

PRESENTED BY
UNIVERSITY CAREER
SERVICES



About University Career Services

University Career Services is nationally recognized for our innovative industry-focused model and customized approach to advising, programming, and employer development. Our appointments, courses, and workshops can help you choose a major and set tangible career goals. We can assist you in creating a résumé, networking with Mason alumni, and preparing for the workplace or graduate school. Our location near Washington, D.C., offers unparalleled access to internships and research opportunities. Each year, more than 500 employers participate in on-campus hiring events to recruit our graduates.

Engage with University Career Services early and often. Scheduled appointments and drop-ins are available for students five days a week. The workshops and events calendar is available on our website. Call **703-993-2370** or visit careers.gmu.edu for more details, tips, and resources. University Career Services is located in **SUB I, Room 3400**.

Explore

The Career Counseling team assists students exploring majors and career paths, and offers advice on how to best use their talents, strengths, and interests.

Strategize

The Industry Advising team helps students connect with employers and build a strategy for breaking into their industry of interest through internships or full-time positions.

Find Your Advisor

Visit careers.gmu.edu/about to meet our team and learn the industry domains of each advisor.

Services

- Career counseling and industry advising appointments (call 703-993-2370)
- Drop-ins (visit careers.gmu.edu for hours)
- Workshops, events, and alumni/employer panels
- Handshake job and internship database (handshake.gmu.edu)
- Career fairs
- On-campus interviewing
- And more

Topics discussed at Drop-ins and Appointments

DROP-INS

- Co-op information
- Basic résumé or cover letter review
- General questions and inquiries regarding resources, Handshake, or on-campus job searches

APPOINTMENTS

- Exploring/choosing a career
- Exploring/choosing a major
- Graduate or professional school exploration
- Industry research
- Internship search
- Interview preparation
- Job offer/negotiation
- Job search
- Networking
- Practice interview
- Professional development

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Dear Patriot,

At George Mason University Career Services, we take pride in our mission to prepare and connect career-ready students for postgraduate success. Employers are looking for students who are career ready! In response to this need, we have developed a holistic and comprehensive career readiness formula, which serves as a guide for preparing marketable graduates.



In addition to working on a degree in your specific area of study, while at Mason it's also vital to gain professional experience through involvement in research, student organizations, internships, experiential opportunities, and service-learning opportunities. Through these experiences, you can develop the eight most in-demand career readiness skills employers across all industries expect from new graduates:

- Critical Thinking / Problem Solving
- Oral / Written Communications
- Teamwork / Collaboration
- Digital Technology
- Leadership
- Professionalism / Work Ethic
- Career Management
- Global / Intercultural Fluency

The career success plan on the next page was designed to help you determine the best time while at Mason to engage in experiential learning to complement your academics. To view the full roadmap, visit careers.gmu.edu/students. University Career Services is here to support you all along your journey. Our Career Counselors can help you choose a major and explore career options while our Industry Advisors can assist you with developing a customized strategy to break into your industry of choice through an internship or job using an easy-to-follow, four-step process outlined throughout the remainder of this guide. Now, let's get to work!

Saskia Clay-Rooks, Executive Director
University Career Services
George Mason University

The career success plan outlines steps for every year you are in college to help you develop into a qualified and competitive candidate upon graduation. To view the full roadmap, visit careers.gmu.edu/students.

Student Success Roadmap

A suggested roadmap to help students navigate college and achieve post-graduation success



GET STARTED



PRE-MATRICULATION

Review transfer equivalencies



Register for orientation



Seek pre-orientation academic advising



Consider taking UNIV 100 or UNIV 220



FIRST YEAR

Join a student organization



Explore Handshake and create your profile



Consider externships /job shadowing



Explore potential majors and careers



Identify resources for academic support



Meet with an academic advisor



SOPHOMORE YEAR

Develop a long-term academic plan



Declare (or affirm) your major



Explore study abroad opportunities



Build/sustain faculty relationships



Consider externships /job shadowing



Find an on-campus job or internship



Begin to build your professional network



JUNIOR YEAR

Plan for graduate school entrance exams



Meet with Career Services



Seek leadership opportunities



Attend a career fair



Apply for internships



Explore undergraduate research opportunities



Update your academic plan



SENIOR YEAR

Visit Career Services



Apply for jobs/graduate programs



Complete a graduation check with an advisor



Apply for graduation on Patriot Web



GRADUATE

Update your LinkedIn account



Stay involved through the Alumni Network



Apply learning to career/graduate program




Complete Exit and Career Plans Surveys



Icon Key

 Online/Patriot Web

 University Life

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 Study Abroad

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Know Yourself

This section will help you identify your interests, values, skills, and certain aspects of your personality that have developed through your studies, extracurricular activities, and work experience. Knowing these things will help you decide on a major and occupation. It will also help you when you prepare for an interview, an internship, or job.

IN THIS SECTION

You will learn...

- What is included in a career plan
- How to identify your interests, values, and skills
- How to choose possible careers and majors

Know Yourself Exercises

EXERCISE 1. HOLLAND INTEREST CHECKLIST

According to the vocational theory developed by John Holland, the activities people engage in and the work environments in American society can be categorized by a set of common characteristics. The more compatible a person's interests are with the work environment, the greater success and satisfaction the individual is likely to experience.

Follow the directions to complete the Interest Checklist to identify your preferred Holland Interest Themes.

1. Circle the activities that sound appealing to you whether you have done them or not. **Do not consider your skill; only your interest in the activity matters for this exercise.**
2. Review the categories and identify your first, second, and third most appealing themes. This is your Holland Code.
3. Read the descriptions of each theme.

INTEREST CHECKLIST

REALISTIC “Doers”	INVESTIGATIVE “Thinkers”	ARTISTIC “Creators”	SOCIAL “Helpers”	ENTERPRISING “Persuaders”	CONVENTIONAL “Organizers”
Use carpentry tools to build items with wood	Solve math problems or quizzes	Design posters, flyers, or brochures	Take a course in interpersonal relations	Make a speech or presentation	Fill out income tax forms
Plant a garden	Work with a chemistry set	Take photographs	Provide care for children	Meet influential people	Take the minutes of a meeting
Repair stereos, computers, or small appliances	Read and solve mysteries	Work independently in an unstructured environment	Belong to clubs or attend conferences and networking meetings	Lead a work project or committee	Keep the books or records for a club
Refinish antique furniture	Read scientific books or magazines; watch scientific TV programs	Conceptualize new ways to solve problems or accomplish tasks	Help someone new become acquainted with others and make friends	Sell items or services	Reorganize a filing system to make it more efficient
Hunt or fish	Work in a laboratory	Sketch, draw, paint, or sculpt	Teach a class	Participate in a political campaign	Write business letters, memos, or reports
Raise or train animals	Use or discuss computers and software	Read or write poetry	Meet and get to know new people	Help settle disputes	Work with numbers and financial data
Work independently, solving concrete, practical problems	Compare and analyze budget figures	Dance or act in a play	Learn about different cultures and groups of people	Be a member of the debate team	Collect and organize such items as stamps, coins, or baseball cards
Develop film in a darkroom	Observe behavioral or scientific phenomena	Attend a play, opera, or concert	Listen to your friends' personal problems and try to help solve them	Own or operate a small business or service	Operate computers and other business machines
Spend time browsing in a hardware store	Develop a survey questionnaire for a research project	Read articles or watch movies with an artistic or musical theme	Do volunteer work to benefit the elderly, needy, or sick	Manage a fund-raising campaign for an organization	Balance a checkbook or manage personal finances
Serve in the military	Use a microscope or telescope	Write a creative story for fun or publication	Entertain friends in your home	Entertain business clients	Make charts and graphs
Repair or tune up bikes, cars, or motorcycles	Play chess or other strategy games	Visit an art museum	Chaperone a youth group dance	Serve as a club officer	Take or keep an inventory of supplies
Operate a sewing machine	Analyze and solve abstract problems	Play a musical instrument	Lead a discussion group on social justice	Supervise a staff of people	Organize items in your room, garage, or attic
Drive a bus or truck, or operate large machines	Collect data for an experiment	Design a dress, piece of jewelry, or furniture	Work on group projects	Persuade others to accept your ideas	Develop and follow efficient work routines

Your Holland Code: First _____ Second _____ Third _____

About Your Holland Code

Work environments can be divided into the six broad interest areas: **Realistic**, **Investigative**, **Artistic**, **Social**, **Enterprising**, and **Conventional**. Knowing your unique combination of interests can assist you in determining what jobs suit you best.





Link Your Interests to Occupations

To learn more about your Holland Code and how to use this information when considering a major or occupation

- Schedule an appointment with a career counselor.
- Refer to O*NET OnLine (www.onetonline.org) to browse occupations by interests.



HOLLAND THEMES

AREA	DESCRIPTION	STUDENT ACTIVITIES (that may be of interest)
REALISTIC <i>(Expresses interests and solves problems by doing)</i> DOER	Enjoys working with machines, tools, objects, and animals. Practical, reserved, and physical Likes to work outdoors on concrete problems and see tangible results.	ROTC Intramural and club sports The Geo Club Event production activities
INVESTIGATIVE <i>(Expresses interests and solves problems by thinking)</i> THINKER	Enjoys researching, exploring ideas, collecting data, analyzing, inquiring, and using instruments. Methodical, original, and logical	Honors Committee Biology Club Student engineering organizations Student government
ARTISTIC <i>(Expresses interests and solves problems by creating)</i> CREATOR	Enjoys being original, independent, introspective, self-expressive, innovative, and unstructured. Develops skills in music, art, drama, language, and writing.	Program Board Student publications Mason Cable Network Storytellers Club Music Educators National Conference
SOCIAL <i>(Expresses interests and solves problems by helping)</i> HELPER	Enjoys working with people to inform, train, enlighten, or cure. Perceptive, responsible, empathic, and patient	Sororities and fraternities Campus ministry Peer advisors Mason Ambassadors Orientation leaders or RAs
ENTERPRISING <i>(Expresses interests and solves problems by persuading)</i> PERSUADER	Seeks to use mind, words, and feelings in dealing with people to motivate, persuade, manage, and sell things or promote ideas. May like taking personal or financial risks. Assertive, sociable, ambitious, enthusiastic, influential, and goal oriented	Student Funding Board Debate Team Model United Nations American Marketing Association Management and activists clubs
CONVENTIONAL <i>(Expresses interests and solves problems by organizing)</i> ORGANIZER	Enjoys activities that permit organization of information in a clear, orderly manner. Likes structured settings. Is detail-oriented, responsible, and conforming.	Accounting Club Student Government DMIS Club Student Elections Commission

EXERCISE 2: VALUES

Values are a set of standards that determine attitudes, choices, and action. Work-related values underlie our choices about work. Some people value creativity; others place a premium on income or contributing. Mapping your value priorities can help you lay important groundwork for making sound career decisions that fit your unique ideals, interests, and talents.

For a values worksheet, visit careers.gmu.edu/students/explore-majors-and-careers.

EXERCISE 3: SKILLS

Functional skills are ones that are transferable to many different work settings. Developing a list of the functional skills you have and most enjoy using can help you focus on positions that fit your talents and provide satisfaction.

For a skills worksheet, visit careers.gmu.edu/students/explore-majors-and-careers.

Career Assessments

University Career Services offers students and alumni the opportunity for formal and informal assessment of personality, skills, and interests as a part of the major and career exploration process. All assessments include a one-hour interpretation session with a counselor. Your career counselor will help you decide which assessments address your specific needs.

STRONG INTEREST INVENTORY, SKILLSCAN, MYERS-BRIGGS TYPE INDICATOR, AND STRENGTHSFINDER

Students and alumni should contact University Career Services for assessment costs or locate the information at careers.gmu.edu/students/explore-majors-and-careers.

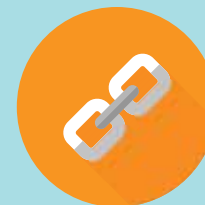
Exploring Majors and Careers

Many students are still exploring majors as they begin college. Whether you are considering a few ideas, wide open to possibility, or somewhere in between, there are resources to help you choose and confirm your choice of major.

EXPLORING MAJORS CHECKLIST

- ☐ Review the program of study for the major you are considering.
- ☐ Identify course requirements and read descriptions of required courses.
- ☐ Identify graduate and professional school opportunities for this major.
- ☐ Identify opportunities for gaining career-related experience (e.g., volunteering, internships, college activities, or student groups) in this major.
- ☐ Identify and contact alumni who pursued this major to find out what they are doing.
- ☐ List potential careers for this major.
- ☐ Based on your research, identify the advantages and disadvantages of this major for you.
- ☐ Skim through texts at the George Mason University Bookstore to get a feel for the subject matter.
- ☐ Explore majors links: “Exploring Majors” at advising.gmu.edu/current-students/research-majors and “Career Exploration Resources/Online Resources” at careers.gmu.edu/students/explore-majors-and-careers.





Quick Links

- catalog.gmu.edu
University Catalog
Explore major requirements, course descriptions, and course syllabi.
- advising.gmu.edu
Academic Advising Office
Pick up course planning sheets for majors you are considering.
- getconnected.gmu.edu/organizations
Mason Academic and Professional Student Organizations
Join organizations that have programs that feature professionals in your field of interest.

EXPLORING CAREERS CHECKLIST

- ☐ Identify skills you would like to use in your career.
- ☐ Identify the education or training that is required to enter and progress in the field.
- ☐ Identify opportunities for advancement.
- ☐ Research the projected outlook and trends in this field at www.bls.gov/ooh.
- ☐ Find the salary range and types of benefits you can expect.
- ☐ Consider nonmonetary rewards.
- ☐ Identify the personal characteristics that are required of someone in this occupation.
- ☐ Based on your research, determine how well the nature of the work suits your interests, values, skills, and personality.
- ☐ List the advantages and disadvantages of working in the occupations you have chosen.
- ☐ Research jobs and internships to identify tasks associated with occupations and majors, skills, and knowledge required. Take advantage of research projects, internships, co-ops, part-time or summer jobs, volunteering, or study abroad to learn more about a particular subject area.
- ☐ Join organizations that have programs that feature professionals in your field of interest. Information on student organizations and programs is available at si.gmu.edu or the Student Involvement Office in The Hub.

PROFESSIONALS IN CAREERS YOU ARE EXPLORING

Professional Associations

Identify associations related to career fields of interest and contact them for information on local chapter meetings, networking events, career trend information, lists of graduate or professional training programs, special certifications, and more.

Career Advice Sites and Social Media

The following are examples of career-related websites to use as resources. You can also visit them on Facebook and follow them on Twitter.

- O*NET OnLine: onetonline.org
- Occupational Outlook Handbook: www.bls.gov/ooh

The Four-Step Process

Finding an internship or a job involves four steps:



As you begin your search for an internship or job, consider these four steps as a way to ensure a diligent, targeted, and purposeful approach. If you find you are not getting interviews, ask yourself: “Which of the steps am I not spending enough time on?” If you are only focusing on Step 4 and are not spending enough time on the first three, try to change your patterns to rebalance your efforts. Fully engaging in all the steps will help you be more successful in your search and lead to an interview.

Step 1: Documents

Documents (résumé/cover letter) are Step 1 in the process. Check out the next two sections for details and samples on how to develop your best résumé or cover letter.

Step 2: Research

Research your organizations of choice by visiting their websites to learn about their mission, products or services offered, major divisions, and location.

Research your industry of interest to learn the lingo and current trends in the field.

Develop a list of 50 to 100 organizations that may be a fit for you. You are not looking for companies that have openings; just list places that you feel could be a fit.

Step 3: Network

Put simply, networking means building relationships with people and exchanging information. If you can add a new friend to Facebook, you have already proven that you can network!

Up to 80 percent of jobs are filled through networking. When employers have a position to fill, they first think of anyone they already know who needs a job and would be a good fit for their organization. Second, they turn to those around them for recommendations of great candidates. Lastly, (and only if necessary) they advertise their position publicly to solicit a large number of applicants.

Step 4: Search

Explore options and identify prospective sites and contacts using Handshake and web resources.



Résumés

This section will explain how to create a concise résumé that highlights your skills and accomplishments, and how to write a cover letter that gives more depth to your experiences. Check out the samples in this section and on careers.gmu.edu/students/resume-and-career-documents to get a better idea of how you can develop your own documents.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Your résumé and cover letter will change every time you apply for a position. You will revisit this step over and over to tailor your documents appropriately.

IN THIS SECTION

You will learn...

- The different résumé formats and when to use them
- What should be included in a cover letter
- Examples of other job letters and how to compose them
- How to ask for references and the proper format for including them in your application

DOCUMENTS IS STEP 1 IN THE FOUR-STEP PROCESS.



What Is a Résumé?

A résumé is a summary of your qualifications, education, and experiences relevant to your job search. Employers will typically spend less than 30 seconds reviewing your résumé; therefore, the information must be conveyed in a clear, well-organized style.

RÉSUMÉ CONTENTS

Identifying Information

- Name
- Address
- Telephone number—Include number where you can be reached during the day as well as evening. **Be sure your voicemail message is set up and appropriate for employers.**
- Email address—While you are a student, we recommend you use your Mason email address. **Your email should reflect your professionalism (e.g., `firstname.lastname@gmail.com`).**
- Website or LinkedIn URL (optional)—Your website should look professional and contain information you would want an employer to see, such as an online portfolio.

Objective (optional)

A strong, targeted objective should include the following:

- Type of position you are seeking (full-time, part-time, internship)
- Type of organization or industry you are pursuing
- Relevant skills you will contribute to the position/organization

Like your résumé, your objective should be tailored to each opportunity or position. Avoid general, unfocused objectives, such as “a challenging and rewarding position that uses my education and experience.” If you are pursuing several career opportunities that emphasize different skills and knowledge, you should create a separate résumé for each.

SAMPLE OBJECTIVES

- Seeking a full-time trainee position in real estate property management, with the opportunity to contribute strong financial skills and relevant experience.
- Seeking a part-time administrative position in community health care education, with special emphasis on community relations and educating local employers.

Summary of Qualifications (optional)

Instead of an objective, you may include a summary of qualifications. Be sure to summarize the experience, skills, and credentials most pertinent to the positions you are seeking. The summary of qualifications is brief, usually with no more than five qualification statements in bulleted format.

SAMPLE SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

- Excellent oral communication skills, evidenced by four successful years on Forensics Team
- More than three years of customer service experience through retail and restaurant positions
- Extensive computer application experience using Word, Access, Excel, PowerPoint, and Adobe QuarkXPress

Education

The education section follows immediately after the objective or summary of qualifications, unless you graduated several years ago and have job experience that shows stronger qualifications. Begin with your most recent education and list your qualifications in reverse chronological order, putting the most recent first. Include the following:

- Degree(s) awarded
- Major and minor
- Month and year degree was (or will be) awarded
- Name and location of college or university

If you are about to graduate and transferred from a school where you received an associate degree or no degree, you may choose to list the school to call attention to your degree, relevant honors, courses, or accomplishments. However, listing the earlier school(s) is optional.

High school is rarely included unless you are a recent high school graduate or wish to draw attention to something special about your high school experience.

Other academic information, if relevant to the position you are applying for, could include the following:

- GPA (overall and/or in major) if 3.00 or higher (do not round up)
- Relevant courses (list up to five course titles and no course numbers)
- Scholarships, honors, awards, and honor societies



- Course projects
- Thesis or dissertation topic
- Clinical or field experience
- Special training programs, certifications, or licensure
- Study abroad

Note: If you have two or more honors and awards, you may choose to create a separate section titled “Honors and Awards” in which to list these for greater emphasis. Likewise, if course projects and clinical or field experiences are among your most relevant qualifications, consider creating a separate section, which may be titled “Related Experience.” For an example of a “Related Experience” section, see the sample résumé for Ali Mohamed (page 16).

SAMPLE EDUCATION SECTION

BS in Economics, minor in Spanish, expected May 2020

George Mason University, Fairfax, VA, GPA 3.15

- *Relevant Course Work:* Money and Banking, Economic Problems and Public Policies, International Economics, Economic Development of Latin America
- *Study Abroad:* University of Madrid, Spain, fall 2016 and spring 2017 semesters
- Financed 75 percent of college costs through part-time employment

Experience

This section may include the following:

- Full-time and part-time experience
- Internships and co-op positions
- Significant volunteer, leadership, field, and practicum experiences
- Significant course projects

For each experience, include the job title; name and location (city and state) of organization; the dates you participated; and a description of the skills, competencies, accomplishments, and knowledge you demonstrated. To choose a format that best highlights your experience, see examples of the chronological, related/relevant experience, and functional formats displayed later in this section.

SAMPLE EXPERIENCE DESCRIPTION

Accounting Assistant, ABC Accounting, Fairfax, VA

January 2017–present

- Maintain accounts payable and receivable for more than 200 office clients.
- Created and implemented a system for ordering and maintaining inventory of office supplies using Access.
- Developed a tracking log of client contacts, resulting in greater office efficiency.

TIPS FOR CREATING THE MOST EFFECTIVE DESCRIPTIONS

- **Action Verbs:** State your experiences in phrases that begin with action verbs and show the scope and results of your activity (e.g., improved a procedure, clarified a problem, increased efficiency).
- **Quantify:** Qualify and quantify your accomplishments (e.g., trained more than 300 persons from 100 companies to use...) Well-chosen descriptive details help communicate your initiative, follow-through, and problem-solving skills.





Quick Tip

Have your résumé critiqued during the Résumé Clinic and conduct a practice interview with an employer representative at the beginning of each fall and spring semester. See the University Career Services event calendar at careers.gmu.edu/events for more details.

- **Keywords:** Use keyword nouns in experience descriptions (and throughout your résumé). Employers often search electronic résumé databases using keywords to locate candidates with preferred qualifications.
- **No Passive Phrases:** Avoid passive phrases, such as “Responsible for,” “Duties included,” or “Assisted with.”
- **Order of Importance:** Describe your most responsible functions first even if they occupied only a small percentage of your time.
- **Outcomes:** Always include the outcome of your efforts or accomplishments (e.g., report was used by the account executive to brief the board).

Skills

Specialized skills, such as computer or foreign language skills, are great additions to your résumé. List relevant skills and your level of expertise. Or, if certain skills are particularly relevant to your objective, you may choose to list them under a separate “Computer Skills” or “Technical Skills” section.

SAMPLE SKILLS SECTION

- Computer proficiency in MS Word, Excel, PowerPoint
- Familiar with database management using MS Access
- Fluent in Spanish and English; conversational ability in French

Other Résumé Categories

Other categories that illustrate competencies might include the following:

- Student activities
- Community service
- Volunteer work
- Course projects
- Presentations
- Leadership experience
- Research
- Publications
- Certifications or licenses
- Honors and awards
- Professional memberships
- International experience
- Security clearances

When deciding whether to create a separate résumé category, ask yourself if the information is important or relevant enough to warrant its own section, or if it would fit just as well under another major heading. Avoid creating a category that has only one item.

SAMPLE STUDENT ACTIVITY SECTION

President, American Marketing Association

George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia, January 2015–present

- Coordinate the activities of 75 members and lead a committee of five officers.
- Plan monthly professional development programs with local community businesses.
- Market all chapter activities to students through class presentations, activity fairs, and electronic communication.

KEY WORDS FOR RÉSUMÉ PREPARATION—ACTION VERBS

Use action verbs at the beginning of each statement describing your experiences.

ADMINISTRATIVE

accomplished	maintained	purchased
administered	managed	recorded
approved	monitored	resolved
arranged	operated	retrieved
classified	organized	screened
compiled	prepared	systematized
developed	prioritized	
documented	provided	

MANAGEMENT

accomplished	improved
achieved	increased
administered	initiated
analyzed	led
appointed	managed
assessed	marketed
assigned	negotiated
chaired	organized
coached	planned
consulted	prepared
contracted	prioritized
controlled	produced
coordinated	promoted
developed	recommended
directed	reconciled
established	recruited
evaluated	reviewed
examined	supervised
exceeded	targeted
executed	trained
implemented	transformed

COMMUNICATION

addressed	consulted	explained	motivated
advised	contributed	formulated	persuaded
aided	cooperated	helped	presented
arranged	coordinated	influenced	promoted
articulated	corresponded	informed	recruited
authored	counseled	inspired	represented
clarified	debated	interpreted	spoke
communicated	defined	interviewed	suggested
completed	directed	lectured	summarized
composed	drafted	marketed	supervised
conceived	edited	mediated	trained
conducted	enlisted	moderated	updated

CREATIVE

acted	illustrated
adapted	improvised
composed	initiated
conceived	innovated
conceptualized	integrated
crafted	invented
created	marketed
customized	originated
designed	performed
developed	problem solved
directed	revitalized
fashioned	shaped
founded	synthesized
generated	traveled

HELPING

advised
aided
assessed
assisted
attended
cared for
clarified
coached
coordinated
counseled
delivered
demonstrated
developed
diagnosed
educated
engaged
facilitated
furnished
mentored
overcame
provided
referred
served

RESEARCH

calculated	discovered	investigated
cataloged	evaluated	monitored
clarified	examined	observed
collected	experimented	organized
computed	extrapolated	proved
correlated	gathered	surveyed
critiqued	identified	tested
diagnosed	inspected	

TEACHING

adapted	guided
advised	informed
clarified	instructed
coached	served
coordinated	taught
explained	trained

FINANCIAL

administered	forecasted
allocated	formulated
analyzed	invested
appraised	maintained
audited	managed
balanced	marketed
budgeted	prepared
calculated	projected
compiled	targeted
developed	tracked
financed	

TECHNICAL

administered	created	operated
analyzed	designed	overhauled
assembled	determined	oversaw
built	developed	programmed
calculated	installed	simulated
computed	led	tested
configured	maintained	troubleshoot
constructed	managed	used

Résumé Formats

There is no single way to format your résumé. The format you choose should present your strengths.

CHRONOLOGICAL FORMAT

- Is most familiar to employers.
- Presents your experience and education in reverse chronological sequence, starting with the most recent.
- Lists date, job title, organization's name, and location, and describes your activities as part of the experience section.
- Is simple, straightforward, and especially useful for anyone with directly relevant experience.

RELATED/RELEVANT EXPERIENCE FORMAT

- This format is an effective way to list your career-related experience first if it is not your most recent experience. It allows your future employer to connect the skills that you have with the skills required for the proposed position.
- Use two experience headings: "Related Experience" and "Additional Experience."

FUNCTIONAL FORMAT

- This style focuses on three or four areas of transferable skills and accomplishments regardless of when and where they were demonstrated; however, it must include a work history section.
- It is highly effective for individuals with a variety of diverse experiences that are difficult to communicate in a chronological fashion.

TECHNICAL RÉSUMÉ

- A technical résumé should clearly show a candidate's technical skills.
- Typically, you should include the following:
 - Upper-level course titles (optional), the duration, and the result
 - Projects completed, including platform used (front-end and back-end)
 - Initiatives and performances that enhanced efficiency (faster work, monetary savings, etc.; focus on your most impressive technical projects and achievements)
 - Technical certifications, hardware, operating systems, networking and protocols, programming and languages, web and database applications
 - Qualifications, such as personality development, marketing diploma, or research study

LIMITED EXPERIENCE FORMAT THAT WILL FILL A PAGE

- Use this format if you do not have enough experiences or work history to fill a page.
- Use 12-point font size, and list your name, address, and contact information vertically on the page to fill space.
- If you are a freshman, note recent high school activities and honors.

Please note, for additional résumé samples, please visit
careers.gmu.edu/students/resume-and-career-documents.



Part-Time Experience

Many students have a difficult time talking about the skills they developed during various part-time jobs and even consider not including these experiences on their résumé. Although some part-time experiences seem irrelevant, it is important to remember the underlying skills, or transferrable skills, that are useful and relevant for any career. Some examples include communication skills, teamwork skills, problem-solving skills, organization skills, leadership skills, learning skills, and so on. Here are some examples of how others have communicated on their résumé the skills obtained in some of the most common part-time jobs.

RETAIL JOB

- Provide friendly, prompt, and efficient customer service with a high level of accuracy at the point of sale.
- Effectively advise customers on purchases by maintaining a high level of knowledge about store products.

FOOD SERVICE JOB

- Build rapport with customers from diverse backgrounds, utilizing a friendly, genuine, and helpful attitude, resulting in many repeat visits.
- Perform opening and closing procedures, ensuring all tasks are completed accurately.

BABYSITTING/NANNY JOB

- Supervise and maintain the safety and well-being of one infant and two toddlers on a daily basis.
- Anticipate the family's needs and demonstrate initiative by providing additional services such as cleaning and organizing.

LIFEGUARD JOB

- Effectively maintain a safe and secure area by enforcing facility rules, policies, and procedures.
- React calmly and swiftly in order to provide lifesaving care and first aid, following a detailed emergency action plan.

OFFICE/ADMINISTRATIVE JOB

- Manage three-line telephone system, responding to various internal and external inquiries and routing to appropriate employee when needed.
- Organize the details of special events, including invitations, catering, room reservations, travel arrangements, agendas, and itineraries.

PET CARE JOB

- Provided in-home pet care, including leashed walks, off-leash socials, feeding, playing, and pet taxi.
- Developed and built summer business generating \$3,000 in three months.

LAWN CARE JOB

- Follow planned landscaping designs to determine where to lay sod, sow grass, or plant flowers and foliage.
- Advise customers on plant selection and care.

(Adapted from University of North Carolina Career Services)



SALLY JONES

Fairfax, Virginia 22030 · 703-555-5555 · sjones99@gmu.edu

EDUCATION

- | | |
|--|-----------------------|
| George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia | May 2017 |
| <i>Bachelor of Arts, History</i> GPA: 3.23/4.0 | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On schedule to complete degree in four years while working 25 hours per week to finance tuition. | |
| Northern Virginia Community College, Annandale, Virginia | May 2015 |
| <i>Associate of Arts, General Studies</i> GPA: 3.41/4.0 | |
| Complutense University of Madrid, Madrid, Spain | January 2015–May 2015 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Studied the life of Francisco Franco, including guided site tours. | |

RESEARCH PROJECT

- | | |
|--|---------------------------|
| <i>The Relationship Between Britain and Imperial Russia</i> | August 2014–December 2014 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Researched diplomatic issues for the era using multiple databases, including EBSCO. Analyzed primary source documents via National Archives. Conducted interviews with subject matter experts. Presented findings at Celebrations of Student Scholarship Day. | |

EXPERIENCE

- | | |
|--|-------------------------|
| The National Museum of American History, Washington, D.C. | May 2015–Present |
| <i>Curatorial Intern</i> | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organize research goals for a team of 10 interns. Investigate the origins of donated artifacts. Review documents for upcoming exhibit proposals. Maintain a database of artifacts using Microsoft Access. | |
| American Apparel, Arlington, Virginia | April 2013–October 2015 |
| <i>Customer Service Clerk</i> | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provided excellent customer service to approximately 100 customers per evening. Trained new staff on an as-needed basis. Recommended clothing options to customers based on expressed tastes. Recognized four times as Employee of the Month. | |

HONORS AND ACTIVITIES

- | | |
|--|------------------------|
| Pi Kappa Phi | February 2013–May 2014 |
| Philanthropy Chair, 2014 | |
| Habitat for Humanity | March 2013–March 2014 |
| Dean's List, two semesters | |
| Arlington County History Scholarship | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awarded to outstanding college student majoring in history and maintaining a 3.0 GPA | |



Georgia Mason

703-123-4567 • gmason@gmu.edu

EDUCATION

George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia

Bachelor of Individualized Study (BIS): Early Childhood Education Studies Concentration

Honors: Dean's List Fall 2016, Spring 2017

May 2017

GPA: 3.65/4.0

Northern Virginia Community College, Annandale, Virginia

Associate of Science in General Studies

August 2011

GPA: 3.72/4.0

EXPERIENCE

Mentor, **Akoma Circle George Mason University**, Fairfax, Virginia

August 2015–Present

- Coordinate three community service fundraisers, raising more than \$3,500.
- Mentor two incoming first-year black students through transition to college while assisting them with academic and social issues that may arise. Guide students in the development of skills and strategies for dealing with concerns.
- Maintain confidentiality relating to mentored students' issues of concern.
- Refer students to campus and community resources as appropriate.

Presenter, **Undergraduate Research Symposium**, George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia

April 2017

Proposed legislative and policy solutions to transplant organ shortage from multidisciplinary perspectives (e.g., scientific, legal, and moral) as part of an interdisciplinary research team of five.

- Reviewed and analyzed relevant legislation and scholarly journals, articles, and reports impacting strategies for routine organ donation, and special considerations prohibiting organ donation from prison inmates.
- Coordinated team members' schedules, ensuring full participation; assessed progress via weekly meetings with members and professor.
- Designed and completed a presentation communicating research findings to faculty mentor and four other research teams.
- Selected as one of 50 College of Humanities and Social Sciences students to present findings at college-wide symposium.

Host and Server, **Bonefish Grill**, Fairfax, Virginia

November 2014–August 2016

- Interacted with more than 50 customers and handled an average of \$750 nightly.
- Developed constructive working relationships with supervisors and co-workers and maintained them over time.
- Communicated effectively in English and Spanish to diverse group of customers and staff.
- Earned a raise after six months of demonstrating a high level of responsibility, maturity, and initiative.

CAMPUS AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

Social Media Coordinator, **Active Minds**, George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia

September 2017–Present

- Created group's Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram accounts; became the first member to hold the title of social media coordinator. Increased followers by 100 percent.
- Launched the first online marketing campaign to generate interest in recruitment events, yielding 15-percent increase in new membership.
- Promoted online club presence and recruited new members for every meeting.
- Coordinated with the president to plan and host bi-weekly meetings to discuss current club events and activities.
- Informed members of updates to events/activities of social media marketing and direct email/phone outreach.

SKILLS

- *Computer/Software*: Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint; Adobe Photoshop; Lexis-Nexis; JSTOR; MailChimp
- *Languages*: Spanish (intermediate verbal, reading, and writing) and English
- *Social Media*: Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, and Twitter



ALI MOHAMED

Fairfax, VA 22030 • 703-555-1234 • amohame45@gmu.edu

EDUCATION	George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia Master of Science in Computer Science	May 2017 GPA 3.67
	University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran Bachelor of Science in Computer Engineering • Top-rated university in Iran, limited to top 1 percent of applicants	May 2015 GPA 3.91
TECHNICAL SKILLS	Programming: C, C++, Java, Python, .NET, PERL Databases: Oracle, Access, SQL Operating Systems: Windows, OSX, Unix, Linux Applications: Adobe Creative Suite, Microsoft Office Suite, Netbeans	
RELATED EXPERIENCE	XYZ Corporation, Dubai, UAE <i>Computer Programmer</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Created Java-based projects for contracted companies. Tested software for rollout on Windows and Linux platforms. Led a team of seven programmers in completing a nine-month audit. Designed a cost-saving module for the corporation that saw net savings of \$5 million. 	May 2015–May 2016
	University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran June 2012– May 2015 <i>Project Manager-Senior Design</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Led a team of five students in developing software to standardize course registration for a university of more than 30,000 students. Consulted with university officials to determine the needs and capabilities of the institution. Designed, developed, and tested code from creation to completion. Organized team meetings on a weekly basis to provide regular project updates. 	
ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE	George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia <i>Graduate Teaching Assistant</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instruct 100 students in an Introduction to Java course. Provide feedback and personal instruction to students on an as-needed basis. Create lesson plans based on recommendations from the professor. 	August 2016–May 2017
	Proma Hypermarket, Tehran, Iran <i>Cashier</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Balanced sales receipts of up to \$300 per day using Quickbooks software. Completed closing duties three nights per week. 	April 2011–June 2012
ACTIVITIES	Member, Association of Computing Machinery Member, Tehran Cultural Society	



CARLOS BODEGA

Fairfax, VA 22030

cbodega@gmu.edu

703-993-2222

EDUCATION:

George Mason University
Bachelor of Arts, Communication

Fairfax, Virginia
Expected: May 2021

Broad Run High School
Advanced Diploma

Ashburn, Virginia
June 2017

EXPERIENCE:

Volunteer Coach, Special Olympics Track and Field, Fairfax, Virginia, May 2014–June 2017

- Organized more than 100 track meets for Special Olympics athletes by scheduling meet times and individual heats, and securing locations for each event.
- Coached five athletes by planning practices and providing advice during track meets.

Lawn Care Specialist, Dream Lawns, Ashburn, Virginia, May 2015–July 2017

- Managed 25 residential and business accounts, ensuring customers' full satisfaction with service; advised customers on plant selection and care.
- Followed planned landscaping designs to determine where to lay sod, sow grass, or plant flowers and foliage.
- Cared for established lawns by mulching, aerating, weeding, grubbing, and removing thatch, and trimming and edging around flower beds, walks, and walls.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES:

- Student Athlete, George Mason University Track and Field Team, August 2017–Present
- Member, Public Relations Student Society of America, August 2017–Present
- Captain, Broad Run High School Track and Field Team, August 2013–June 2017
- Student Member, Key Club, August 2014–June 2017

SKILLS:

- Written and verbal fluency in Spanish
- Proficient in Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint
- Moderate proficiency in WordPress and Dreamweaver



Evelyn Knight

301-000-XXXX (Cell) • eknight@gmail.com • Gaithersburg, Maryland 20878

HIGHLIGHTS OF QUALIFICATIONS

- Excellent planning, organizational, and administrative skills
- Strong interpersonal communication skills with the ability to establish relationships and work effectively and productively with clients and staff
- Energetic, innovative, dedicated, adaptable, intuitive problem solver
- Receptive to identifying and adopting technological advances in the field
- Experienced with MS Office, SPSS, social media, and internet research
- Multilingual: English, German, and French

EDUCATION

George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia

M.S., Economics, GPA 3.59, Expected: May 2018

Florida State University, Tallahassee, Florida

B.A., German; Minor in Political Science

EXPERIENCE

ORGANIZATIONAL/MANAGEMENT

- Developed, organized, and managed two yearly committee meetings.
- Planned, organized, and facilitated meetings; trained new employees in effective sales techniques.
- Coordinated project management, proposal development, and financial management.
- Produced multiple forms of office communications, including social media campaigns.
- Ensured contractual obligations were fulfilled; liaised with interdepartmental agents; purchased necessary supplies; and communicated closely with corporate partners.

EVENT PLANNING

- Coordinated the development of two expos with more than 1,000 guests at each.
- Created social media presence and developed strategic plans to increase followers.
- Brainstormed marketing strategies and implemented them on campus.
- Organized priorities, assigned responsibilities, and coordinated schedules and hours.

INTERNATIONAL

- Lived in Switzerland and Germany for 10 years; traveled extensively throughout Europe and Africa.
- Collaborated with a large team of local administrators to identify the priorities for program development.

WORK HISTORY

George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia

- **Graduate Assistant, Student Involvement**, May 2015–Present
- **Customer Service Representative, Sodexo**, June 2013–April 2015

Exquisite Vacations, Orlando, Florida

- **Sales and Event Planning Assistant Manager**, September 2010–February 2013

U.S. Embassy in Switzerland and Liechtenstein, Geneva, Switzerland

- **Program Specialist**, September 2008–August 2010

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATION

Member, National Association for Business Economics, November 2015–Present



Bailey Ward

Burke, VA • 703-993-5555 • bjward18@masonlive.gmu.edu

EDUCATION/TRAINING

Bachelor of Science in Nursing, May 2017
George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia

Major GPA: 3.97/4.00
Dean's List: Fall 2014–Fall 2016

Clinical Rotations

- Psychiatric, The Center for Psychiatric and Addiction Treatment, Manassas, Virginia, Fall 2016
- Community, Prince William–Manassas Regional Adult Detention Center, Manassas, Virginia, Fall 2016
- Pediatrics, Potomac Hospital/Kaiser Permanente, Woodbridge, Virginia, Spring 2016
- Obstetrics, Potomac Hospital, Woodbridge, Virginia, Spring 2016
- Medical/Surgical, Inova Alexandria Hospital, Alexandria, Virginia, Fall 2015
- Long-term Care, Leewood Healthcare Center, Annandale, Virginia, Fall 2015

Associate of Science, May 2013

GPA: 4.0/4.0

Northern Virginia Community College, Woodbridge, Virginia

RELATED EXPERIENCE

Nurse Intern, Inova Heart & Vascular Institute, Fairfax, Virginia, June 2016–April 2017

- Collaborated with preceptor RN to provide acute care for up to six cardiac patients, including implementation and monitoring of clinical pathways.
- Obtained head-to-toe patient assessments and vital signs on transfers and new admissions, verified by RN.
- Assisted care team with patient ADLs, basic care, therapeutic communication, Foleys, and phlebotomies for a 32-bed unit.
- Documented patient care and performed end-of-shift handoff report for incoming RNs.

Medical Receptionist, Randolph & McFarland Internal Medicine, Fairfax, Virginia, June 2015–March 2016

- Assessed patient vital signs, performed EKGs, and prepped patients for physician examination.
- Greeted patients, triaged phone calls, and scheduled and coordinated appointments.
- Generated referrals, maintained accurate patient records, and tracked and managed patient medical reports.

ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE

Sales Associate/Leader, Bath & Body Works, Springfield, Virginia, May 2014–May 2015

- Coordinated and coached associate selling behaviors and assessed customer needs to provide appropriate product recommendations.

Association Assistant, Smith Bucklin, Pet Food Institute, Washington, D.C., January 2013–May 2015

- Initiated process improvements to accounts payable and receivable to streamline procedures and reduce late fees.

Nanny, Fairfax Nannies, Fairfax, Virginia, January 2013–May 2014

- Organized activities, meals, and daily tasks of children.
- Anticipated family needs and demonstrated initiative by providing additional services such as cleaning and organizing.
- Managed hostile behavior with patience, care, and problem-solving skills.

CERTIFICATIONS/SKILLS

- Basic Life Support for Healthcare Providers–CPR, July 2017
- Proficient in Microsoft Word and Excel
- Working knowledge of hospital computer charting system

MEMBERSHIPS/ACTIVITIES

- Student Nurses Association, George Mason University, Member, 2014–2017
- Make-A-Wish Foundation, group fundraising up to \$10,000



Joan David

Fairfax, Virginia 22030, 703-497-3037, j david@masonlive.gmu.edu

EDUCATION

B.A., Sociology

George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia

Expected: May 2017

GPA: 3.45

Relevant Coursework: Methods and Logic of Inquiry, Classical Sociological Theory, Sociological Analysis and Practice, Sociology of Culture, Social Structure and Globalization

RELATED EXPERIENCE

Center for Social Work and Research, Fairfax Virginia

September 2016–present

Human Services Assistant

- Assess resident health status, document biweekly reports, and coordinate with executive director to determine options.
- Conduct and process evaluations for social service eligibility and financial assistance availability.
- Complete interviews and case reviews for individuals to determine eligibility.
- Act as liaison between families and case workers to relay important updates and information.

Grants Coordinator Intern

August 2015–April 2016

- Researched best practices, policies, and procedures of external universities.
- Identified audit findings and recorded them in manual.
- Developed trainings and provided key members of the university with comprehensive training and professional development.

ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE

Resident Advisor, George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia

September 2014–May 2015

- Advised students on academic and personal issues; referred students to appropriate university life resources and services available on campus.
- Assessed student needs and interests to develop suitable programs; arranged for presenters and handled logistics for three programs each semester.

Office Assistant, LGBTQ Resources Office, Fairfax, Virginia

May 2015–May 2016

- Organized and accurately maintained filing system of confidential information.
- Developed and managed client contact database, resulting in a 58 percent increase in communication.
- Orchestrated special events and meeting reservations.

SKILLS

- Formulate research designs and perform data analysis.
- Possess proficiency in Microsoft Word, Access, and Excel, and working knowledge of PowerPoint.
- Communicate at intermediate level in Spanish.



Kai Chen*U.S. Citizen / U.S. Marine Corps Veteran*

Springfield, Virginia / 703-839-9484 / kchen79@outlook.com

OBJECTIVE STATEMENT

Senior mechanical engineering student looking to find full-time employment specifically focused on improving the safety and effectiveness of our nation's warfighters through research, development, and implementation of mission-critical systems.

EDUCATION**Bachelor of Science, Mechanical Engineering****May 2017**

George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia

GPA 3.9

Related Coursework: Thermodynamics, Heat Transfer, Design of Thermal Systems, Finite Element Analysis, Controls Project Management

Associate of Science, Engineering**May 2014**

Germanna Community College, Fredricksburg, Virginia

GPA 3.2

Related Coursework: Statics, Dynamics, Mechanics of Materials

RELATED PROJECTS**Senior Design**, Mine Detection Robot for Office of IAD Detection

August 2016–Present

Team Lead

- Organize efforts of the team to stay on schedule and meet predetermined deliverables.
- Direct design team meetings focused on meeting customer requirements using applied engineering skills.
- Maintain a \$20,000 budget provided by the DOD's Office of IAD Detection.

SKILLS

Finite Element Analysis/Method

Autodesk Inventor / Mechanical Simulation

Matlab and C++

Microsoft Office Suite

AWARDS AND CERTIFICATIONS

Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society

DOD/CPO Basic Corrosion Course Certification

Type 1, 2 CFC Certification

EXPERIENCE**Project Manager**, Stark Industries, Woodbridge, Virginia

February 2012–Present

- Supervise the implementation of a company-wide site management software upgrade and training system to reduce man-hours associated with data entry and data management. Currently on-call to troubleshoot and repair technical issues dealing with customer equipment.
- Maintain, service, and repair HVAC, plumbing, electrical, and network systems to ensure proper function of all company locations and maximum profitability for the company by reducing maintenance costs.

Manager, Wayne Enterprise, Lorton, Virginia

June 2007–February 2012

- Managed day-to-day operations of the company including sales, purchasing, accounts payables, accounts receivables, and deliveries. Built and maintained close relationships with clients to meet requirements and maintain high levels of customer satisfaction.

HVAC Service Technician, Oscorp, Alexandria, Virginia

August 2005–June 2007

- Performed routine maintenance and inspections on commercial and residential HVAC systems. Troubleshot systems and removed / replaced failed components as required to ensure proper system operation.

Blackhawk Helicopter Mechanic, United States Marine Corps, Charleston, South Carolina

July 1999–October 2004

Aircraft Maintenance Inspector

- Delegated and supervised all maintenance activities on 17 aircrafts for 20 mechanics and crew chiefs within the work center to ensure squadron readiness in peacetime and combat.
- Inspected work performed by work center mechanics and crew chiefs to ensure correct maintenance procedures were followed and to ensure proper functionality of aircrafts.

SAMPLE RELATED PROJECT RÉSUMÉ

Jack Bauer

U.S. Citizen • Alexandria, Virginia 22306 • 703-345-0567 • jbauer@gmu.edu

Objective

Senior electrical engineering student looking to obtain a full-time, entry-level position working with a defense contractor.

Education

George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia

Bachelor of Science, Electrical Engineering

- Dean's list standing (four semesters)

Expected: May 2017

GPA: 3.65

Northern Virginia Community College, Annandale, Virginia

Associate of Science, Electrical Engineering

May 2014

GPA: 3.61

Advanced Courses

Electromagnetic Theory

Signals and Systems

Digital System Design

Linear Electronics

Control Theory

Digital Control Systems

Computer Organization

Single-Chip Microcomputers

Communication Theory

Embedded Systems

Probability

Classical Systems

Technical Skills

Programming Tools

Coding Languages

Hardware Dexterity

Applications

Cloud9, MATLAB, PSpice, TI Code Composer, and Xilinx ISE

C, JAVA, Python, and VHDL

Arduino, Beaglebone, breadboard prototyping, and MSP430

Microsoft Office Suite, OSX, Unix, and Windows

Related Projects

Parking Availability System, Senior Design

August 2016–May 2017

- Collaborated with a group of five teammates to provide drivers with parking availability data.
- Developed sockets to communicate between sensors, server, and smartphones.
- Tested ultrasonic sensors to establish optimal operation placement.
- Designed microcontroller algorithms to exclusively forward accurate readings.

Image Processing using 2D Convolution, Signals and Systems

November 2015

- Detected horizontal and vertical edges using a 3x3 pixel mask
- Blurred images using an averaging mask
- Sharpened images using a LaPlacian 2D operator

Audio Equalizer using Shelf Filters, Signals and Systems

April 2015

- Designed filters using pole-zero plots to attenuate desired frequency spectrum.
- Analyzed results in the time domain to determine amplitude attenuation.
- Examined spectrograms for required frequency attenuation.

Single Cycle MIPS Processor, Computer Organization

August 2015–December 2015

- Designed the Arithmetic and Logic Unit in accordance to the MIPS instruction set.
- Configured the datapath for R, I and J-type instructions.
- Implemented the processor on a Basys 2 FPGA board.

Control of a Computer Disk Drive, Classical Systems and Control Theory

December 2015

- Configured a lead compensator to reduce the settling time of the controller.
- Developed a lag compensator to reduce errors without interfering with the settling time.
- Analyzed system results using MATLAB to determine successful execution.



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SYDNEY R. JONES

Highland, Virginia 22010 • 703-123-4567 • sydneyjones@gmu.edu

EDUCATION

PhD, Education, Specialization: Higher Education, Expected May 2018

George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia

Dissertation: *A Comparative Study of First Generation and Continuing College Students at a Four-Year Public University*

MEd, Curriculum and Instruction, Concentration: Secondary Education, Biology

George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia, May 2014

Thesis: *A Comparative Analysis of the Biological and Public Health Factors of the HIV/AIDS Epidemics in Secondary Schools*

Virginia License Endorsement Secondary Biology

BS Biology, Concentration: Environment Biology, May 2012

James Madison University, Harrisonburg, Virginia

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Teaching Assistant, Environmental Biology, August 2014–present

George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia

- Plan weekly laboratory assignments for class of 25 students to enhance and reiterate concepts introduced in class lectures.
- Create and lead field experiences to raise awareness of environment issues.
- Assist in preparation and grading of mid-term and final examinations.
- Teach weekly laboratory exercise.

Instructor, The EDGE, George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia, Summers, August 2013–present

- Present lectures and weekend outings to groups with basic to advanced knowledge of ecology, with emphasis on alpine ecology, animal tracking, and wilderness skills.
- Lead six-day canoe and hiking trips with attention to environmental science.

Biology Teacher, Fairfax High School, Fairfax, Virginia, August 2011–present

- Teach Advanced Placement Biology, Standard and Honors levels of Biology grade 9, and Human Anatomy and Physiology.
- Create lessons aligned with standard for Fairfax County and with state standard for Virginia.
- Differentiate lessons by incorporating a variety of teaching methods while accommodating students with various learning modalities.
- Incorporate expert knowledge of a retired orthopedic surgeon who participated in the Human Anatomy lessons.
- Communicate student progress with parents, counselors, and administrators under the direction of mentor teacher. Participate in IEP and 504 meetings.
- Collaborate with other biology teachers to develop new lessons, enhance old lessons, assess student progress and analyze standardized testing data.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Independent Researcher, Department of Biology, George Mason University, Fall 2015

- Designed and conducted field study on the impact of avian predation on Anolis lizards in the eastern Caribbean, documenting the important differences in spatial scale between prey and predators.
- Analyzed spatial scale and environment heterogeneity in predator-prey communities.
- Supervised two undergraduate assistants who compiled data.

Research Assistant, Department of Biology, George Mason University, Spring 2014

- Developed quantitative theory of hierarchical structure in ecological systems.
- Investigated primary events of bacterial photosynthesis.
- Performed isolation and spectral analysis of photosynthetic reaction centers.





SAMPLE CURRICULUM VITA, CONTINUED

PUBLICATIONS and PRESENTATIONS

Jones, J. R. and T. J. Strauss. Pattern and stability in predator-prey communities: How diffusion in spatially variable environment affects the Lotak-Volterra model, *Theoretical Population Biology* (forthcoming).

Stachelek, M. R. and Jones, J. R., (2016). Foraging behavior of Eastern Cottontail: Short and long range movement, *Journal of Zoology*, 90, 503-505.

Jones, J. R. and T. J. Strauss, (2015). Avian predation on Anolis lizards in the northeastern Caribbean: An Inter-island contract, *Ecology*, 70, 617-628.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Volunteer, Habitat for Humanity, Arlington, Virginia, Fall 2014–Spring 2015

Assistant Coach, Little League of Fairfax County, Annandale, Virginia, Summer 2015

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

Member, American Institute of Biological Sciences, Fall 2015–present

Member, American Biological Society, Fall 2014–present

Member, American Association of Neuroscience, Fall 2014–present

SKILLS AND TECHNIQUES

Proficient in SPSS, MS Office, MatLab, internet research. Experience with C++, ClarisDraw, Dreamweaver, EndNote, HTML, Java, Perl, Photoshop, PsyScope, SAS, and Systat., Northern Blotting, SDS-PAGE, Microinjection, Spectrometry, SPSS, ArcView, BioCom, Mammalian cell culture, and Fluorescence microscopy

SELECTED HONORS AND FELLOWSHIPS

Doctoral Student Full Tuition Scholarship, George Mason University, 2016–present

Research Fellowship, Bee Research and Discovery Center, American University, 2015

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Participant: Department of Biology Interest Group, George Mason University, 2015

Analyzed ecological specimen samples and case studies. Explored, assessed and made recommendations regarding research design and methods through weekly discussions led by faculty of the Biology Department.

Member: Mason Neuroscience Club, George Mason University, 2016–Present

Attended lectures, presentations, and career events focused on neuroscience and biotechnology

ABSTRACTS

Taylor, K. T., Robinson, A. L., Klein, S. A., and Jones, S. R. Membrane-associated proteins in high, predator-prey animal kingdoms. Abstracts of the Virginia Symposium on Zoology, 2016. Abstract 100.

Kincaid, B. R., and Jones, S. R. The Complex and Regulation of Membrane Composition of Anolis lizards. Abstracts of the American Society for Biochemistry, 2014. Abstract and Presentation 1310.

PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

Jones, S. R. and Strauss, T.J. Pattern and stability in predator-prey communities: how diffusion in spatially variable environment affects the Lotak-Volterra model, *Theoretical Population Biology* (forthcoming).

Stachelek, M.R. and **Jones, S.R.**, (2016) Foraging behavior of Eastern Cottontail: Short- and long-range movement, *Journal of Zoology*, 90, 503-505.

Jones, S.R. and L.J. Wilson, (2015). Avian predation on Anolis lizards in the northeastern Caribbean: An inter-island contract, *Ecology*, 70, 617-628.

Jones, S.R. and Thompson, V, (2015). Behavior modification in low-predator communities. *Journal of Biology*, 50, 256-259.

Simmons, A., Tate, K.L. and **Jones, S.R.**, (2014) Developmental dissociation of sensory neurons of the Eastern Cottontail. *Journal of Neuroscience*, 11, 215-221.

Mahad Ibrahim

1234 Maple Lane, Fairfax, Virginia 22032 • 703-123-4567 • mahad.ibrahim@live.com

U.S Citizen
Clearance: None
Languages: Fluent in Arabic
Highest Previous Grade: GS-04 Pathways Intern
Geographic Preference: Washington, D.C., Northern Virginia

PROFILE

Skilled researcher and analytical problem solver committed to public service. Strong written, oral, and interpersonal communication skills gained through course work and internships. Bilingual with interest in learning new languages.

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Arts in Global Affairs, Concentration: Middle East and North Africa May 2016
George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia GPA 3.51

Relevant Coursework

Government and Politics of the Middle East and North Africa, The Middle East in the 20th Century, International Economic Policy, Global Conflict Analysis and Resolution

Economic Development Research Project: Researched and wrote 20-page paper on trade and international finance in the Middle East based on literature reviews. Compared economies, analyzing similarities and differences among countries in the region. Assessed influence and consequences of trade and protectionism. Presented overview of paper to class. (October 2014)

Conflict Analysis Team Project: Led four-member team project on intercultural communication and conflict resolution. Analyzed the influence of globalization on conflict using case studies. Delegated tasks and organized meeting schedule. Conducted a 60-minute presentation based on research findings. (April 2014)

RELATED EXPERIENCE

10th District Constituent Services Office, CONGRESSIONAL INTERN, Herndon, Virginia, August 2015 to December 2015, eight hours per week

Supervisor: Ms. Jane Doe (703-234-5678), may contact

Management Information Systems: Utilized and updated Capital Correspondence Database Information System to respond to written and verbal inquiries from the public. Planned and organized work, coordinated with others to solve complex problems. Demonstrated professionalism and courtesy. Shared information with and sought input from internal and external sources.

Proven track record for providing excellent customer service to a diverse body of constituents.

Recognized for interpersonal skills with customers and co-workers. Regularly received and responded to high-priority requests from constituents. Managed 50+ inbound and outbound call traffic and 70 email requests from constituents each day. Worked successfully under deadlines to achieve daily objectives. Worked extra hours and took over additional tasks to complete projects.

Built rapport and maintained liaisons with internal and external offices to improve operations and flow of information in a high-pressure environment under tight deadlines. Participated in 2010 Congressional Grant Conference for researchers and businesses, held at Northern Virginia Community College's Sterling Campus. Managed supporting logistics, information dissemination, and security.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Recognized twice for exemplary internal and external customer service by supervisor.
- Made recommendations to enhance the Congressional Grant Conference, which were implemented for the next year. Streamlined data entry process for the Capital Correspondence Database Information System, allowing the public to easily submit inquiries.

Department of Defense Chief of Staff, PATHWAYS PROGRAM INTERN, Arlington, Virginia, June 2014 to June 2015, eight hours per week, (\$13,000/year), Supervisor: Mr. John Doe (703-345-6789), may contact

Demonstrated outstanding customer service while managing logistics and support of multiple missile defense agency conferences attended by military officials, defense department employees, and foreign dignitaries. Provided a wide range of direct support and proactive assistance to the Protocol Section of the chief of staff for the Missile Defense Agency (MDA). Maintained professionalism and courteous attitude in a fast-paced, high-pressure environment. Used Arabic language skills to assist foreign dignitaries.

Engaged in effective oral communications and personal interaction at various retirement ceremonies, senior executive service and flag officer events, and weekly organizational staff meetings, and arranged transportation to events.



SAMPLE FEDERAL STYLE RÉSUMÉ, CONTINUED

Researched and prepared a comprehensive “History and Missile Defense Bibliography” for use by missile defense researchers and international strategic partners by compiling information from a variety of sources including the Pentagon library, the Pentagon intranet, and materials from the MDA Military History Office.

Analyzed, evaluated, and interpreted information from missile defense history sources to actively assist the military historian with creating speeches for the director of MDA to use in congressional testimony given in front of senators justifying budgets and programs.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Wrote parts of the speech for the director of the Missile Defense Agency to give at the MDA’s conference, which was praised by more than 10 senators.
- Selected to represent the DOD at multiple meetings and ceremonies.
- Created formal brochure explaining the support of the MDA to be used in the future for Japanese-speaking dignitaries.

Fairfax County Public Schools, SUBSTITUTE TEACHER, Falls Church, Virginia, January 2012 to June 2014, 24 hours per week (\$21,000/ year), Supervisor: Dr. John Doe (703-732-0123), may contact

Monitored, tracked, evaluated, and executed complex daily action plans while adjusting for changing priorities in a fast-paced, emotionally charged environment. Supervised and taught up to 30 students while promoting teamwork and communication. Disseminated written materials and effectively communicated oral instructions while maintaining order using a variety of creative methods. Supported and promoted primary instructor’s vision in tense situations.

Evaluated and documented progress of action plans. Prepared and delivered in-depth analysis reports and briefings to primary instructors. Anticipated and responded to needs, maintaining flexible, service-oriented attitude.

Managed and oversaw support and action plan implementation for 30 elementary school-aged children while primary instructor was on leave due to an unexpected illness. Demonstrated quick thinking to adapt schedules and routines, creating lesson plans without guidance to ensure that learning continued uninterrupted.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Repeatedly selected as a long-term substitute for teachers on maternity or extended medical leave as a result of demonstrated teaching ability.
- Frequently recognized for enthusiasm, dependability, organization, and effectiveness as one of the Fairfax County Public Schools system’s most in-demand substitutes.
- Awarded Substitute of the Year in 2013 for exceptional dedication to the classroom and students.

The Green Turtle, HOST/SERVER, Fairfax, Virginia, March 2013 to August 2014, 10 hours per week (\$10,000/year), Supervisor: Jane Doe (703-156-8897), may contact

Demonstrated excellent interpersonal communication skills while interacting with more than 50 customers and handling an average of \$750 nightly. Engaged in effective teamwork in a fast-paced environment to ensure accuracy and timeliness of orders.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Selected as employee of the month two times in a 12-month period.
- Frequently recognized for initiative, being a team player, and having a positive attitude.

Asian Bistro, Kitchen Prep Assistant, Fairfax, Virginia, March 2011 to February 2012, 10 hours per week (\$8,000/year), Supervisor: Jeremy Miller (703-726-1559), may contact

Consistently followed the prep list created by chefs to plan duties. Labeled and stocked all ingredients on shelves.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Entrusted to reduce sauces and parboil food after 6 weeks in the position.
- Received 100 percent sanitation compliance in food prep area on a daily basis.

TECHNICAL SKILLS

HTML, Dreamweaver, Java



FEDERAL GOVERNMENT STYLE RÉSUMÉ

- Federal government style résumés contain additional information that is not found on civilian résumés. This information includes veteran's preference, full address of employers, supervisor's name, phone number of the agency, and wage or salary.
- This style of resume allows you to expand upon your experiences and skills. Multiple pages are expected. Be honest and thorough about dates, skills, and experience; it will be verified.

Federal Style Résumés

Although most U.S. government agencies will accept a "simple" résumé, you can make yourself more competitive by creating the longer federal résumé. There is an excellent federal résumé builder on www.usajobs.gov that can help you properly format your résumé and ensure that you include the necessary information.

The federal résumé requires information not usually included in a résumé for the private sector. It can be up to five pages in length. Your federal résumé should include the following:

- The job announcement number, job title, and job grade of the job for which you are applying
- Your full name, full mailing address, day and evening phone numbers, and home email
- Social Security number
- Country of citizenship
- Veteran's preference
- Reinstatement eligibility (for former federal employees)
- Highest federal civilian grade held, including job series and dates held
- Education, college name, city, state, zip code, your majors, and type and year of degrees held or number of semester hours completed; also, if requested, your high school name, city, state, zip code, and date of your diploma or GED
- All work experience, paid and unpaid (job title, duties, and accomplishments; employer's name and address, including zip code; supervisor's name and phone number; starting and ending dates (month and year); hours per week; and salary. List each experience as a separate entry on the résumé.
- Indicate whether your current supervisor can be contacted for a reference.
- Job-related training courses (title and year).
- Job-related knowledge or skills.
- Current job-related certificates and licenses.
- Honors, awards, special accomplishments, leadership activities, memberships, or publications—both university and job-related.

Additional Résumé Tips

- Analyze the announcements carefully for keywords and government jargon.
- List your accomplishments, including work, academic, extracurricular, volunteer, and other activities; don't be shy, but be truthful.
- Focus on the mission of the agency and translate your experience into terms that make sense for that agency.
- Use more nouns and titles (e.g., writer, team leader, database administrator) to allow for selection in a keyword search.
- After creating a draft of your federal style résumé, schedule a meeting with our Government Industry Advisor.





Quick Tips for Writing Résumés

- Design your descriptions to focus on your accomplishments, using action verbs to clearly indicate the skills you've used.
- Take advantage of on-campus positions and activities to express learned skills on your résumé.
- Try quantifying results in your descriptions, such as "Created marketing campaign that increased club membership by 25 percent."
- Don't make your margins and font size too small.
- Only include high school experiences if you are a freshman or sophomore.
- Have others look over your résumé for content and grammar. Career counselors and industry advisors are available to critique your résumé.

Additional Resources

The Student's Federal Career Guide, Ten Steps to a Federal Job, The Federal Résumé Guidebook, and Guide to America's Federal Jobs by Kathryn Troutman are excellent step-by-step guides with good samples on writing an effective federal résumé.



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- ▶ Friendly Environment

EXERCISE 1: T-CHART FOR ANALYZING POSITION DESCRIPTIONS

On the left side of the T-chart, write down the requirements/qualifications listed in the job description you are interested in. On the right side, list specific examples of how you have demonstrated that particular skill/requirement. **This is a great tool when trying to figure out what experiences to highlight in your résumé and cover letter.** Include all of your qualifications on your résumé. Select three to five of your strongest qualifications to highlight through examples or stories in the body of your cover letter.

Requirements/Qualifications	My Relevant Examples
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.
6.	6.
7.	7.



Cover Letters

IN THIS SECTION

You will learn...

- How to create a letter that introduces you and your résumé.
- How to state that your qualifications and interests make you a good fit for the job and organization.
- How to explain your accomplishments and transferable skills gained through academics, course projects, student involvement, volunteerism, and internships.
- To identify any other information that distinguishes you.

What Is a Cover Letter?

The cover letter is a standard business letter that accompanies a résumé. The goal of the cover letter is to encourage employers to look at your résumé further and to provide employers with a writing sample. Effective cover letters are tailored for the particular job and organization to which you are applying. Taking the time to personalize your cover letter will demonstrate to the employer a level of enthusiasm and interest in the position and could help you stand out more as a candidate.

There are two basic types of cover letters:

- **Application Letter**—Used to apply for an open position within an organization; includes pertinent details about your qualifications and requests an interview.
- **Prospecting Letter/Letter of Inquiry**—Used to contact an employer where no known opening exists to express interest in the organization and request an opportunity to interview for an appropriate position.



Cover Letter Outline and Contents

CONTACT INFORMATION

Your Address

City, State, Zip

Date

Name of Addressee

Title

Organization Name

Address

City, State, Zip

SALUTATION

- Dear Mr./Ms./Mrs. _____ (specific person's name who will be doing the hiring)
- If you do not have a name, call the department or human resources to find out to whom your letter should be addressed.
- As a last resort, address your letter to Personnel Manager, Hiring Manager, or Recruiting Representative.

FIRST PARAGRAPH

- The main purpose of the first paragraph is to introduce yourself and explain why you are writing. You want to grab the employer's attention.
- Indicate why you are interested in the position and/or this organization.
- Use your community. If someone has referred you to the organization (a current employee, friend, or family member), include his or her name in the first sentence.

SECOND/THIRD PARAGRAPH

- Tell the employer your story.
- Describe your related qualifications for the type of position you seek using specific examples from academic, work, volunteer, and/or co-curricular experiences.
- Connect your accomplishments, skills, and knowledge directly to the type of position, organization, and/or field.

FINAL PARAGRAPH

- Summarize or give a final statement of interest and qualifications.
- Thank the employer for his or her time and consideration.
- Plan to follow up with the employer by phone or email.

CLOSING

- Sincerely,
- Your Name





Quick Tips for Cover Letters

- Use social media and the organization's website to gather information about the company/ organization for your cover letter. Focus on skills and attributes the employer is seeking in applicants and discuss these skills in the body of your cover letter.
- Cover letters also showcase your writing abilities. It is imperative that your cover letter is error-free and grammatically sound. **Don't begin every sentence with "I."**
- Letters addressed to a specific person demonstrate a higher level of investment and enthusiasm for the position, so try to find out the name of the person you want to read your letter.



Cover Letter Examples

Highlighted key words indicate skills, competencies, experience, or knowledge areas that the candidate must possess and include on his or her résumé, cover letter, and supporting materials to be considered for an interview. If the key elements are not there, you won't be selected. Be prepared to discuss and give examples of your qualifications at the interview.

EXAMPLE #1: CONGRESSIONAL INTERNSHIP DESCRIPTION

Congressional Internship

Student Conservation Association (SCA)

Job Function: Public Administration/Public Affairs/Public Policy/Transportation

Application Deadline: 5/15/2018

SCA and Unilever Corporation have partnered to offer a unique congressional internship opportunity that will give students a chance to change the world. Working in either a Democratic or Republican office, students will gain firsthand knowledge of how government policy shapes our national park system. After spending 15 weeks on Capitol Hill, interns will be placed in the field at a national park to help implement those policies.

Minimum Requirements

- Strong communication skills, both written and verbal
- Interest in public policy and environmental issues
- Strong customer service skills and comfortable manner when dealing with the public
- Willingness to work in a Democratic or Republican congressional office
- Computer proficiency with spreadsheets or databases
- Ability to conduct Internet research
- Current undergraduate or recent graduate with a GPA of 3.00 or higher
- Detailed résumé
- Directed writing sample and college transcript

Location: Washington, D.C., and an assigned national park

Position Type: Internship—Paid or stipend

Desired Major: Public policy, government, political science

To Apply

Send résumé, cover letter, and college transcript via George Mason University's Handshake database or to SCA Human Resources Office at www.theSCA.org/hr by the May 15, 2018, deadline.





EXAMPLE OF A TAILORED COVER LETTER

Fairfax, VA 22030

April 15, 2017

Ms. Jennifer Moss
Internship Coordinator
Student Conservation Association
963 New York Avenue
Washington, DC 20003

Dear Ms. Moss:

Your recent posting on Handshake for the Congressional Internship caught my attention immediately. The opportunity to work on Capitol Hill and also in the field is the perfect match for my academic pursuits and career interests. As a **government and international politics major** and **environmental** and sustainability studies minor with a **3.2 GPA in my senior year**, I believe I have the skills you are looking for.

The past two summers, I worked as a receptionist and group leader for Fairfax County's Hidden Oaks Nature Center. In this role, I answered a multi-line telephone, provided information about the center, and performed general administrative duties. As a group leader, I educated and engaged children ages 3-12 about ecology, preservation, and woodland trails. This experience has helped me to develop **my customer service and verbal communication skills** and understand how government policies and funding affect our parks. Additionally, my volunteer experience over the past four years with the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay has reinforced my interest in public policy and environmental issues. My college coursework is **writing** intensive, and the enclosed writing sample illustrates my **research skills** on the topic of Maryland's Annual Cleanup Day and Project Clean Stream. My skills in **Microsoft Office, including Excel**, are advanced, as I am able to create formulas, run macros, and develop pivot tables, all of which I learned in an economic policy course last semester.

Attached is my résumé that highlights my customer service and research experience along with my transcript and writing sample. Next week I will follow up to inquire if any additional information is needed. You can reach me by email at ssstudent15@masonlive.gmu.edu or telephone at 703-555-3456. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Samantha Student

EXAMPLE 2: PROFESSIONAL JOB DESCRIPTION

Fairfax County Public Schools

Title: School Counselor, Rachel Carson Middle School

Job Function: Counseling/Consulting/Crisis Intervention/Program Assessment and Evaluation

Duties: School counselor will work with students from **multicultural and diverse socioeconomic backgrounds**. Provide developmentally appropriate information, knowledge, and skills to promote student success in **academic, career, personal, and social areas**. Serve as a consultant to parents and teachers, helping them to be more effective in working with students through **individual or group conferences**, staff development activities, or parent educational workshops. Provide **crisis intervention** by addressing specific concerns of students at risk or with identified needs, consulting with parents and/or teachers as appropriate. Assess needs of students and staff, evaluate programs, and make changes in the school counseling program to increase effectiveness. Act as liaison between **teachers, parents/guardians, support personnel, and community resources** to facilitate successful student development. Be an advocate ensuring equitable access to programs and services for all students.

To Apply: Email résumé and cover letter to aford@fcps.edu by August 15, 2017.

A woman with blonde hair, wearing a white sleeveless top and dark pants, is shaking hands with a man with dark hair, wearing a light blue shirt and dark pants. They are standing in a modern office environment with large windows and bookshelves in the background. The woman is holding a laptop. The man is leaning on a table. The background shows a bright, airy office space with bookshelves filled with books and a large window letting in natural light.

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EXAMPLE OF TAILORED COVER LETTER

CARLOS BODEGA
Fairfax, Virginia 22030
703-993-2222 cbodega@gmu.edu

August 1, 2017

Alice Ford, Recruitment Specialist
Fairfax County Public Schools
8115 Gatehouse Road
Falls Church, VA 22042

Dear Ms. Ford:

As a recent graduate from George Mason's Counseling and Development MEd program with a concentration in school counseling, I believe my education and experience match the needs of your position. I was excited to see the school counselor opportunity at Rachel Carson Middle School posted on the Fairfax County Public Schools website on July 31, 2017. The possibility of working with a diverse student body at a school known for its nontraditional teaching methods and innovative programs is exactly how I would like to build my career.

For the past year and a half, I have held a school counseling internship working with students from various multicultural and socioeconomic backgrounds at Irving Middle School. My experience includes leading individual and group counseling sessions on anger management, social skills development, study skills, friendship, grief, deployment, and divorce. In addition, I worked with a diverse student body that included many non-English speaking recent immigrants at Arlington High School for the Arts and Sciences. During this practicum, I conducted individual and group sessions addressing attendance, academic, career, and social concerns. One project I initiated was to update community resources, brochures, and intake forms. Additionally, I had the opportunity to co-facilitate a parent-teacher workshop on the topic of social media and bullying. While pursuing my degree, I balanced a part-time job at a group home for battered women and volunteered at a crisis hotline. The culmination of my education and experience provides a strong foundation to provide counseling services to your student body.

Attached is my résumé for your consideration. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions you may have. I look forward to discussing my background and passion for supporting students, families, and staff with you. The best way to reach me is via cell phone at 703-987-6543.

Sincerely,

Carlos Bodega

EXAMPLE OF PROSPECTING COVER LETTER

Amanda Ramirez

Reston, VA 20191

571-765-2791 • aramx@masonlive.gmu.edu

Mr. Mark Parker
Internship Coordinator
EC International Development Inc.
111 Connecticut Avenue
Washington, DC 20003

Dear Mr. Parker,

While conducting research on the field of international development on LinkedIn, I came across your organization and decided to learn more by visiting your website. I am excited about the current projects you provide in Latin America in support of human rights. I noticed on the George Mason University hiring system Handshake that an internship was available with your organization last summer, and I would like to inquire about anticipated internship openings within the next six months. My extensive knowledge of international affairs, along with my Spanish language skills and enthusiasm for empowering international communities, would allow me to make a valuable contribution to your organization.

I will graduate from George Mason University in May 2018 with a bachelor's degree in Global Affairs and a minor in Spanish. I have consistently received positive feedback from my professors concerning the accuracy and efficiency of my research projects, and I have played leadership roles in many academic group projects. I have learned a great deal about Latino cultures and global issues associated with human rights and poverty, and I would like to put my knowledge to good use. I am interested in getting experience at an organization that aims to make a difference for disadvantaged individuals in developing countries. In fall 2016, I completed a study-abroad program in Argentina, where I practiced my Spanish skills and served as a volunteer for a community project to benefit orphans. I would like to continue to contribute my relevant skills to your organization as a student intern.

I look forward to speaking with you further about potential internships and opportunities within your organization. I have attached my resume for your review. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me by phone at 571-765-2791 or by email at aramx@masonlive.gmu.edu. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Amanda Ramirez





Quick Links

- careers.gmu.edu/students/resume-and-career-documents
(Résumés and Cover Letters Section)
- collegegrad.com
Cover letter tips, samples, and templates
- careerlab.com
Lots of cover letter examples for job hunters
- livecareer.com
Career tools, job search tips, and expert advice

Letters of Recommendation

Recommendation letters are typically requested when applying for graduate school or a scholarship, and by employers in certain fields.

Provide your letter writers with the following:

- Four to six weeks lead time to write the letter
- A copy of your résumé
- Written highlights of your academic courses
- Examples of projects and research papers
- Your transcripts
- Any other information that serves to distinguish you for the purpose of the recommendation
- Stamped and addressed envelopes (if they need to mail in the letters)
- A handwritten thank-you letter or card

Save copies of your recommendation letters. They may be used again but should be updated by the original writer after one year.

OTHER LETTERS <i>Visit careers.gmu.edu for samples.</i>	
NETWORKING Letter	Written to develop a contact in a field or organization and may be used to request an information interview, job lead, or help with preparing job search materials.
THANK-YOU Letter	Follows an interview. Conveys appreciation for the interview and reiterates your interest in the position.
Letter of APOLOGY	Expresses your regret for missing an interview. Conveys your continued interest and states your desire to reschedule the meeting.
ACCEPTANCE Letter	Serves as an ethical contract between you and the employer after you have been offered a job. It should be brief, express your appreciation, restate the terms and conditions of employment (salary and benefits), and the starting date.
REJECTION Letter	Declines a job offer and expresses appreciation for the employer's time and the offer in a positive, tactful manner.
WITHDRAWAL Letter	Notifies an employer in a considerate and positive tone that you no longer wish to be considered for a position with that organization.



References

Employers may require you to provide a list of references to be contacted. References verify your experience and confirm your credibility. Unlike writing a recommendation letter, your references, if contacted by the employer, will speak with the employer by phone or email about your accomplishments and credibility, as well as answer any questions about you that the employer may have. Employers use references to assess past job and school performance as an indicator to determine whether you would be a good fit for the position. Careful consideration should be given to whom you ask to serve as your references.

IDENTIFYING YOUR REFERENCES

- Consider asking professors, advisors, supervisors and bosses, or co-workers to be a reference.
- As a college student or recent alum, you should have at least one reference from a professor or faculty member.
- Choose wisely. If an individual has minimal knowledge of your professional experience, do not ask him or her to serve as your reference. You should select an individual who knows you well and can speak of your skills, rather than a well-respected professional in your field who knows very little about you.
- If the person seems hesitant to serve as your reference, ask someone else.

REQUESTING REFERENCES

- Personally contact each person to ask whether he or she would be able to serve as a strong reference before you provide the employer with his or her contact information.
- Share the types of positions you are interested in applying for, along with your résumé, and explain how you see your qualifications fitting with those positions.

REFERENCE LIST FORMAT

- The names of references should not be included on the résumé. Create a separate page with your complete contact information at the top followed by a list of your references and their contact information.
- Do not send your list of references with the résumé unless requested to do so; instead, give it to the employer at the interview.
- Employers will usually contact your references by phone or email.
- Keep your references updated on your job search.



Quick Tip for References

- When creating your professional references list, identify their relationship to you. This gives the employer context and a starting point for verifying information.



REFERENCES SAMPLE

Daniel Faircloth
Fairfax, VA 22030
703-555-8120
dfair1111@gmu.edu

REFERENCES

Jocelyn Weaver, PhD (Current Instructor)

Assistant Professor
School of Systems Biology
George Mason University
Fairfax, VA 22030
703-555-2014
jweaver9@gmu.edu

Melissa Graybar (Previous Supervisor)

Manager
Britches
88766 Maple Street
Alexandria, VA 33049
703-444-1000
mgraybar@britches.com

Rhonda Kalish (Previous Internship Supervisor)

Project Manager
National Institute for Allergy and Infectious Diseases
National Institute of Health
Bethesda, MD 20887
301-4333-0909
rkalish@niaid.nih.gov



Career Research

It is critical to conduct research into the industry that interests you. The more research you do, the more likely a career path and effective job search strategy will become evident to you. This section will explore how you can effectively implement some research methods.

IN THIS SECTION

You will learn...

- What to research to find out more about a company or industry
- How you can conduct career research
- Which online links for general and industry-specific information might be best for you

CAREER RESEARCH IS STEP 2 IN THE FOUR-STEP PROCESS.



Step 2: Research

- Research your organizations of choice by visiting their websites to learn about their mission, products, or services offered, major divisions, and location.
- Research your industry of interest to learn the lingo and current trends in the field.
- Develop a list of 50–100 organizations that may be a fit for you. You are not looking for companies that have openings; just list places that you feel could be a fit.

ABOUT CAREER RESEARCH

A major element of a successful job search and career is understanding the full scope of the position to which you are applying. Often a job description is limited in explaining what is required of the applicant for that particular position. It is essential to discover more about the job, the company, and most important, the industry. Once you know more, you can go back to your documents and tailor them appropriately. Important questions that you may want to consider researching include:

- What is required of me, both in the day-to-day work, as well as the overall goals for achieving success in this position?
- What are the goals of this company, and how does it go about achieving them?
- Who are competitors in this industry, and what, collectively, does the industry stand for? What obstacles does it face?

- What are the emerging trends in this industry, and how might this position or company play a part in this larger context?
- How does the company's mission match my own values?

It is important to remember that through doing your research, you are not committing to an organization. You are simply gathering information to help you determine if you would like to pursue the next step in seeking employment with them. Use this opportunity to learn about options and expand your list rather than limit your choices. If it is clear that a company would not be a good fit for you, you can move on from them; otherwise, consider exploring further through the next steps in the process.

CAREER RESEARCH CHECKLIST

- ☐ Read about various occupations and learn about the nature of the work, working conditions, training and educational requirements, earning potential, future job outlook, and more in the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics' Occupational Outlook Handbook at www.bls.gov/ooh.
- ☐ Talk with your network of contacts—family, friends, professors, teachers, neighbors, peers, colleagues, and mentors—about potential careers. Use social media, including LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter.
- ☐ Use Mason's Alumni Association to build connections. The Mason Alumni Association's LinkedIn group is a great way to access a large number of connections very quickly.
- ☐ Conduct career research online. Learn more about your industries of interest by visiting careers.gmu.edu/students/find-job-or-internship.
- ☐ Explore current job openings. Different companies have variations of jobs within the same career field. This information can help you learn which skills are important in your industry.
- ☐ Consider volunteering in your industry of interest.
- ☐ Conduct informational interviews and attend customized recruiting events at University Career Services.
- ☐ Go to one or more career fairs.
- ☐ Arrange to job shadow one or more people who have careers that interest you. Take a Patriot to Work Day is a great opportunity to conduct a job shadow.
- ☐ Locate one or more professional associations related to your career field.



LINKS

Below are some of the websites you can use to conduct career research.

General Information

- O*NET OnLine (onenetonline.org)
- Career OneStop (careeronestop.org and myskillsmyfuture.org)
- Occupational Outlook Handbook (www.bls.gov/ooh)
- LexisNexis—Use Mason's library site to access this database

Industry-Specific Information

- For industry-specific information, visit the University Career Services "Industry Specific Resources" page at careers.gmu.edu/students/industry-specific-resources and visit the Mason Libraries page at infoguides.gmu.edu.
- Use LinkedIn to research groups relevant to your industry or interest area and to research company pages.
- Access information through national or regional associations related to your industry. You can also locate professional associations through Career OneStop.
- Visit TheCareerProject.org to research thousands of real careers and jobs through the eyes of the people who work in them.

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Networking

Networking = Relationships. This step is the most important and the most time consuming, but effectively building your network will ultimately lead to a successful internship or job search.

IN THIS SECTION

You will learn...

- Networking basics
- What should be included in a personal pitch
- How to prepare for an informational interview
- Sample networking questions
- Social media tips and other networking strategies

NETWORKING IS STEP 3 IN THE FOUR-STEP PROCESS.



Step 3: Network

Put simply, networking means building relationships with people and exchanging information. If you can add a new friend to Facebook, you have already proven that you can network!

Up to 80 percent of jobs are filled through networking. When employers have a position to fill, they first think of anyone they already know who needs a job and would be a good fit for their organization. Second, they turn to those around them for recommendations of great candidates. Lastly, (and only if necessary) they advertise their position publicly to solicit a large number of applicants.

WHERE CAN YOU NETWORK?

Networking can take place anywhere you come into contact with people. Informal places include the classroom, a sports game, or your religious service. Formal spaces, specifically designed for networking, include a career fair, professional association meeting, or conference.

WHO IS IN YOUR NETWORK?

Your network is probably bigger than you think! Just to get started, add up all the contacts in your phone and email address book. Networks are built over time. Remember, with each new person you meet you are expanding your network.

YOUR PERSONAL PITCH

The first thing you do when you meet someone or are trying to establish a relationship is to introduce yourself. Imagine you are on an elevator with someone who has the ability to give you

your dream job, or you are at a career fair with a long line of students waiting to speak with the same employer. What would you say to make a positive first impression? A personal pitch allows you to provide the following in 30 seconds or less.

1. Information about yourself (e.g., name, year, major)
2. Your interest in the industry or organization
3. Your top two to three strengths and qualifications, supported by concrete examples
4. A relevant question to initiate a conversation

For more information, see careers.gmu.edu/events/students-attend.

THE INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW

An informational interview is a structured meeting to gather advice from a professional about an industry, occupation, or organization. This information can be used to help you decide about a major or career and how to prepare yourself to successfully enter that line of work. Take the following steps to arrange informational interviews.

Develop a List of Possible Contacts

Identify individuals who work in the industry or do the type of work you are considering as a possible career. Think through people in your personal and professional circles:

- Family, neighbors
- Friends and their parents
- Fellow Mason students and alumni in the [Mason Alumni Association LinkedIn group](#)
- Faculty and industry experts who have published in your field
- Foundations, members of professional clubs, and associations



Request an Informational Interview Meeting

Once you have found someone you would like to interview, use the following script to request a meeting.

Hello, my name is _____. I obtained your name from _____ (person who referred you, Mason Alumni Association LinkedIn group, etc.). I am a _____ (year in school, major) at Mason, and your career field is of interest to me. I am trying to learn more about the nature of your work, industry trends, and what skills employers seek in new hires in this field.

Could I make a half-hour appointment to meet with you in person at your workplace or speak with you over the phone? I would like to ask you about your career path and any advice you have on what I can do while in college to better prepare to enter the job market.

Prepare for the Informational Interview

- Update your résumé in case the interviewee asks for a copy of it or if you would like to ask for feedback on it.
- Research the person's field and organization.
- Develop a list of questions. (See samples on page 47.)



Informational Interview Etiquette

- **Never** ask for a job during an informational interview. Save that for follow-up communication if you find you are still interested in working for the organization.
- If you are meeting someone in person for your informational interview, dress in the most professional attire that your wardrobe allows. (The closer you are to interviewing for a job, the more critical it is to dress professionally.)
- Arrive or call on time for the interview. If an emergency or unexpected problem arises that prevents or delays your arrival, notify the person immediately.
- Ask your interviewee if there is anything you can do to help them. Remember, networking is a two-way street.
- Thank the interviewee for his or her time and send a follow-up thank you note or email.
- Enjoy the experience! Because you are the interviewer, you do not have the same pressures as in a job interview. At the same time, the experience helps you develop your interviewing skills—firm handshake, good eye contact, relaxed but erect posture, clear speaking, careful listening.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND ONLINE NETWORKING

Social media and online resources are great tools for you to identify and connect with people who may know about jobs and internships. A positive online presence can also attract recruiters to you.

LinkedIn

With more than 500 million users, LinkedIn is the premiere professional networking site. Create a profile on LinkedIn and invite everyone you know to join your network. You may be surprised to discover that your uncle, professor, or former supervisor is connected to someone who works for your dream employer.

- Market yourself and create a professional brand.
- Establish and build your professional network by connecting to friends, family, supervisors, co-workers, classmates, professors, advisors, and others with similar interests or skills.
- Join groups based on your career interests.*
- Gain and share information about industry trends, companies, and job leads.
- See whether you have connections to a company and ask for an introduction.

*Search through the members of groups you have joined on LinkedIn. If the “Contact” section of a profile says “Expertise Requests,” this is a good indication that the individual would be willing to talk with you. Use the “Send a Message” feature to request an informational interview.

Twitter

Use Twitter to follow and have real-time communication with hiring managers and working professionals in your industry area. These are some tips for using Twitter for networking:

- **Maintain a professional profile:** A Twitter profile bio is limited to 160 characters. Be sure to include your location and the type of work you do or are looking for, plus keywords that recruiters might use to search for prospective candidates. Don’t forget to add a professional-looking photograph.
- **Use Twitter add-on applications for job hunting**, including Tweetmyjobs or Twitjobsearch.
- **Follow** career coaches, résumé writers, job industry experts, and government employment agencies to keep up with hiring trends. Regional groups (@dcjobscouncil) and job boards (@indeed) are also on Twitter.
- **Follow hashtags.** Twitter uses hashtags (# single word) to tag individual tweets or



Quick Links

- bit.ly/KInJPR
LinkedIn's "10 Official Tips to Enhance Your Job Search"
- [linkedinintelligence.com](https://www.linkedinintelligence.com)
Linked Intelligence—an online library of resources

conversations on specific subjects. Examples of job-related hashtags include #job, #jobs, #jobsearch, #career, #employment, #salary, and #hire.

- **Participate in chats** sponsored by professional groups, career experts, or agencies.

To locate job resources that fit your interest, you can use the **Twitter search function** and select relevant keywords based on your interests. For example, if you want to work in the public relations field in New York City, you could type "job openings," "public relations," and "New York."

Facebook

Use Facebook to stay up to date with what is going on with your network of classmates, friends, family, and co-workers. Highlight your work experience and education on your profile. Post status updates about the type of work you are seeking and where to solicit advice and referrals. Facebook also has networking applications such as BeKnown, Branchout, and Glassdoor. Most importantly, be sure to keep your profile professional and tasteful.

OTHER NETWORKING STRATEGIES

Professional Associations

Just like there are organizations here on campus for students, there are organizations for working professionals in the "real world." These groups are often referred to as professional or trade associations. In order to attract the next generation of professionals, many of these groups allow current college students to join at a discounted rate. Benefits of membership in a professional association can include access to industry publications, job and internship opportunities, mentors, and conferences.

Networking Events

Events hosted by professional associations, academic departments, or University Career Services can be intimidating, but they can also help you to connect with industry experts, alumni, and employers you might not otherwise meet. Follow these tips to prepare for and make the most of these opportunities.

- Practice your personal pitch so that you will feel comfortable introducing yourself to new people.
- Conduct research about the speakers and participants before an event by reviewing their bios and LinkedIn profiles. Researching speakers will give you ideas of topics to discuss with them.
- Make sure your own LinkedIn profile is updated so that you are ready to send invitations to connect with any of the people you meet at the event.
- Remember, you have been successful in networking if you shared your career interests with someone, gained a piece of useful advice, or provided someone else with beneficial information.

Volunteering

As stated previously, many positions are filled by referrals from employees within an organization. Volunteering is a great way to strengthen your résumé while building a relationship with individuals at organizations where you might like to intern or work.





SAMPLE NETWORKING QUESTIONS

In case of a planned or chance meeting, you should always have questions prepared to ask a new professional contact. Here are some examples:

- What trends are most impacting your industry/company right now?
- In class we just discussed _____ (current issue); how is that impacting your work?
- What are the most pressing needs/issues for your organization/department?
- What most surprised you about working in this industry/company?
- What's the best lesson you have learned on the job?
- What do you know now that you wish you had known when you were my age/in my position?
- How did you enter this field?
- What should I be doing now to prepare myself to enter this field (classes, activities, experience)?
- What does an average day on the job look like for you?
- What skills, abilities, and personal qualities do you find most important in your work?
- What do you like most and least about your field/job?
- I've built a target list of potential employers. Would you be willing to take a look at it and give me your feedback?
- From your perspective, what are the job prospects for the next few years in this line of work?
- What next steps do you recommend I take?
- May I follow up with you if I have further questions?
- Based on my interests, is there anyone else you would recommend I speak with?

Job Search

Through your research and networking, you should have a solid idea of where you need to be searching for opportunities in your industry. This section will build on what you learned in the previous sections and provide tips as you embark on your job/internship search.

IN THIS SECTION

You will learn...

- How to identify employers/positions
- More about online resources for job searching
- About the process for applying for federal jobs

THE JOB SEARCH IS STEP 4 IN THE FOUR-STEP PROCESS.



Step 4: Search

Explore options and identify prospective sites and contacts using Handshake and web resources.

IDENTIFYING EMPLOYERS AND POSITIONS

You created your résumé and cover letter and had them critiqued. You identified certain fields of interest and researched the industry. You networked using social media and at events. Now is the time to search and apply! Make sure you cover all your bases when searching...

- Your networks
- Industry-specific databases or listservs (an email you subscribe to in order to receive targeted information and jobs)
- Social media platforms (particularly popular for certain industries and growing in popularity for many others)
- Individual company websites
- General databases



RESEARCHING EMPLOYERS

Every field is unique and it's critical for you to learn where and when openings are advertised. Target social media platforms or job boards that are specific to your professional goals, such as those found through professional associations. Use the information provided in the Research section to target employers.

THE “OPEN” JOB MARKET

The “open” job market means anything that is advertised or published. These include all jobs promoted in Handshake, employer job listings, placement agencies, trade journals, job and career fairs, and newsletters. Become familiar with the resources that have the kinds of jobs you are interested in applying to, and make it a habit to frequent these sources. But don’t spend too much time using this approach!

THE “HIDDEN” JOB MARKET

Most jobs (70 to 80 percent) are not advertised. While it takes more time and energy to uncover these opportunities through networking, it has a much larger rate of success. In the end, you will often find yourself with less competition and a better chance of obtaining an interview.

Job Search Resources

Below are a few key resources you should keep in mind when conducting your search:

YOUR NETWORK

You can network or not work! Talk to as many people as you can about your career interests and job search goals. Remember to conduct informational interviews (refer to the Networking section for more information) to learn more about your target industry, companies, and types of opportunities.



MASON CAREER SERVICES RESOURCES

- Mason Career Services website (tips, advice, and more): careers.gmu.edu
- Handshake: handshake.gmu.edu
- On-Campus Interviewing: Interview on campus with employers for full-time positions and internships.

INDUSTRY-SPECIFIC DATABASES

- Target industry-specific internship/job boards or listservs and national or regional associations related to your industry: careers.gmu.edu/students/industry-specific-resources

SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

- LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com
- Twitter: www.twitter.com
- Facebook: www.facebook.com

INDIVIDUAL COMPANY WEBSITES

- Through your research and networking, you should have determined some target companies that pique your interest.
- Regularly check the “careers” section of company websites to ensure you’re capturing any and all opportunities that may be posted (not all companies will post to a general database).

GENERAL DATABASES

- CareerShift: careers.gmu.edu/career-resources
- PassportCareer: careers.gmu.edu/career-resources
- Internships.com: www.internships.com
- Indeed: www.indeed.com



- Simply Hired: www.simplyhired.com
- Career Builder: www.careerbuilder.com
- Glass Door: www.glassdoor.com

ON-CAMPUS JOBS

- Working on campus is an excellent way to gain career-related experience as you clarify goals and acquire skills and self-confidence while developing professionalism and building your network.
- George Mason University is a top employer for students, offering a variety of on-campus positions including Federal Work Study, Research, Graduate Assistantship, and part-time student employment. You can search and apply for on-campus jobs through Handshake. Once your profile is completed and your resume has been approved, you can begin to apply for positions. After logging in to Handshake, select “Jobs” tab, followed by “On Campus” from the filter options.
- For more information on workstudy/on-campus jobs, check out careers.gmu.edu/students/find-job-or-internship/campus-jobs.
- In addition, check out jobs.gmu.edu to search for positions throughout the university. For most students, searching in the “Hourly/wage employment opportunities” section will likely provide the best matches.

Federal Government Job Search

The federal government is a major employer in the Washington, D.C., area, offering a wide variety of employment and internship opportunities. With more than 2.7 million civilian employees nationwide—and attractive benefits—the federal government is the employer of choice for many Mason students. Moreover, federal internships offer students an opportunity to gain professional experience that can lead to full-time federal employment after graduation.

MANAGING THE FEDERAL JOB SEARCH

To manage your federal job search, you should treat the more than 450 federal departments, agencies, and bureaus as if they were separate organizations. The federal government has three categories of employment:

Competitive Service, Excepted Service, and Senior Executive Service.

Competitive Service jobs constitute the majority of all federal jobs and are housed in an online system called USAJobs.gov, which is managed by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). Excepted Service agencies include all intelligence agencies, the State Department, the General Accounting Office, and a select number of others. Each excepted service agency runs its own hiring process, so you will have to visit the individual agency’s website to apply. The intelligence community has a portal to its agencies at intelligence.gov. The third category of employment, Senior Executive Service, is for executive level hiring after many years of experience have already been earned.

For your search, your main source for finding federal positions will most likely be USAJobs.gov. As you begin your search on USAJobs, you will notice several key pieces of information in each listing: grade levels, occupational series, and KSA questionnaires.

Grade Levels

The General Schedule (GS) is the federal government’s most common pay scale for civilian employees. It contains 15 grades ranging from GS-1 to GS-15. Based solely on education, you





Quick Tip

Preview the assessment questionnaire of the job posting to see if you can score yourself highly. If you cannot, do not spend time applying to the position, but find another for which you are better qualified.

may apply for a GS-5 after completing your bachelor's degree. After completing a master's degree, you are eligible for GS-9 positions. Keep these grade levels in mind as you search for positions. You want to be sure you are applying for positions for which you qualify. For more information on grade levels, visit www.opm.gov.

Occupational Series

Also a part of the GS are occupational series codes. These will be listed as sets of numbers ranging from 000 to 8800. Each hundred level represents an occupational group. For example, jobs in GS-500s all fall within the Accounting and Budget Group. Jobs in the GS-800s all fall within the Engineering and Architecture Group.

Each grouping is then further broken down by what are called series. For example GS-592 is the Tax Examining Series, and GS-810 is the Civil Engineering Series. These series are much like job descriptions and can also be found on www.opm.gov. By looking up each series, you will have a good idea of what that job entails. This information will help you in your job search in two ways. First, it will assist you in finding the positions you are qualified for, and second, it will assist you in knowing what information you need to highlight on your résumé.

KSA Questionnaires

As part of the application process, many federal agencies include a questionnaire to assess your Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSAs). KSAs ask you to rate your experience level based on your past experiences, education, or training. Since the best predictor of future performance is past performance in similar situations, they are looking for you to prove you can do the job better than others in the candidate pool. Think of all of your experience (in and outside of the classroom), and rate yourself as high as you can on the questionnaire. You must be able to rate yourself at a 90 in order to be considered for most positions. Also, be sure that the level of proficiency you are expressing on the questionnaire is supported by your résumé. If there is a discrepancy between the two, your application could be thrown out of consideration.

In addition to questionnaires, some agencies may request your KSAs in an essay format during some later point in the application process. Should they request narrative essay responses, draw on your past experiences, education, and training to demonstrate you possess the particular KSA, and include answers to the following:

- An estimate of when the experiences occurred
- A description of the problems you faced or the objectives you were trying to accomplish
- A specific statement of what you actually did
- A description of the outcome or results of the activity



APPLY!

Now that you know what you are looking for, begin applying for positions! When creating your résumé to apply for positions on USAJobs, you may use the site's **Resume Builder** feature and/or upload your résumé into the system. Whichever you choose, be sure to adhere to the federal résumé writing format. See the Résumé/Cover Letter section for tips on writing a federal résumé and a sample. Make sure to include keywords from the vacancy announcement and highlight your accomplishments. Apply quickly, as it is common for federal employers to stop accepting applications after a position has been open for only 24 to 48 hours, if a certain threshold is reached (e.g., first 75 applications). Make sure you check the closing date and application threshold.



Be Open and Accurate

The federal application process is very competitive, particularly if you are not a veteran.

Do not make your job search too narrow. Prepare as many applications as you can and keep applying. For instance, if you want a job as a writer, do not apply only for Writing and Editing jobs. Look under the entire Information and Arts group (GS-1000) and others to uncover additional position titles, because writing is a major skill used in many positions. In addition, always accurately follow all application instructions in the job vacancy announcement! This is critical to having your application considered.

Know Your Options

In 2010, President Obama signed the Pathways initiative in order to create opportunities for students and recent graduates. The Pathways Programs include the Internship Program, the Recent Graduates Program, and the Presidential Management Fellows (PMF) Program. Internship and Recent Graduate opportunities can be found on USAJobs.gov. The PMF application can be found by visiting pmf.gov. Don't forget about volunteer experiences, virtual internships, or temporary or seasonal work as great ways to get your foot in the door.

Patience, Persistence, and Networking

The federal government is currently averaging 6 to 12 months to process applicants from the initial résumé submission to a Conditional Offer of Employment (COE) for full-time career positions. Do not lose heart! Students applying for internships and other student programs have an advantage because the application process is much shorter.

Federal agencies are required to notify applicants of the status of their applications. If you have not heard anything or received an acknowledgement of your application within two weeks after applying, call or email the agency contact. Most agencies have automated application tracking systems, which allow applicants to check their own application status.

Network with everyone you know who has some connection to the federal government—friends, relatives, neighbors, professors, and others. Conduct information interviews with federal workers to find out about hiring trends, identify upcoming needs, and obtain feedback on your qualifications. Start early and network, network, network!

Background Investigations and Security Clearances

This section was reviewed by the Office of the Director of National Intelligence.

Background investigations and security clearances determine an applicant's trustworthiness and reliability before granting access to sensitive information. Only the federal government can grant people "clearances" for work purposes through a background investigation and/or an in-depth security clearance process. To get a clearance, you must be sponsored by or have a job offer from a government agency or contractor, and you must be conducting business that justifies granting access to sensitive information. All federal job offers are contingent on a clearance and are withdrawn if the candidate does not receive the clearance required by the organization for the specific position.

BACKGROUND INVESTIGATIONS

- SF-85, non-sensitive background investigation
- SF-85p, public trust background investigation
- SF-86, national security clearance





The forms needing to be filled out for these types of investigations are available at www.opm.gov/forms. Maintaining a career diary to record all prior and current employment, education, residences, and domestic and overseas travel will be useful. It is critical to be absolutely truthful on clearance forms, in interviews with investigators, and on polygraphs. Situations explained or described untruthfully will end the process. Truthfulness and explanations of some behaviors may be considered, and the process can go forward. If the process is curtailed, the candidate is not likely to receive an explanation. Agencies are not required to provide explanations; however, candidates may appeal the decisions and ask for reconsideration. Start working on the SF-86 form as early as possible. Gather information in advance; this will save you time in the future.

Non-sensitive or public trust investigations can take as little as a few weeks and will include a National Agency Check with Inquiries (NACI). A NACI will look at five years of the candidate's employment history, education, and references, and require a personal interview. The public trust investigation will also include a credit check.

SECURITY CLEARANCES

- **Confidential:** Provides access to information or material that may cause damage to national security if disclosed without authorization
- **Secret:** Provides access to information or material that may cause serious damage to national security if disclosed without authorization
- **Top Secret:** Provides access to information or material that may cause exceptionally grave damage to national security if disclosed without authorization
- **Top Secret/Sensitive Compartmented Information:** Provides access to all intelligence information and material that require special controls for restricted handling within compartmented channels and for which compartmentalization is established

The paperwork for a security clearance will include federal form SF-86 (National Security Questionnaire) and other supporting documents. Your signature on these documents will allow the agency to check your medical history, credit and financial history, military background, police record, and other areas of your life. Make sure you understand the process before applying. This process is an in-depth probe into your personal and professional life. With the threat of spies, terrorism, and other issues of national security, the level of scrutiny will be intense. The investigation focuses on an individual's character and conduct, emphasizing such factors as honesty, trustworthiness, reliability, financial responsibility, criminal activity, emotional stability, and other similar and pertinent areas. All investigations consist of checks of national records and credit checks. Some investigations also include interviews with individuals who know the candidate, such as neighbors, current and former co-workers, and family members, as well as the candidate himself or herself.



The federal agencies that can provide a security clearance include all national security and intelligence-gathering agencies (e.g., CIA, National Security Agency), federal law enforcement agencies (e.g., FBI, Secret Service, Drug Enforcement Agency, Naval Criminal Investigative Service), combat support agencies (e.g., Defense Intelligence Agency, Defense Security Service), certain occupations in the U.S. military, diplomatic agencies (e.g., State Department), certain government scientific agencies, and a number of others depending on their mission and role in national security.

Timelines

Interim security clearances may be obtained in 26 to 45 days. Interns sometimes receive interim clearances, and their access to sensitive material is restricted. The amount of time to obtain a security clearance can be 18 to 24 months or more! Security clearances obtained in previous employment usually can be reactivated within a 24-month period following the end of employment in which the clearance was obtained. If the candidate had a clearance more than 24 months in the past, the process of obtaining a clearance must begin again. Also, note that security clearances may not transfer from federal agency to federal agency.



FACTORS PERTINENT TO BACKGROUND INVESTIGATIONS AND SECURITY CLEARANCES

Violations of any of these factors may not necessarily prevent clearance. Consideration may be given for activity in the past and extenuating circumstances.

- **Alcohol use:** excessive use, patterns, abuse
- **Allegiance to the United States:** anything to suggest allegiance to other countries above allegiance to the United States
- **Criminal conduct:** particularly any felony convictions
- **Drug use:** patterns of use (how frequent and how recent), type of drugs
NOTE: While there have been changes to some state laws, the sale, possession, and use of marijuana is still illegal under federal law and must be reported.
- **Emotional and mental stability**
- **Financial problems:** mostly focused on current issues with credit and debts that cannot be repaid
- **Foreign influence and preference:** including dual citizenship
- **Misuse of information technology:** music and video downloads and other copyrighted material are included and will be questioned in the investigation process as well as in polygraph interviews
- **Outside activities:** investigators review community and extracurricular activities
- **Security violations:** while as a federal employee, contractor, or intern
- **Sexual behavior:** focus is on behavior, not preferences
- **Personal conduct:** behavior indicating a lack of trustworthiness to protect federal information



Interviewing

The interview is your opportunity to convince an employer that you are the right person for the job.

IN THIS SECTION

You will learn...

- The different types of interviews
- How to prepare for an interview
- What is involved in a behavioral interview
- Common questions interviewers ask and questions to ask an interviewer
- How to handle interview challenges, including when an interviewer asks inappropriate and biased questions

About Interviewing

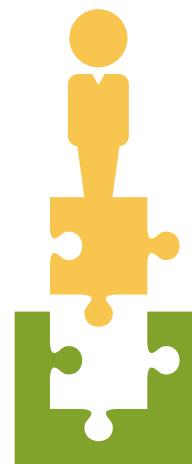
A key element of successful interviewing is positively presenting yourself to demonstrate how your qualifications meet the employer's needs. Preparation, practice, and a well-articulated presentation are critical. Remember that the employer has asked you to interview because of genuine interest in you. Now, it is your turn to demonstrate your interest and provide proof of your qualifications.

Interviews are used to:

- Expand on information contained in your résumé.
- Supply information to the employer that is not contained in your résumé (e.g., personality).
- Gain additional information about the organization and the position you are considering.
- Ensure fit between the interviewee and interviewer.
- Provide an opportunity for both parties to discuss the possibility of employment.

Before the Interview

- Prepare copies of your résumé and a list of references. You may wish to bring a writing sample or portfolio, if appropriate, and a copy of your transcript(s). You do not want to assume that everyone you speak to will have a copy of your provided documents on hand.
- Dress to project an image of confidence and success. Understand the culture of the organization for which you are interviewing. Business dress is considered standard attire for most interviews, even if more casual clothing is typically worn at the workplace. Traditionally, this means a suit that has been pressed or dry-cleaned, an appropriate button-down shirt or blouse, and matching dress shoes. In general, you will want to choose conservative colors (black, gray, navy), but you can incorporate color into your complementary items such as a tie or jewelry. Hair should be neatly styled. If jewelry is worn, it should be simple and tasteful. If a fragrance is worn at all, it should be very subtle. Visit careers.gmu.edu/students/find-job-or-internship/interviewing for details on this topic.
- Know how to get to the interview and leave plenty of time to get there. Arrive early, but don't check in with the employer more than 15 minutes before your scheduled appointment. It may even be a good idea to do a test drive of the route in advance.
- Find out how long the interview will take. Be prepared to stay longer, if necessary.
- Smile and have a firm handshake. While waiting for an interview to begin, maintain positive posture and remain attentive.
- Practice, Practice, Practice!



RESEARCH: INFORMATION TO GATHER BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

Obtain information on the job and organization from people in the field, the company website, public and career libraries, trade journals, newsletters, business magazines, and directories. Career Services offers subscriptions to a number of resources that can help with this, such as CareerShift, Vault, and the Book of Lists. LinkedIn is also a great tool to learn more about the company and its employees. Be prepared to discuss your knowledge of the organization and industry at the interview. Be sure to gather the following:

- Job description
- Knowledge, skills, and personal qualities required for the job
- Trends and major issues in the industry
- Realistic salary for the position
- Size, location(s), and structure of the organization
- Past, present, and projected growth
- Types of clients, and products and services offered
- Relationship of the organization to its competitors
- Management philosophy and style



PREPARE QUESTIONS TO ASK

You should prepare thoughtful questions to ask during the interview that demonstrate an interest in the employer and help you learn whether the position and organization will fit your interests, values, and qualifications. Asking questions will also show the employer that you hold a genuine interest in the position and the organization. Avoid asking questions that are answered on the employer's website or in the documents provided prior to the interview.

Sample Questions to Ask the Employer during the Interview

- What specific skills and experiences would you ideally look for in the person filling this position?
- How would you describe a typical day in this job?
- What significant changes do you foresee in the future for this position and the company?
- What career paths are available in this organization to someone with my background?
- What kind of training do new hires receive in this position in the first three months?
- What professional development opportunities are available?
- What is the work environment like?
- What do you enjoy about working at this company?

DURING THE INTERVIEW

- Make eye contact immediately and continue to do so throughout the interview.
- Have a relaxed but erect posture.
- Answer questions completely. Be direct and concise. Avoid rambling.
- Speak clearly with appropriate volume.
- Control nervous habits (such as tapping your foot or rotating your ring) and use natural hand movements for emphasis.
- Initiate discussion appropriately. For example, make a positive comment about the organization and how you see yourself contributing to it. Ask a question about some of the job requirements.
- Be an active listener.
- Be specific and use examples to talk about your experiences.
- Be positive and enthusiastic!
- Ask about the expected hiring timeline.
- Get the interviewer's contact information. You will need this to send a thank you email and mail a thank you card.





PRACTICE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Employers who interview you are hoping to find a reason to hire you, not to rule you out. You want to use examples to discuss your experiences. You can use examples from the following: class projects, academic classes, work in a student organization, volunteer experience, athletic activities, and part-time or full-time jobs. It is a good idea to do a practice interview with someone you trust. Employers, University Career Services staff, parents, and professionals are all great resources in preparing you for your interview. You can schedule a practice interview with your industry advisor at any time! InterviewStream is also available on the Career Services website to help you practice your skills from home. InterviewStream records practice interviews using webcam or smartphone technology.

THE SIX MOST FEARED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. **“Tell me about yourself.”** Focus on your academic background and the reasons you chose your major, accomplishments during college, activities that helped you develop personally and professionally, lessons learned, and what excites you about working in your chosen field and with this employer specifically. This is an introduction to what you will be talking about throughout the interview.
2. **“What is one of your weaknesses?”** Think of this question as “What is one area I need to develop in order to be more effective in my field?” Avoid offering personal or character flaws, as well as anything that will disqualify you from the job. State the weakness, own it, and tell the interviewer what you are doing to work on it. Give examples of how you are already improving and will continue to improve.
3. **“Why do you want to work for us?”** Discuss the research you have done on the company and the job description. Talk about how your interests, skills, and experience match the job requirements. Show them that you have been very intentional in choosing their organization.
4. **“Why should I hire you?”** Focus on your strongest points, as this is often one of the final questions of the interview. You want to make a strong final impression. Keep the focus on all the positive traits you bring to the job and focus only on yourself; avoid making references to any other candidates, as you want them only thinking about you. If there is something you had not yet talked about that you wanted to bring up, this is the time to do so.
5. **“Where do you want to be 10 years from now?”** Think about tasks and roles you would like. Would you like to advance into management, manage major projects, supervise or train others, or simply become so competent at what you do that others ask you to consult with them? Employers want to see that you have goals and are forward thinking.
6. **“What are your salary requirements?”** Avoid giving a specific figure. Research salary surveys such as [salaryexpert.com](https://www.salaryexpert.com) or the NACE Salary Calculator to learn what the entry-level salary ranges are in the field or industry you are entering. Then state the salary range. See more on this topic in the Offers and Negotiations section that follows.

Practice Interview Questions

- What do you consider to be one of your strengths?
- How do your qualifications relate to our position? What do you have to offer?
- How would you describe your own work style?
- What relevant coursework or projects have you completed?
- How does your previous experience relate to this position?
- What did you like most and least about your last position?



- Why do you think you'd be a good match for this position?
- How do you like to be managed?
- What do you think would be your greatest contribution to our operation?
- What is your proudest achievement?

THE BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEW

The behavioral interviewing approach assumes that past performance is the best predictor of future success. More than 80 percent of employers who recruit at Mason use a structured competency-based behavioral interviewing approach, which assumes that past performance is the best predictor of future success. Behavioral questions require job candidates to give specific examples of how they handled specific real-life situations. This approach elicits the candidate's competencies, skills, abilities, and knowledge more reliably than standard interview questions. While behavioral interviewing questions may initially seem more intimidating, they are often easier to answer because you can draw on actual experiences rather than responding to hypothetical scenarios or giving vague or generalized responses.

It is helpful to prepare a handful of stories that you want to tell before the interview, as you do not know exactly which behavioral questions will be asked. Having these stories on hand can allow you to quickly adapt them to any given question. In the rare case that you cannot recall a real example related to the question, you can tell the interviewer, "I've never actually been in that situation; however, I think I would...." Then, give your best appraisal of how you would respond in that circumstance. The following questions are typical of behavioral questions. When thinking about how you would answer them, remember to use the STAR Formula.

S	T	A	R
Identify the SITUATION or problem you solved or encountered	What was the specific TASK or thought process? (who, what, when, what's required)	Detail your specific ACTION . What did you do? How did you do it?	Explain the RESULTS . Quantity. (savings, accomplishments, recognition, etc.)

Practice Behavioral Interviewing Questions

- Describe a time when you were faced with stresses in school or at work that tested your coping skills. What did you do?
- Tell me about an experience in which you had to speak up and tell other people what you thought or felt.
- Give an example of a time when you used your fact-finding skills to gain information needed to solve a problem; tell me how you analyzed the information and came to a decision.
- Give an example of an important goal you set and describe your progress in reaching that goal.
- Tell me about a time when you had to take on a leadership role.
- Tell me about a time you failed to meet expectations.

THE CASE INTERVIEW

The purpose of the case interview is to determine whether the candidate can perform consulting work and make a good impression on clients, and to scrutinize the skills that are important in management consulting.





Quick Tips for Case Interviews

- Understand the question.
- Listen carefully and restate the question.
- Ask great clarifying questions.
- Take meticulous notes.
- Form a relationship with the interviewer.
- Construct a logical framework (i.e., SWOT analysis, Porter's Five Forces).
- Prioritize the issues and objectives.
- Think outside the box.
- Vocalize your thought process.
- Practice! Use books, websites for practice cases, and practice interviews.

In particular, case interviews examine quantitative, analytical, problem-solving, and communication skills. The employer is looking for you to demonstrate your creativity and flexibility, business acumen, professional demeanor, powers of persuasion, and the ability to think under pressure and synthesize findings. Organizations that typically use case interviewing are management consulting firms, investment banking companies, and consumer goods companies for brand management positions. Some firms use cases for MBA-level job candidates only, and some firms do case interviewing in second or third rounds of interviews. Case interview questions may be brainteasers, market-sizing questions, factor questions, or business case questions.

Handling Interview Challenges

INAPPROPRIATE OR BIASED QUESTIONS

Questions that seem to be inappropriate or biased could be indicators that something is wrong with the interview. Biased questions are those that suggest an opinion through their structure (e.g., Don't you think that green is better than gold?). You will want to remain focused on the job at hand when answering the questions, and tie everything back to why you are a good candidate rather than focus on the question that should not have been asked in the first place.

According to Salary.com, federal and state laws like the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Pregnancy Discrimination Act, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and others legally bar interviewers from asking questions about race, sex, sexual orientation, religion, age, national origin, marital status, or family matters. If you believe it is in your best interest to defer answering an interview question, use tact and grace to explain that the question does not relate to your abilities or qualifications for the position. If an interviewer's questions make you feel uncomfortable, this may be a red flag.

HIGHLY TECHNICAL QUESTIONS

Interviewers often ask the interviewee to answer questions related to their particular industry or organization. Be prepared for this type of question. You should know common jargon and be ready to define terms and discuss trends in the particular industry. If you don't know the answer, try to work through the problem, as often companies want to see your process as much as the actual answer.

DISABILITY ISSUES AND POTENTIAL ACCOMMODATIONS

A job seeker who has a disability is, first, a fully qualified candidate for a position and, second, a person with a disability. If you do not require accommodation for the interview, you may or may not choose to disclose a disability to potential employers. If technological or other types of accommodations will equalize or maximize your effectiveness on the job, they can be discussed during the information exchange or closure stages of the interview, before a job offer is extended. The decision to disclose a disability is personal and may vary depending on the situation and the job requirements.

If you do disclose a disability, it is important that you feel comfortable and confident in your approach. All job seekers are advised to approach a discussion of their qualifications in a positive manner. You can highlight your relevant skills and give evidence of your qualifications for the position in the form of examples from past academic, employment, or volunteer experiences. A proactive approach will be most effective and emphasize your adaptability, flexibility, and talents.

For additional resources, visit Mason's Office of Disability Services at ds.gmu.edu.



Quick Tip

Personalize any thank you notes you send. Many interviewers will compare notes they receive to see if you took the time to make a personalized connection.

InterviewStream allows you to email your recorded attempts to send to anyone for additional review.



After the Interview

If you determine that the position would be a good fit for you, be sure to express interest in the position and briefly summarize why you are well qualified for it. Then ask what the next step will be or when you can expect to hear from the interviewer. This inquiry demonstrates your confidence and interest and gives you important information. Proceed to follow up with your interviewer(s) via a thank you note.

John Warren

Fairfax, Virginia 22031 | 571-572-5031 | john@somedomain.com

June 2, 2017

Ms. Nicole Sanders
Vice President, Media Relations
York Media
3 Corporate Blvd. Suite 200
Fairfax, VA 22030

Dear Ms. Sanders:

Thank you for meeting with me this morning to discuss the media relations position. I enjoyed our conversation, and I am very excited about the possibility of joining your team.

I know what it takes to run a busy and successful media office. In my last position as a marketing assistant for Verizon, I helped develop communication messaging, collaborated with design teams, and conducted market research.

You mentioned that you need a manager who is creative and has strong interpersonal skills. These are areas in which I excel. At Verizon, I was consistently asked to assist other teams to develop and execute creative marketing concepts, as well as effectively explain creative concepts to nontechnical and technical stakeholders across the organization.

Again, thank you for considering me for this exciting opportunity. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

John Warren



Offers and Negotiations

For many people, discussing salary is a nerve-racking experience; however, when managed correctly, it can contribute to a positive and more fulfilling professional relationship between you and your future employer.

IN THIS SECTION

You will learn...

- How to respond when asked for salary history or requirements in an application or interview
- Negotiation strategies

About Offers and Negotiations

Timing is key. You are in the best position to talk salary and bargain after the employer has determined you are the best person for the job. Therefore, always wait for the employer to initiate the salary discussion.

SALARY REQUEST ON THE APPLICATION

If you are asked about salary as part of the application, it is generally because an employer wants to know whether or not they can afford to hire you.

Salary History

List what you earned or write “unpaid” next to each position on your résumé. Remember to be honest because it is easy for potential employers to verify your salary with previous employers.

Salary Requirements

Answer the question while still allowing room to negotiate later.

- If the application allows you to enter text or you are asked to include this information in a cover letter, consider writing that your salary requirements are “flexible.”
- If the application forces you to enter numbers, consider entering a salary range instead of an exact amount. Do your research to determine what an appropriate range is for the geographic location, industry, and job function of the position, as well as your experience level. For example, if your research shows that the average person in a similar position makes \$40,000, you might enter \$38,000–\$45,000 for the range.



SALARY REQUESTS DURING THE INTERVIEW

Try postponing discussion of salary until the interviewer is prepared to make you an offer. However, if pressed, provide a salary range that you are comfortable with based on your research, as further avoidance will only make you seem defiant and thus upset the employer.

Consider using one of the following responses:

- **Option 1:** “Since salary is only one piece of the puzzle for me, I’d like to find out more about the job before determining my salary requirements. This sounds like an excellent



Quick Links

- **Salary.com**
Online salary information
- **Salaryexpert.com**
Employee-provided data from 10 million job incumbents
- **glassdoor.com**
Search millions of job listings and see salaries, reviews, and inside connections for any company.
- **bestplaces.net**
Compare cost of living.
- **paycheckcity.com**
Paycheck calculator

opportunity so far. Can you tell me a little more about...[insert an area where you have additional questions]?”

- **Option 2:** “Thank you for asking. Would you mind telling me the average salary for this position or similar positions within your agency, as well as the other benefits that are part of your overall compensation package? My requirements are flexible, and I’d like to consider that information before deciding on a number.”
- **Option 3:** “I prefer to have a full understanding of everything I can offer an organization before discussing salary. With that said, do you mind if we delay this conversation until we’ve talked a bit more about my fit for the position and where we are in the interview process?” (Follow up with specific questions.)
- **Option 4:** “Based on my market research and qualifications, I am expecting a competitive salary in the range of _____ (e.g., \$45,000–\$55,000).”

Negotiating Your Offer

Most offers are negotiable, and you should not assume an employer’s first offer is the best offer. It’s not uncommon for employers to initiate salary discussions by proposing a salary figure that is at the lower end of the position’s allocated pay scale. This allows room for the candidate to negotiate. Generally speaking, the amount of flexibility an employer has to adjust a starting salary will vary based upon the level of the position and the competitiveness within the market to fill that position.

If you encounter an employer who is unable to adjust the starting salary, consider negotiating other elements of your offer, such as funding for professional development, extra vacation days, health insurance, flexible hours, loan forgiveness, technology and equipment (company computers, phones, cars), opportunities for advancement, bonuses, relocation expenses, or reimbursement for commuting expenses.

Employers expect that you will negotiate your salary responsibly and respectfully. Ensure you do the following to prepare for the negotiation process:

- **Conduct research to determine what a competitive salary is.** Salaries will vary based upon the industry, position, company size, and region of the country. Helpful resources for conducting salary research include using salary websites such as glassdoor.com and speaking with individuals employed in the industry or specific organization with which you are seeking employment.
- **Know what you are worth based on your qualifications.** To determine an appropriate salary range, think critically about the skills you are bringing to the position and your years of relevant experience. Pay particular attention to the ways in which you exceed the requirements for a particular position. Your financial situation (e.g., student loan debt) should not be stated to the employer as rationale for a higher salary.
- **Practice your negotiation skills.** Negotiating can be intimidating, but practicing what you will say can help to reduce your stress about the process. Setting up an appointment with your Industry Advisor to prepare for the negotiation process can also be helpful. Consider the following responses.

“Thank you for the offer. From what I learned in the interview process, I would love to work for your organization. Based on the market value of someone with my qualifications, I was expecting an offer of \$____. Can you do anything to get closer to that number?”



“Thank you again for the offer of employment. Over the past few days I have thought more about what I have to offer the organization and the nature of the job and its responsibilities. What would help me make the decision to accept the offer would be a tablet for work-related travel and reimbursement for commuting expenses. Is that something we can discuss?”

Evaluating Multiple Job Offers

If you are lucky, you will find yourself in a position where you are juggling multiple offers or you are still in the interview process with other organizations when you receive an offer. Make sure to keep the following things in mind before committing to an employer.

- Ask for a copy of the job offer in writing. If your hiring manager leaves his or her position before you start, it is important that you have a copy of what was agreed upon.
- Take time to evaluate all the factors involved in a job offer. Although the salary is important, you also want to pay attention to the job responsibilities, opportunities for career advancement, and company culture when deciding which offer to accept.
- Ask for time to make your decision. Employers generally give candidates up to one week to decide. This time span may vary depending on your needs and those of the employer, but allow at least 24 hours for evaluation before accepting any position. If you are asked to decide sooner than you wish, ask for an extension, which may or may not be granted. It is perfectly reasonable to say that you have other interviews scheduled that you want to attend before making your final decision.
- Follow up with other organizations that are still considering you for employment. Explain that you have received another offer, and because of your interest in their organization or position, you are following up to learn the status of your candidacy.
- If you are unsure about whether to accept a position, use your Industry Advisor as a sounding board.



Committing to Your Offer

Congratulations! You have successfully negotiated and accepted an offer! When you have officially accepted an offer, you should contact the hiring managers of other positions to which you have applied to remove yourself from consideration. Failing to remove yourself from the job or internship search process after you have accepted an offer demonstrates a lack of professionalism and respect for employers. Students who renege on a job offer, or go back on their commitment to start working for an employer,

negatively impact their own professional reputation, as well as that of George Mason University. Once you have accepted an offer, tell University Career Services about your success by filling out the Career Plan Survey.

SALARY RESOURCES

See salary information at careers.gmu.edu/students/find-job-or-internship/salary-negotiation.

Deciding to Go to Graduate School

For students considering an advanced degree, many factors must be considered. Approaching this decision in an organized manner can lead to successful progress, application, and acceptance into a graduate or professional degree program.

IN THIS SECTION

You will learn...

- What factors to consider when looking into graduate programs
- Steps and timeline in the application process

Making the Decision

When making this important decision, carefully weigh the time commitment, financial considerations, personal adjustments, and your readiness to pursue graduate-level coursework. Assess the value of a graduate degree in terms of earning potential, entry into a profession, advancement, and competitiveness. Seek guidance from faculty, people in the profession, and your career counselor or industry advisor. Review the information on applying to graduate or professional school located on the University Career Services website, careers.gmu.edu/students/graduate-school.

Consider taking a course or two as a nondegree (e.g., special student or continuing education) student, such as UNIV 421 College to Graduate School before applying for admission. Check out the course description at careers.gmu.edu/students/explore-majors-and-careers/career-courses.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT GRADUATE SCHOOL OPTIONS

- Visit the Career Resource Room in SUB I, Room 3400, for books about graduate school.
- Visit the Career Services website at careers.gmu.edu/students/graduate-school.
- Attend the annual Mason Graduate Showcase in September and the Idealist.org Graduate School Fair in the fall at www.idealists.org/info/GradFairs.
- Meet with a career counselor at University Career Services: 703-993-2370.
- Many schools offer information sessions on their graduate programs. Contact the schools that interest you.
- At Mason, the Financial Aid Office lists scholarships, grants, and other financial resources: financialaid.gmu.edu.



Factors to Consider in Choosing a School

- **Faculty**—number of faculty; their credentials and reputation; where they received their training; their research and teaching interests; publications; involvement in professional activities; their availability; and balance of gender and ethnic representation
- **Academic program**—accreditation; course offerings and availability; difficulty; availability of assistantships or fellowships; internships or practica; size of program; degree requirements; length of time/rate of completion; admissions policies; reputation/ranking

- **Resources**—facilities for students; library collections; laboratories; computer access; location; cost of living; financial support; housing and transportation options
- **Students**—satisfaction with program; gender/ethnic diversity; academic ability; employment and professional accomplishments of graduates
- **Suggestions/Tips:** gradschools.com/get-informed/before-you-apply

Timetable for Application Process

Start 16 to 24 months before you wish to begin graduate school.

SPRING

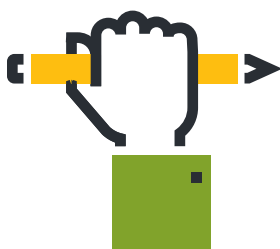
- Clarify career objectives to determine if graduate school is the appropriate next step to achieving career goals.
- Research graduate and professional school programs.
- Consult with faculty and professionals in the field.
- Develop your application process timeline.

SUMMER

- Prepare for and practice taking admissions test(s).
- Sign up for required admissions test(s) offered in fall. See a listing of dates at kaplan.com or princetonreview.com.
- Review application materials.
- Research scholarships, fellowships, and assistantships. Note **deadlines** for both the graduate school applications and the financial aid, fellowship, and assistantship applications. Send in the application form and fee well before the deadline.

FALL

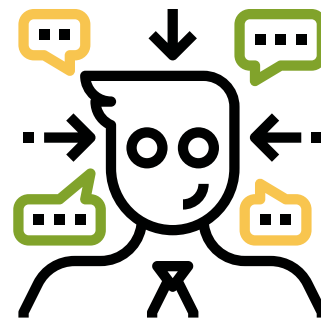
- Attend the Mason Graduate and Professional School Fairs in the fall and spring hosted by Mason's Graduate Admissions Office. View their website details at admissions.gmu.edu/grad/resources.
- Take the required admissions test(s), preferably in September or October if you plan entry the following fall; for professional school and law school, complete testing in June through October at the latest.
- Verify deadlines for admissions and financial aid materials. Ask graduate admissions staff about how test scores from multiple test administrations will be treated. Send your **test results** to the schools to which you are applying.



- Develop a concise and well-organized **personal essay** that reflects your carefully examined objectives for attending graduate school. Consult with faculty, a career counselor at your Career Services Office, and mentors for guidelines and strategies for writing an effective essay. If essay writing is not your strength, take your draft to the Writing Center, Robinson Hall, Room B213.



- Ask for letters of recommendation. Request **recommendations** from faculty, administrators, and employers who know you and the quality of your work. Use the same courtesy in the process of obtaining recommendations for graduate school as you do when you are requesting references for a job search. Avoid using a person's name for a reference or recommendation without obtaining their permission in advance. Write a thank you note or letter to each person who serves as a reference or writes a recommendation. Allow **recommendation writers** four to six weeks to write and send letters.



- Provide your writers with recommendation forms, stamped envelopes, and written highlights including academic courses, projects, research papers, résumé, and a copy of your transcript. Pay close attention to the requirements of each graduate program regarding number and type of recommendations.
- Order transcripts from all postsecondary schools. Request **transcripts** at least one month before the application deadline from each college you attended. Have official transcripts sent directly from the Office of the University Registrar to the graduate schools. Keep an unofficial transcript for your records.
- Complete application forms.

WINTER

- Submit applications.
- Follow up with institutions. **Follow up** with the graduate school(s) to be sure that all your application materials have been received.
- Prepare for personal interviews, if required. If possible, **visit** the campuses. For some programs, **personal interviews** may be used as a part of the application process. Prepare to discuss your goals and qualifications as you would for any interview.

SPRING

- Evaluate offers and decide which one to accept. **Admission decisions** typically are made by April 1 at the latest, and registration commitments will be requested by May 1.





Professionalism

Professionalism is defined as the skills, good judgment, and polite behavior expected from a person who is trained to do a job well.

IN THIS SECTION

You will learn...

- Tips to keep and advance within your first job or internship

The eight Career Readiness skills you learned in the beginning of this guide don't just help you find a job or internship; they also help you advance, grow, and keep the job/internship you worked so hard to land! Check out these tips to help you become more career savvy.

1. Critical Thinking/Problem Solving

You were hired because your supervisor thought you could contribute to the success of the organization, so prove it by being a problem solver. Don't wait for someone else to fix a problem you see. Do some research and develop a possible solution to share. Remember, your supervisor is busy, and you want to become the person who is known for identifying and solving problems, not the person who creates them.

2. Oral/Written Communications

Use social media to positively promote your accomplishments as well as your organization, and never post content you would be embarrassed for your supervisor or co-workers to see. Learn to see yourself as an ambassador of your company, because whatever you share on social media/email could be perceived as a reflection of the organization.

3. Teamwork/Collaboration

Networking is the process of building mutually beneficial relationships. To advance within your organization, you will need to continue to network even after you receive a job or internship. Connect with co-workers outside of your department over lunch to learn more about the projects they are working on, volunteer to serve on a planning committee for your office, or join a professional association related to your industry to meet other people in your career field.

4. Digital Technology

Work with your supervisor to identify professional development opportunities within your organization. See if your company has an internal learning management system to help you grow professionally, and remember that there are many free resources you can use as well, such as LinkedIn, webinars, YouTube, MOOCs, and your local library.

5. Leadership

Identify successful people in your company. Seek out opportunities to connect with them and reflect on their skills, experience, and personality traits so you can learn from their success. These individuals can serve as mentors to support and guide your professional growth. Remember that leadership is an action, not a title, so start where you are.



6. Professionalism/Work Ethic

One way you will grow professionally is through receiving feedback about your areas of strength as well as areas for development. When you receive constructive feedback, monitor your verbal and nonverbal responses. For example, do not interrupt a speaker who is providing you with feedback; maintain eye contact to show you are listening, and be aware of your body language (i.e., crossing your arms, frowning, etc.). Once the feedback has been shared, ask for examples of what you could do differently in the future, and thank the person sharing the feedback for his or her perspective.

7. Career Management

Ensure you are on the same page as your supervisor about the level of autonomy you have to make decisions and how your supervisor defines the successful completion of your assigned projects. Your supervisor can have a positive or negative impact on your ability to advance within the company, and if you want to increase your likelihood of success, you need to learn what your supervisor values. Take time to identify your supervisor's preferred means of communication (e.g., face-to-face, email, text, or virtual) and meeting frequency (e.g., weekly, monthly, or bi-weekly).

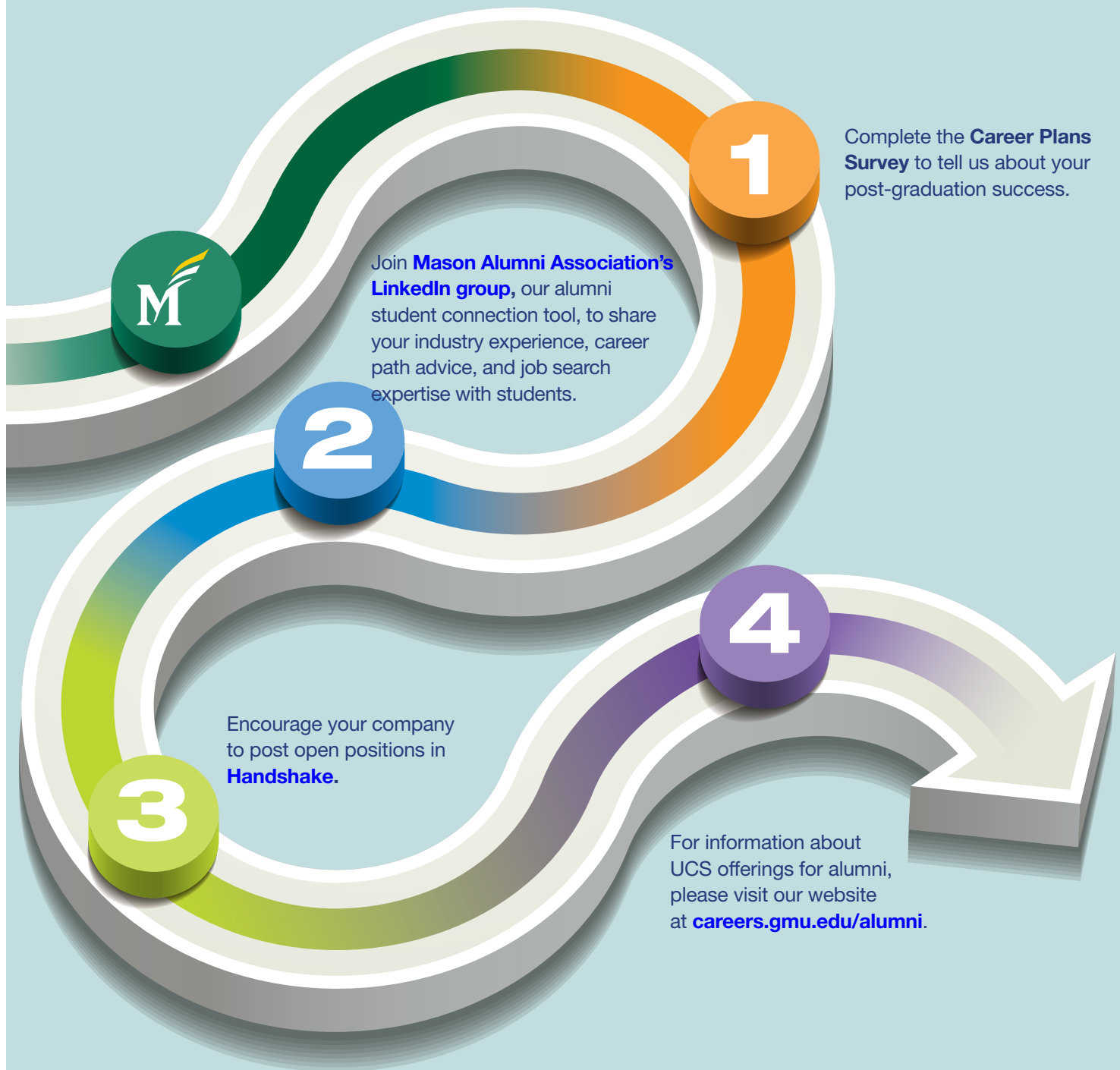
8. Global/Intercultural Fluency

Today's workforce is more diverse than ever before, and you will have an opportunity to work with people of different faiths, cultures, races, ages, genders, sexual orientation, and so on, in your first job. You will interact with individuals who see the world differently than you and who have unique experiences that shape the way they approach their work. Take time to learn about your team members in both formal and informal settings in order to work more productively with them.

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Graduation and Beyond

We hope the information provided in this guide will help you find, pursue, obtain, and excel in your first position after Mason. University Career Services is here to support you throughout your career journey, and we welcome the opportunity to stay connected with you even after you graduate. Consider doing one or all of the following:





University
Career Services

SUB I, Room 3400
Fairfax, Virginia 22030
703-993-2370

careers.gmu.edu