color such as navy, dark grey or black. Solids or subtle weave patterns are best.
- Long-sleeved shirts are best, even in summer. Wear a white or light-colored dress shirt.
- A tie is a must! 100% silk ties look the most polished. Choose colors that match your suit and aren't too flashy. Watch what other men in the industry are wearing to get more ideas on what's appropriate.
- Your shoes should be either brown or black leather and polished. Dress shoes are appropriate – just make sure that they are comfortable. You don't want to be limping through interviews.
- Your belt should be simple and should match your shoes.
- Your socks should be blue or black to match your suit and they should pull up over your calves. You don't want baggy or short socks that show skin when you sit down.
- Jewelry should be conservative. A nice watch and rings are fine. Consider removing additional piercings on your ears and face.
- Avoid using cologne unless it is **very** light.
- You should carry a small, leather briefcase or a padfolio. Leave your back pack at home.



# PROTECT YOUR ONLINE REPUTATION

Employers often search the Internet to catch a glimpse of you beyond your resume. Social profiles can help you land or lose a job. Protect your personal online reputation by using social media sites professionally.



## Facebook

- Use professional looking photographs as your profile and cover photos.
- Control who can see your posts and photographs. Don't leave your profile open to the public.
- Keep your personal information private.



## Twitter

- A professional looking photo is best.
- A public profile is fine as long as your activity is appropriate.
- Your tweets can show up in search engine results, so think before you tweet!
- Content to post with caution: political views, overly religious posts and references to drinking, drugs or sex.



## LinkedIn

- A professional looking photo is essential.
- Establish a professional presence by sharing relevant information, joining groups and interacting.
- Make sure all components of your profile are complete.

### Tips:

- Prevent recruiters from **mistaking another person's profile** as yours. Include links to your LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter profiles on your resume.
- **Google yourself** – or use another search engine – Yahoo, Bing, or Google are your first impression to employers. What comes up in search results is your second impression. If there is damaging information, contact the sites where the information is located and ask for it to be removed.
- Reach out. Don't be afraid to **use online tools to connect** with other alumni, professionals and colleagues in your field. You never know when an opportunity will arise!
- Don't complain about your current employer on social media sites (or *anywhere*). This not only will turn off new possible employers, but it may also make your current employer become your former employer.