PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER:
✓ Choosing your major
✓ Finding career advisors
✓ Finding student jobs
✓ Internship tips
✓ Resume writing
✓ Interviewing prep
✓ Landing a full-time job!
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3M.com/Careers-US
1. GETTING STARTED
6  About the Career Services Network
8  Where is Career Services?

2. EXPLORE & EXPERIENCE
12  Explore Your Career Options
15  Liberal Arts Students
16  Thinking about Graduate School
18  Building Knowledge and Connections
22  Develop Skills Through Experience

3. CREATE. COMMUNICATE. CONNECT.
26  Writing a Good Resume
32  Use Action Verbs!
34  Cover Letters
36  Communication Essentials
38  Outside the Resume Box

4. MAKE YOUR MOVE
42  Why You Need a Strategy
44  Developing Your Search Strategy
47  International Students
48  Government & Nonprofit Work
51  Job Search Checklist
52  Building Your Network
54  Dress to Impress
56  MSU Career Event Calendar
58  Getting Results at a Career Fair
60  Interviewing
62  Negotiating Job Offers

5. YOUR CAREER TOOLBOX
64  Professionalism, Honesty & Ethics
66  MySpartanCareer FAQ
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In accordance with Federal statutes and regulations, no person on the grounds of race, color, age, sex, national origin or disability shall be excluded from participating in denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any program activity receiving financial assistance from the Department of Defense.
About the Career Services Network

We’ve got your back! We’re here to help you succeed in whatever path you choose. Plus, we’re your biggest fans. Keep reading and tap into the advice and resources we provide.
Content on our home page provides handy links to MySpartanCareer and Career Advising as well as highlighting upcoming career events and sharing Twitter news and YouTube videos.

Do you know about the Steps for Success Workshops? Workshops are a great way to get hands-on help and answers to common questions about resume writing, interviewing, internships, and getting into grad school.

As if that weren’t enough, alumni and employers often participate in our Career Exposure Series, so workshops can also be a way to make new connections and explore fields of interest. Career Exposure events are highlighted in MySpartanCareer and on our homepage Events Calendar. Check out what’s coming up!

Need some one-on-one help? Schedule a career advising appointment! Click on “Make an appointment” to log in and sign up for an open time with a Career Consultant or a Career Advisor to answer your questions. What’s in it for you? Career advising can help you at every stage of planning for life after MSU—whether your plans are employment or graduate study. Not sure who you should meet with? Click on “Services + Locations.”

tip: Because appointments are in high demand, attending a workshop and/or using the information here in Career Passport or online before you come see us can jump-start the conversation to make the most of your time.

Look under Exploring Options for information to help you with your major and career. Resources + Tools has info about everything from resumes to applying to grad school. And Jobs + Internships can help you with… finding jobs and internships!

We also subscribe to powerful resources to help you with your career and job search. Under Resources + Tools click on “Career Research Tools” and find in-depth info on everything from learning about your interests, to finding potential employers and salary data, to international “country career guides.”

Our full list of career events is online—just click on “Career Fairs” under Jobs + Internships. All events are open to students in all majors. Use the website to get times, locations, and links to see who’s attending, and to sign up to be a student ambassador. Attend any and all events that fit your personal interests.

Still need more reasons to find us online? How about links to our YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn accounts? We even have Career Guides—access the Career Passport online!

Jobs and internships. Any time someone wants to hire a Spartan, we list their job on MySpartanCareer. You can use MySpartanCareer to find and apply for part-time jobs, internships, and full-time positions. You can even sign up for on-campus interviews when employers come to MSU!

Events and workshops. MySpartanCareer has inside information on all the career workshops, fairs, events, and employer presentations on campus. No matter where you are in your career planning, we have something for you. Just trying to figure out what your interests are? We’ve got events to help. Resume workshops? Yep, lots. Oh, and did we mention you get the inside scoop on over 12 career fairs offered on campus every year?

We call it “MySpartanCareer” for a reason: It’s yours. Logging in at CareerNetwork.msu.edu, you can use MySpartanCareer as your personal career management tool. Store your resume and other career documents right on your profile. Use it to keep track of workshops, career fairs, and employer presentations on campus. Save successful job searches and automatically get email alerts about new postings—it’s magic!

Complete your profile. Why? Activating your profile gives you access to employers, student jobs, internships, and professional positions exclusively for Spartans.

Find out more! You can find out more about MySpartanCareer in the FAQ on page 66.
Where is Career Services?

HUB OFFICES.

1 Career Services @ Student Services focuses on early career exploration and experiential learning connections for all students. This office also helps students looking for part-time and Work Study jobs.
   Student Services Building
   556 East Circle Dr., Room 113
   (517) 355-9510 / CareerServices@csp.msu.edu

2 PhD/Graduate Career Services offers academic and non-academic career support for graduate students.
   Chittenden Hall
   466 West Circle Dr.
   Matt Helm, PhD, helmott@msu.edu
   Julia McAnallen, PhD, mcanall8@msu.edu

3 Career Services @ The Stadium offers employment resources for employers and is a primary location for hosting student interviews. The Stadium also manages the MySpartanCareer job system and organizes 12 different career events annually.
   Spartan Stadium Office Tower
   535 Chestnut Rd., Room 290
   (517) 884-1300 / HireASpartan@csp.msu.edu

4 Lear Corporation Career Services Center provides career advising for all students interested in business-related careers. They also host interviews with companies seeking interns or entry-level hires in business-related fields.
   Broad College of Business
   645 N. Shaw Ln., Room 21
   (517) 432-0830 / lear@broad.msu.edu

5 MBA Career Services
   Broad College of Business
   645 N. Shaw Ln., Room 211
   Jeff McNish, mcnish@broad.msu.edu

6 MSU Alumni Association. Career support and activities for Alumni Association members.
   Spartan Stadium Office Tower
   535 Chestnut Rd., Room 300
   Dave Isbell, isbelld@msu.edu
   Lisa Parker, lisap@msu.edu
WE WANT THE TENACIOUS ONES,

THE BRILLIANT ONES,

THE ONES WHO HAVE THE INITIATIVE AND INSTINCT TO THINK

OUTSIDE THE BOX.

Every product has been on a truck or train at some point—your computer and your phone, the bed you sleep in and the food you eat. Coyote specializes in how each of these products ends up where it needs to be. Coyote is one of the fastest-growing third-party logistics (3PL) companies in the US.

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- National Account Manager Sales Trainee

Internship Opportunities:
- Sales and Logistics Internship

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We are looking for employees to join a fun and energetic organization with plenty of room for growth and professional development in our organization.

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- Professional development
- Comprehensive training
- Employee wellness programs

At MSUFCU, we work hard for our members, and have fun with our peers! For more information on available positions, visit www.msufcu.org/careers.

www.msufcu.org • 517-333-2424 • 800-678-4968

Residential and Hospitality Services
Student Employment
Work in Progress

go to jobs.rhs.msu.edu

Culinary Services • Residence Education and Housing Services • Spartan Hospitality Group
Steps to explore your career options

Here are some great steps to get you started, but remember: Your major is just one of the factors in shaping your future career—your interests, skills, values, and personality all play a vital part. For more help putting the pieces together, make an appointment with the Career Consultant for your college or a Career Advisor at CareerNetwork.msu.edu.

What can I do with this major?

I want to do everything!
“What can I do with this major?” is a resource for students wondering how to connect majors to careers. You can find this at the CareerNetwork.msu.edu website in the “Exploring Options” tab under “Choosing a Career and Major.” Click on majors to see common career areas, employers, and strategies designed to maximize career opportunities. There are also links by major to professional organizations, the Occupational Outlook Handbook, and job websites.

Informational interviews can be another great way to learn about specific career paths by asking questions of professionals in career fields about which you are curious. Look on page 19 for more information.

Job shadowing can be an excellent way to explore a career up close and get a real-life experience. Check out page 19 for more information.

Spartan Links is a group on LinkedIn (a professional networking site) that connects MSU students to alumni working in their areas of interest. It serves as an advice hub, where students can explore different industries and connect with people firsthand who are working in those industries. See page 53.

Career fairs aren’t just for seniors! Get out and talk to recruiters hiring for the types of careers you are exploring. Ask them what education, experiences, and skills they seek in successful applicants. Be a career event ambassador! Each year we recruit hundreds of volunteers to host employers at career events. Page 59 has advice for getting results at a career fair.

Working on- or off-campus, volunteering, or working on a research project (venture.msu.edu) are all excellent ways to explore specific career fields while networking with professionals, building your skills, and enhancing your resume.

Keep an eye on MySpartanCareer for workshops and alumni panels related to your areas of interest (see page 66). Also check out one or more of the events in our Career Exposure Series, presented by SpartanLinks. Alumni from various fields will be on campus to share their insight, experience, and advice with you! See CareerNetwork.msu.edu for topics and dates and get complete details through MySpartanCareer as the event approaches. Some may require that you RSVP to attend.

Check with your college Career Consultant who can help connect you with alumni and professionals or meet with a Career Advisor who can help you lay out a plan to explore your interests. Some colleges may have specific resources on what others who graduated in your major are doing now. See page 7 for more on career advising.

A career assessment can help you discover your strengths and interests and connect them to majors, extracurricular activities, and jobs/internships.

Talk with faculty about their interests, research, and professional experiences to learn about the field and what you will need to do and learn to succeed.

Explore all the opportunities that MSU.edu has to offer!
Steps to explore your career options

find your passion

Start by asking yourself …

▶ Who am I? Who do I want to be?
▶ What values guide me? What are my most important life goals?
▶ What ideas excite me? What activities are most engaging?
▶ How do I learn? What knowledge is important to my plans for personal and professional development?
▶ What skills are my strengths? Are there skills I need to develop? Are there things I’m good at but don’t actually enjoy?
▶ How have my experiences helped me grow? What assets do my experiences bring to new settings?
▶ What drives me? How do I make things happen and create new opportunities?

career assessments

“I heard I can take a career test that will tell me what to do…” Yeah, you can do that, but they aren’t really tests and they won’t give you the one major or career that will be right for you—but the results will help you examine, understand, and talk about how your interests, personality, values, and skills combine to make you who you are!

You will get a framework to structure your ideas around and a guide to help point you toward careers to explore further. Talking with a Career Advisor about your results can help you see how you can use what you’ve learned to make career decisions. Learn about the types of career assessments we offer at CareerNetwork.msu.edu under the “Exploring Options” tab.

explore outside the box

College is about exploration, discovery, and taking some risks. You’ll discover so much more if you experiment along the way. Broaden your horizons by …

▶ Taking an elective outside your major that really excites you. Employers and graduate schools value students who act on their passions and interests.

▶ Browsing career options at a career fair. Career fairs aren’t just for job seekers, they are for anyone interested in exploring different career options. It’s a great way to learn about different employers and talk to Spartan alumni about their experiences. Surf by CareerNetwork.msu.edu for a list of career events and to get more details.

▶ Study Abroad is a great way to broaden your global perspective and develop intercultural awareness. Browse study abroad options at StudyAbroad.msu.edu.

▶ The Alternative Spartan Break Program helps you gain insight into different communities and social challenges while contributing to a greater good. Check out asb.msu.edu.

Exploring may lead to new questions. Career Advisors can help you find the answers, sort through your options, and plan next steps. Set up an appointment at CareerNetwork.msu.edu.
Liberal arts students: Major ≠ Career

**Did you know** that 50–75% of all undergraduate degree requirements are the same, regardless of major? The last 25% (about 30 credits) is what determines the name of your major, but most of your academic classes are very similar to other college graduates. As for your major, liberal arts degrees are broad by design. This makes you a versatile graduate with lots of transferable skills to offer employers. Your degree doesn’t automatically predefine what you can do—you can do just about anything you want with the right combination of skills and experience!

Okay, not having a major that equates to a specific career might make figuring out what you want to do a little more challenging. But it also gives you many directions in which to turn initially and provides versatility over the life of your career. Liberal arts grads can be found everywhere: government, nonprofits, corporations and banks, education, and much more. As a liberal arts grad, you’ve got a lot to offer an employer. For many students, one of the best things to do is to focus less on your major and more on your interests.

Like other majors, employers will expect that you have experience when you graduate. This could include volunteer activities, student organization involvement, studies abroad, undergraduate research, part time jobs, and most importantly, internships. These activities allow you to explore what you might be interested in doing and build important skills valuable to employers before you graduate. Use your experiences intentionally to explore your interests, prepare for life after MSU, and connect with potential employers of interest.

Sometimes finding a job might seem harder for you than for your friends graduating with a degree in business or engineering. Some degrees are more profession-driven than others, and that’s OK. As a liberal arts grad, you’ve got a lot to offer an employer.

**33% of Fortune 500 CEOs have liberal arts degrees**

**33% of jobs recruit from All Majors in addition to those that require liberal arts degrees**

*Keep reading* through the “Explore & Experience” section (pages 12–23), in addition to the section “Make Your Move” (pages 42–62). And if you need help, don’t forget that your Career Consultant or Career Advisor can help you develop a custom plan through a career advising appointment (pages 7–9).
Why go to graduate school?

- **You want to know more** and be able to use that knowledge to help people, research, teach, make a great discovery… As a graduate or professional student, you become part of the process for advancing and creating knowledge in your field. Be prepared for changes—the expectations from faculty members are different than for undergrads and are far more demanding.

- **The career you want requires an advanced degree.** Clearly, if you want to be a doctor, a lawyer, or a faculty researcher, an advanced professional degree is required.

- **You want to make more money.** Having an advanced degree does not always translate to more money. Salaries for someone with an advanced degree vary by profession, job market, and location. Advanced degrees do not always mean better chances of finding a job, either. The key here is to do some solid research on your profession and the demand for people with advanced degrees.

- **Talk with current graduate students and faculty or professionals in your field.** Ask them why they chose graduate or professional school. How has it helped them in their careers and life goals? What advice would they give to a student thinking about graduate school?

- **Attend our annual Law School Fair in September and/or the Graduate and Professional School Recruitment Fair in October to meet and get information from recruiters representing schools and programs around the country. Get more details on these events at CareerNetwork.msu.edu.**

How can I decide if grad school is right for me?

- **Admissions requirements** will vary from program to program. Find out for each program:
  - preferred undergraduate majors or coursework, if any
  - GPA requirements
  - standardized tests (GRE, GMAT, etc.)
  - academic or work skills preferred
  - application deadlines.

- **Experience** is an asset in any graduate/professional school application. Grad schools like students who have undergrad research experience (see venture.msu.edu for opportunities). Some graduate and professional programs may require 1–5 years of work experience prior to applying.

- Graduate and professional school applications usually require a **personal statement** in which you describe yourself, your goals, and the reasons why you want to continue your studies in a particular program at that school. See page 39 for more info on writing personal statements.

- **Need some more guidance?** Make an appointment with your Career Consultant or Career Advisor to discuss your graduate or professional school search and application process.

- **More information.** You can find a list of factors to consider in choosing a graduate school, information on personal statements, and more at CareerNetwork.msu.edu under the “Exploring Options” tab.
if you’re considering graduate school

The MSU website grad.msu.edu offers a variety of resources from how to apply to graduate school to how to fund your graduate education.

Other great sources for information on applying, funding, and/or locating programs:

- Peterson’s, at petersons.com, allows you to search for programs by type, degree offered, and location, and get info on financing your advanced degree, test preparation, and more.

- University of Texas “Listings of U.S. Universities”: utexas.edu/world/univ/state

- PhDs.org allows students to run customized rankings from the National Research Council. This site also includes articles about applying to graduate school.

- GradSchools.com offers articles about graduate education and tips about the graduate admissions process.

- “Diverse Issues in Higher Education” at DiverseEducation.com/top100 provides rankings of graduate programs in each discipline by minority student participation.

- Interfolio.com is a web-based service that can hold letters, evaluations, and unofficial transcripts for candidates applying to graduate/professional schools or seeking employment in the field of education; documents kept in your file will be sent out upon your request. Open a credential file by going to Interfolio’s website and starting an account. Note that this is a fee-for-service resource. See Interfolio.com for pricing.
Sometimes it can feel like you’re supposed to have it all figured out—what you’re going to major in, what you’re going to do after college. Sometimes it can feel like you’re supposed to know what you’re going to do for the rest of your life!

The truth is that our lives can take turns we didn’t ever expect, the path we start off on ends up somewhere new, and the real day-to-day work in our careers isn’t always what we envisioned.

When making decisions about what majors, fields, and careers might be a good fit, one of the best ways to gather information can also help you to make professional contacts that can last you a lifetime.
informational interviewing & job shadowing

- **Talking to current professionals** is a great way to determine if a career field is for you. An informational interview is a 10–30 minute conversation with someone working in a position or field that interests you.

- **During a typical job shadowing visit**, you “shadow” an employee at work for a couple of hours, or even a full day. The visit provides an up-close look at the workplace and the “real job” from an employee’s view. You have a chance to observe daily office activities, ask questions, and consider the potential pros and cons of a particular profession or industry. You will also discover what workplace skills and career-related experiences are essential to being successful in your chosen field.

- **The process for setting up** an informational interview or job shadowing visit is the same—for a job shadow, you are just asking for a bit more time. Consider starting with an informational interview, and following up with a job shadow if you want to get a deeper view.

finding people to interview or shadow

- **Friends, family, and professors**. You will be amazed at how many contacts you may be able to make through existing relationships.

- **Career research tools** include a searchable database of employers, including contact info (see page 7). You might be surprised how many professionals are willing to talk with you about their careers and professional experiences.

- **SpartanLinks**. Alumni join SpartanLinks to share their stories and expertise with students. Use your Spartan connections to meet people who want to help you! (See page 53 for more information.)

- **Social networks**. Are you on Facebook? Twitter? LinkedIn? Do you blog? Social networks grow daily, and new ones are always just around the corner. Tap into your existing friends, followers, connections and readers by reaching out to them for the info you’re seeking. See page 53 for more on using social media and networking.

- **Attending career fairs** can be very useful even if you aren’t looking for a job. Go to career events and check out the Career Exposure Series to connect with alumni and employers right here on campus. Then take it a step further with an informational interview or job shadow.

benefits

- **Learning**. If you want to find out what a specific career path has to offer, what the positives and negatives are within an organization’s culture, or which academic major will best prepare you for a selected career path, why not ask the people who are already working within that field?

- **Building relationships**. In a recent national survey, 70% of respondents reported they got their present position because of a personal contact. The earlier you start building relationships with people in your field of interest, the stronger they will be when you actually begin your job hunt later on.

- **Linking**. See how your skill development, courses, and academic planning can connect to your future success on the job.
✓ connecting with people

- **First, know your purpose.** Be clear with yourself, and with them, about why a conversation with them will be helpful to you. How much do you already know? How can they help you fill in the gaps?

- **What do you have in common?** Are they a Spartan? Do you have a shared contact? Are you members of the same social organization or network?

- **Ask for what you’re looking for.** Be realistic about schedules and time constraints—don’t ask for a meeting with less than two weeks’ notice or for more than 30–45 minutes of their time for an initial discussion.

- **Asking about setting up an info interview or job shadow** might happen face-to-face with someone you know or meet at an event—and that’s great. For others, starting with an email request works well. See the sample email at right for ideas of what you might say. Give your contact a reasonable amount of time to respond (at least one week) and then follow up with a phone call if needed.

- **Hit all the main points.** Explain who you are and how you found them, demonstrate that you’ve already done some research, and request a meeting.
Dear Mr./Ms. ____________________________:

I am a sophomore at MSU focusing on art history, professional writing, and Spanish. Careers that combine multi-media communication skills with socially conscious work are very interesting to me and I’m currently exploring those kinds of options. I’m also a member of MSU’s SpartanLinks group on LinkedIn, and found you through the Communications, Media & Public Relations subgroup.

Your background in journalism and nonprofit management at the _______________________ Foundation and _______________________ Associates is fascinating to me. I know that you are very busy, but if you have the time, I would love to set up a meeting (no more than 30 minutes) to learn more about how a fellow Spartan got started on this kind of path. I am planning a trip to Chicago for next month—if your schedule allows, I am hoping that I can arrange my dates around our meeting. If a phone conversation would work better for you that would be fine too.

Thank you for your time,

__________________________________________

Before the visit

- **Research** the employer and/or industry you will be observing. See information on job search strategies on pages 44–46 for ways to research employers and fields of interest.

- **Choose 10–15 questions** to ask the employee you talk to. An outline for conducting informational interviews, including sample questions you might ask can be found at CareerNetwork.msu.edu, under the “Exploring Options” tab.

- **Confirm** the time/date and plan for travel to the meeting site.

- **Bring notebook and pen and take notes!**

After the visit

- **Send a thank-you note.** See page 37 for information on writing thank-you letters.

- **Take time to assess** what you learned about the skills and work experiences needed to pursue your career interests. Are there skills you need to gain? What are your next steps?
Explore + Experience

Develop skills through experience

It doesn’t matter what your major is, employers and graduate schools look for students who have experience. Why is this so important? It helps you build skills that are essential to professional success and apply them in different settings. The good news is there are lots of ways for you to build skills and experience in college.

✔️ have you considered . . . ?

- **Working a part-time job** helps you demonstrate your work ethic, build workplace skills, and learn how organizations operate. MySpartanCareer has all the latest part-time job openings for you.
- **Volunteering** or getting involved in service-learning helps you make a difference in the community and learn how to work in diverse economic, social, and cultural environments. Go to ServiceLearning.msu.edu for opportunities.
- Doing **undergraduate research** helps you gain complex reasoning, problem-solving, and communication skills while building a mind for innovation. See venture.msu.edu for opportunities.
- Being an **active member or leader of a student organization** can help you gain project management, teamwork, and leadership skills. Check out over 500 student organizations on StudentLife.msu.edu.
- **Serving as career fair ambassador** gives you behind-the-scenes insight into what employers are looking for in candidates and opportunities to broaden your professional contacts too. Learn how to sign up at CareerNetwork.msu.edu and MySpartanCareer.

Experiences help increase your competitiveness for internships, fellowships, and cooperative education opportunities. To download a copy of the 12 Essentials for Success: Competencies Employers Seek in College Graduates, go to CareerNetwork.msu.edu and click on “Career Guides” under the “Resources + Tools” tab.

What is an internship?

- **An internship is:**
  - An on-site work experience directly related to career goals and/or fields of interest
  - Supervised, emphasizing learning and professional development
  - Evaluative, providing a system for feedback and communication

- **An internship is not:**
  - Routine, repetitive tasks unrelated to identified learning goals
  - A job that does not offer career-related learning opportunities and experiences
  - Unsupervised, non-evaluated experiences
Internships are challenging work opportunities related to your major or intended career that force you to reflect and integrate your college learning in the professional world.

According to MSU’s Collegiate Employment Research Institute, students who intern earn 10% more over their lifetime than those who don’t. Why the increase? Current research indicates that internships today are equal to starting jobs five years ago, which gives students who have completed internships a competitive advantage in managing the pace and expectations of professional work.

More significant is the skills advantage interns develop through their experience. Quality internships focus on the critical skills new professionals need to be competitive in the workplace such as risk-taking, leadership, cooperation, critical thinking, and problem solving. Exactly what employers value most!

**Internships come in many shapes and sizes.** They also vary a lot between career fields and employers. Internships can be paid or unpaid, for-credit or not-for-credit, part-time or full-time, and they can be done at any time during the year, not just in the summer.

Some academic programs, like engineering, offer cooperative education placements (co-ops) which are special partnerships between a student, an employer, and a college or university.

---

### Finding Internships

- Check out CareerNetwork.msu.edu under the "Jobs + Internships" tab for everything you need to get started.
- Consider an internship on or near campus during the school year.
- Use MySpartanCareer to search for internship positions and take advantage of on-campus interviewing and career fairs.
- Meet with a Career Advisor or Career Consultant for your college to discuss and create an internship search plan that fits with your goals and interests.
- Identify employers of interest and contact them directly!
- See page 44, “Make Your Move,” for more on developing a search strategy.

---

### Getting the Most Out of Your Internship

- **Set goals.** Before you begin, sit down with your supervisor and establish several realistic goals for your learning experience. Ask, “What results should I be working toward?” Use these goals to evaluate yourself throughout your experience.
- **Know your place.** You will be working with professionals who have many more years of experience in the field than you. Remember you do not have all the answers. Communicate respectfully to all employees—those with a college degree, and those without. At the same time, don’t be afraid to share your ideas. Sometimes a fresh perspective is just what your employer needs.
- **Find a mentor.** If your employer does not provide you with someone who will coach you and answer your questions, seek out employees who will agree to serve in that role.
- Building quality professional relationships during your internship is vital to lifelong career success.
- **Take the initiative.** Some experiences are well-defined with specific outcomes provided, others are not. In either case, don’t sit back and wait! Your employer will be impressed when you see a problem or issue and address it. When you take ownership in your work, you’ll find it more rewarding.
- **Build relationships.** Learning about your chosen field can be an enjoyable experience. Connect with other students and employees both inside and outside of the work environment. Take it upon yourself to organize after-work social activities if they are not planned for you. Remember to show a strong work ethic throughout your experience, and you will be respected by those with whom you work.
Life is truly what you make it.

I started in computers by building one.

I learn as much from my son as he does from me.

Computers by day. Campfires by night.

Technology has found a home in Michigan.

Michigan is home to countless new stories being told through a growing number of voices. They speak of emerging technologies, along with thousands of IT and engineering jobs just waiting to be filled. Of course, the talk is also about how Michigan is an incredible place to call home. Opportunity is knocking. Open the door to Pure Michigan. Begin your story at mitalent.org
FIND A CAREER FIT FOR A SPARTAN

Majoring in any one of these areas?
Visit www.auto-owners.com today to apply!

- Business
- Information Technology
- Finance & Accounting
- Marketing
- Math & Actuarial Science
  and more!

Auto-Owners Insurance
Writing a good resume

Yes, everyone needs a resume. Potential employers—for part-time jobs, internships and full-time positions—look at resumes to find the best candidates to invite for an interview. Graduate and professional schools also often ask for resumes as part of the application.

▶ Resumes are most often skimmed in seconds—not read word-for-word.

▶ When the job market is tight, it’s even more important to spend time customizing your resumes. If you think your resume is “good enough,” it probably isn’t.

▶ The job description, employer website, and your networking contacts are all great sources for keywords and phrases to include. Your resume should mirror what they are looking for and what they value.

▶ It’s all about relevance. Use your knowledge of the position and organization to make decisions about how you describe experiences and skills and what to include or leave out. MSU coursework is only relevant to employers in specific cases. If you need to include it, don’t simply list course names or numbers. Identify the concepts or skills you’ve learned through those courses and include them as a bullet point in your “Education” section.

▶ Active, skills-based language is the best way to begin your resume bullet points. Even a quick skim by a reader should give them enough to know whether they want to read more. See pages 32–33 for action verbs.

▶ Go beyond duties and responsibilities. Be specific and results-oriented. What skills or knowledge did you develop? As you write, ask yourself questions like: How many? How much?

research before writing!

Every communication counts when you’re contacting a potential decision-maker. Whether it’s a resume, cover letter, or short email—be sure to do some research first. To be effective, you need to demonstrate your knowledge of who they are and/or what they are looking for. You also need to know enough about yourself and what you’re looking for so you can present your skills, interests, and goals in a way that’s relevant to your audience. Generic, one-size-fits-all documents aren’t going to make the kind of impression that gets you to the next step.
Employers are interested in what you’ve done recently. Unless you are a freshman writing a resume for a part-time job or internship, your high school education, experience, and activities should not be on your resume.

Resumes evolve over time. Your resume will need to be updated regularly to reflect new skills and experiences as you gain them. Not only that, but resume standards have changed over the years. If you are getting resume advice from someone who hasn’t written one since 1989, chances are they might be giving you outdated advice.

For instance, it used to be standard to include an “Objective” (now it’s optional) and “References Available Upon Request” statement (which is now considered obvious and a waste of space). For tips on references, visit CareerNetwork.msu.edu and click on “Resumes” under “Resources + Tools.”

For most positions, colored paper, funky fonts, and fancy graphics aren’t going to help your resume to stand out in a good way. If you are going into a creative field and want to integrate creative elements in your resume, talk to your Career Consultant or professionals in the field for advice on how to do it effectively. Even in creative fields, the quality of your content is key.

When emailing or uploading your resume, the best format is PDF. However, many employers may specifically request MS Word format. Follow instructions if given! In general, Word is the best program for creating and editing your resume. (No, Microsoft isn’t paying us to say that.)

The first step is to get something written. Use the information here to write the best draft you can. If you need more help, attend a resume workshop (see page 7). Then make a career advising appointment to get more feedback.

If you’re sending resumes out and not getting a response, come in and let us help!

To make customizing your resume each time easier, start by making a “master resume” that includes everything. This document may be more than one page but, since it’s just for you, that’s OK. If you’re having trouble deciding what to keep and what to cut, we can help with that, too.

Before you start writing, consider one or more of these ideas for generating resume content:
• Make a list of your skills, work and volunteer experiences, honors, awards, memberships, and activities
• Use this to help determine what section headings might work best.

When considering how to write bullet point descriptions:
• Make two lists, one for skills/knowledge you gained, one for tasks/duties you performed. Put these lists together to write bullets that include both.
• Make a list of keywords you want to include using the job description, information you’ve gotten from other sources, and/or the action verbs list on pages 32–33. Use those to start bullet points and then add details.
• Do 3–5 minutes of free-writing about each experience you want to include to get yourself thinking about what you did, what you found meaningful, etc. Then translate that into bullets.

Many employers have online systems they require applicants to use.

If you need to apply online, use the same care and attention to detail as you would with your resume.

Often you can cut and paste information from your resume into the application. You may need to fix the formatting so it doesn’t look messy.

Make sure you fill in all fields with the appropriate information and include a cover letter, even if it’s not required.

Help your application stand out from the rest by asking for advice from recruiters, alumni, or other contacts you might have at the organization. They may encourage you to use the “comments” area, complete an optional assessment, or include specific keywords.
formatting essentials

Yes, you’re going to have to make decisions about what to include and how you present yourself, but following these guidelines for formatting can help make the resume writing process a little easier.

▶ Use a blank Microsoft Word doc to start. Resume templates send the message that you can’t format a document on your own, and they can limit what you choose to include or update.

▶ Use bullets instead of writing in paragraphs. Bullets help your reader skim more quickly and guide them through the page.

▶ Stick to one page. Most college undergraduates don’t have the range of relevant experience that warrants more space.

▶ Be consistent with format. Use the same spacing, font size, placement of headers, etc.

▶ Leave some white space. One-inch margins are standard.

White space not only gives your reader’s eyes a break, but it also leaves room to make notes.

▶ Use ALL CAPS and bold. Avoid italics and underlining since both can be misread by scanners or electronic systems.

▶ Choose a standard font that is easy to read—like Arial, Times New Roman, Garamond, Tahoma, or Verdana. Use no less than 11 points for smaller fonts; larger fonts can be easily read at 10 or even 9 points.

▶ Make headers larger than body text. Use them to organize your content and make it easier to find relevant information. You may choose to strategically use headers by incorporating key words from the job description, “Editing Experience” or “Financial Management Experience” for example.

resume essentials

Research with employers reveals some of their biggest “pet peeves” when it comes to resumes. Below are some essential tips to help your resume avoid an unfavorable review from employers.

▶ Read your resume out loud to check for spelling errors, typos, and poor grammar.

▶ Be sure to highlight your accomplishments instead of just listing work duties that read like a job description.

▶ Include dates—accurate dates.

▶ List education and experience in reverse chronological order (most recent first).

▶ Use bullet points instead of narratives or paragraphs.

▶ Include correct and complete contact info, using a professional email address.

▶ Follow the formatting tips listed above!

▶ Keep it short—one page is the best!

▶ Leave out personal information that doesn’t belong on a resume (age, height, weight, etc.).

▶ Remember: Your resume should provide support that you are qualified to apply!
Sparty Spartan
Campus: A111 Butterfield Hall, East Lansing, MI 48824
Permanent: 123 North Avenue, City, MI 45654
(517) 582-5555 • Spartan1@msu.edu

Education

Bachelor of Arts, Communication
Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI

High School Diploma
North Street High School, City, MI
  • National Honor Society Scholar

Experience

Senior Class Vice-President
North Street High Student Government, City, MI
  • Facilitated 8 senior class meetings with 25 members
  • Spearheaded “Fall Carnival” fundraiser that raised over $1,900 for senior class trip
  • Oversaw the homecoming and prom planning committees

Youth Counselor
North Street YMCA, City, MI
  • Supervised 35 youth campers ranging from 7 to 10 years old
  • Coordinated daily activities for campers to keep them active and engaged
  • Planned an end of summer event for 200 campers with a group of 4 other counselors

Crew Member
McDonalds, City, MI
  • Received 2 awards for outstanding customer service
  • Provided exceptional customer service increasing repeat business
  • Collaborated with a team of 5 to provide efficient services in a fast-paced environment

Activities

Member, North Street High Track Team, City, MI
Volunteer, Boys & Girls Club, City, MI

Certifications/Skills

  • Proficient in Microsoft Word, Microsoft PowerPoint, and Adobe Photoshop
  • Certified in CPR/First Aid

As a general rule, follow this formula to determine how much space you should give to specific kinds of content:

- Name and contact info: 5%
- Education: 10–15%
- Relevant experience and/or skills: 75%
- Other (objective, activities, awards, memberships, computer skills, interests, etc.): 5–10%
For some, a “Skills Summary,” “Summary of Qualifications,” or other similar section toward the top of the resume can work well. A section like this serves as a short introduction to your strengths that can keep an employer reading. In fact, many hiring managers say this is the first thing they read! To make this work for you, keep these tips in mind:

- Keep it short, ideally 3–5 bullets.
- Don’t overstate your level of skill or experience. In most cases, the typical college undergrad still has more to learn on the job and is not an expert.
- Back it up. This is one place where general statements (such as “Proven ability to work in teams as both leader and contributing member”) can work—as long as you provide concrete, specific examples under your experience to support those claims.

Once you have a resume draft, use the following evaluation to take a critical look at it. This can help you to identify and work on problems so that you can make efficient use of a career advising session and resume review. Also consider sharing your resume and this evaluation with someone whose opinion you trust to get feedback.

**Resume Self Check**

**Overall Impression**

How does the resume look in a 15-second glance?

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<th>EXCELLENT</th>
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Some questions to consider: Does the formatting work to guide your eye to key content? What parts of the resume stand out? (Headings? Job titles? Keywords?) Does it appear organized or jumbled? If you took any creative risks with formatting, are they working for you or are they distracting? Does it seem like it represents a real person or does it feel artificial?

**Obvious Career Direction**

Is it apparent that you are looking for a specific type of opportunity?

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**Clear Contact Information**

Are all the basics on the resume: name, address, phone number, email address? If you included your LinkedIn, website, or blog URL, is it employer-ready?

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Is the formatting here working? Have you used space efficiently so that this section doesn’t take up a disproportionate amount of space?
Dalia Levine
123 Grand River Ave, East Lansing, MI 48823 | cell 248.987.6543 | dalia.levine@msu.edu

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Arts, English/Creative Writing | May 2016
Michigan State University | East Lansing, MI
• Specializations in Jewish Studies and Digital Humanities
• Honors Credits

EXPERIENCE

Front Desk Receptionist | June 2013–Present
MSU Career Services | East Lansing, MI
• Compiled hundreds of new job postings into database using attention to detail to ensure accuracy
• Communicated with diverse clientele including students, staff, professors, and employers
• Responsible for smooth front office operations

Student Webmaster | August 2014–Present
MSU Interfaith Council | East Lansing, MI
• Responsible for Council web content and blog posts; increased web views 23% during fall 2014
• Solicited feedback from members and leadership on direction and content
• Collaborated with Publicity and Membership chairs to promote the Council to MSU students

Office Assistant | May 2014–August 2014
Heartcare MD | Waterford, MI
• Organized hundreds of patient files into new system resulting in increased ease of retrieval
• Located and obtained patient files from various other physician offices
• Interacted with patients, vendors, and delivery people in a friendly and professional manner
• Organized and tacked appointment calendars for two doctors and one PA

English Tutor for Hebrew Speakers | May 2013–August 2013
Tapuach Pais | Tel Aviv, Israel
• Polished Hebrew fluency skills through daily communication with students
• Inspired students by relating material to everyday life using creative techniques

High School Mentor/Tutor | August 2012–December 2012
Refugee Development Center | East Lansing, MI
• Overcame cultural and language barriers with students by remaining open-minded and encouraging
• Adapted lessons and activities to students’ learning styles and levels of proficiency
• Coached students in reading, writing, pronunciation, and culture

SKILLS PROFILE

• Language: Fluent Hebrew and English, conversational Spanish
• Technical: Adobe Creative Suite (including Photoshop), New Media Driver’s License, and SPSS
Use action verbs!

The action verbs listed here are organized by skill areas to help you think about how your past experiences can apply to skill sets employers seek. Of course, many of these verbs apply to multiple skill areas—use all categories to get ideas for how you might describe your own skills and experience in your resume, cover letter, portfolio, interview, and other interactions.

Always describe your experiences in the past tense—even your current work!

**ANALYSIS**
- determined
- devised
- diagnosed
- estimated
- evaluated
- examined
- forecasted
- formulated
- integrated
- investigated
- justified
- measured
- negotiated

**COMMUNICATION**
- prescribed
- prioritized
- projected
- questioned
- rated
- recommended
- researched
- scrutinized
- studied
- substantiated
- synthesized
- validated
- verified

**FLEXIBILITY**
- addressed
- apprised
- arbitrated
- attested
- authored
- clarified
- communicated
- composed
- convinced
- corresponded
- corresponded
- drafted
- edited

**INITIATIVE**
- accommodated
- adapted
- adjusted
- altered
- amended
- balanced
- converted
- grew
- improvised
- tailored

- accelerated
- accomplished
- achieved
- acquired
- advanced
- bolstered
- boosted
- built

- coordinated
- created
- dedicated
- demonstrated
- enriched
- established
- expanded
- expedited
- implemented
- improved

- increased
- initiated
- innovated
- inspired
- introduced
- launched
- minimized
- mobilized
- modernized
- modified

- multiplied
- overhauled
- pioneered
- revamped
- revised
- spearheaded
- stimulated
- suggested
- updated
- upgraded

Use action verbs!
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Any time you send a resume or application to an employer, you should include a cover letter. Whenever you’re not face-to-face with an employer, your cover letter is your introduction.

**The Overview**

- Write a separate cover letter for every position. The best letters are customized for the employer receiving them.
- Since your resume talks about you, use your cover letter to demonstrate you’ve done your research and show an employer how you’re the best candidate for them. This means talking about them and how you’re a fit for what they need.
- Demonstrate a professional, clear, and direct writing style while also expressing your interest and excitement.
- As with your resume, your cover letter is a writing sample. Proofreading for grammatical and spelling errors, typos, and content/style is just as important. Mistakes can wreck your chances of moving forward.
- Think of your cover letter like a response to a personal ad—you’re connecting your interests and experiences with the other person—being genuine, conveying interest, showing that you understand what’s important to them, and sharing their values. You don’t have to tell them your life story—you’re telling them enough to convince them to invite you to an interview to learn more.

**The Details**

- Your resume and cover letter should match in both style and appearance.
- Fold them together and mail in a matching envelope or, because employers are scanning resumes, send your cover letter and resume unfolded in a large envelope.
- If you’re emailing your resume as an attachment, it’s not necessary to also attach a cover letter. The email message itself serves as a cover letter. Write it accordingly.
- If you’re applying online, don’t forget to include a cover letter, even if it’s optional.
- Address the letter to a specific individual. You may need to do some extra research, but it makes a big difference.

**A Helpful Tip**

If you are having difficulty getting the tone of your cover letter right, you’re not alone. Many job seekers struggle with cover letters that sound artificial or too impersonal. If you find yourself in that situation, try this:

- Write a letter to someone you know well—a parent, friend, advisor, professor, former teacher. Tell them about the position you are applying for, how you found it, why you are interested/excited, why you think you would be a good candidate, what parts of the job you would especially enjoy, and what you know and like about the employer.
- Now that you have a letter that sounds like you, put it into cover letter format, fill in any pieces that are missing, and edit the language to make it a little more professional/formal if needed. It’s much easier to make something informal sound more formal than the other way around.
April 2, 2014

Cameron Sullivan
National Events Manager
Crohn’s & Colitis Foundation of America
38th Park Avenue South
17th Floor
New York, NY 10016

Dear Ms. Sullivan,

I am writing regarding the Take Steps Walk Manager position located in Detroit, MI. As a psychology major, I am attracted to a career where I can use my strong communication skills to directly help people. This position would allow me to coordinate with many people in order to plan successful Walks, supporting the CCFA’s goal of improving Crohn’s & Colitis patients’ lives through research. Being very familiar with your organization personally and in networking with the Gastrointestinal Student Group that I lead at Michigan State University, I was excited to see the listing for this position on idealist.org.

In my recent internship at NorthWest Initiative, I had the opportunity to plan a neighborhood conference from the ground up, which involved honing many important event-planning skills such as those you are seeking in a Walk Manager: developing a promotional plan to publicize the event, working within budgets and timelines, mobilizing local business leaders and residents to volunteer their time and money, and maintaining current databases to track and record the progress of the event. I learned first-hand how vital meaningful relationships with individuals and other groups are to making an organization sustainable.

Of particular relevance to CCFA, I also currently serve as Social Chair of MSU GISI (Gastrointestinal Student Initiative) where I plan regular social and educational meetings for students with Crohn’s and Colitis. As with the Walk Manager position, this role requires heavy reliance on networking among and outside of the group. When we participated in the Take Steps Walk at Camp Dearborn last year, I was Team Captain for MSU GISI, and I am looking forward to the event again this year.

Thank you for your time and attention to my application. I look forward to scheduling an interview with you to discuss the position, as well as my qualifications and commitment to your cause. An opportunity to contribute to an organization whose mission I already support would be an excellent next step in my career path.

Sincerely,

Avery Black

Enclosure
very time you communicate with an employer, be as professional as possible. Always use correct grammar when speaking or writing. Professional email is different from a text message or writing a friend.

Even if email is your preferred way of communicating, check with your contacts to see what their preferred contact method is so you can communicate with them most effectively.
Taking a cell phone call when with another person can be rude. This is especially true during an interview, site visit, career fair, or other professional event!

In fact, be prepared to silence your phone and put it away. Texting, checking your phone for email, and otherwise being constantly distracted by your phone is likely to make you seem uninterested. It’s not going to make a good impression.

When leaving a voice mail or message, speak slowly and clearly so your message is clear. Keep your message short. Leave your name and phone number to ensure the employer can call you back.

Return calls the day they’re received. If for some reason you can’t call back the same day, call within 24 hours.

Make sure that the greeting for your voice mail is professional. Employers often complain about greetings that include loud music, background noise, or are just generally unprofessional.

Always send a thank-you letter after an interview or other personal interaction. Show the people you met that you appreciate their time and attention. Thank-you letters can be sent via email, a handwritten note, or formal letter.

Wondering whether or not email is the best way to send a thank-you note? As with most things, it depends on the organization. More conservative employers will likely prefer a formal letter. Employers who have a high-touch approach to customer service or a high level of relationship development with clients are more likely to prefer a handwritten note or card. But any employer with a quick turnaround time between interview and offer (you interview on Thursday and they tell you they plan to make a decision on Monday) should get an emailed thank-you letter.

Be sure to send the thank-you promptly—it’s best to send it within 24 hours of your meeting or exchange.

The bottom line is that you want the letter to reach them before they’ve made their decision. If they haven’t told you what their timeline is, that’s one of the things you should ask before leaving the interview!

To avoid burning bridges that might be useful later on, you should even send a thank-you letter to an employer with whom you’ve decided not to accept a position.

For more information on thank-you letters, see the resources available at CareerNetwork.msu.edu.

Don’t use an unprofessional email address (e.g., sexykitten@hotmail.com). The recipient could delete the message thinking it’s spam or porn. In fact, employers tell us hotmail addresses almost always end up in their junk folders! Your MSU email or a Gmail account are the best bet.

Include a meaningful subject line that makes it clear what will be covered in the message, such as “Jose Vega—Confirming Friday Interview Time” or “MSU Food Science Junior Seeking Information.”

Be sure to include your full name and contact information in each email.

Remember that there is no guarantee that an email is private.

When replying to a message, include the previous message in your response. Keeping the thread of the discussion together will help both you and your contact to follow the course of your email discussion.

Re-read and spell-check every email before you hit “Send”! Sadly, employers say they’ve received emails from students (or recent grads) that are so casual or full of grammatical and spelling errors that they just hit “delete.” Sadder still, employers who are alumni have said these unprofessional messages hurt their Spartan pride!
Outside the resume box
writing a personal statement

Some employers and most graduate or professional schools will require you to write a statement of purpose, personal statement, or essay of intent as part of the application process. If you find that you need to write this kind of document, start the same way you would write a resume and cover letter.

As with those documents, the key to writing a good personal statement is solid research. You need to include enough detail about the program and/or school to demonstrate why this particular opportunity would be the right next step for you.

You also need to have strong knowledge about yourself, your motivations for applying, how you’ve prepared to make this move, and the role it plays in your future plans. If you haven’t already considered these points, take some time to review “Thinking About an Advanced Degree” on page 16 and additional resources on exploring further education available at CareerNetwork.msu.edu and grad.msu.edu.

In many ways, your statement of purpose is like a much longer cover letter, written in essay form. You should convey knowledge, enthusiasm, and draw a clear connection between what they are looking for and what you have to offer.

To set yourself apart from other applicants, avoid general or obvious statements and clichés. Don’t say things like “I’ve wanted to be a lawyer for as long as I can remember” or “I always knew I wanted to be a doctor” or “My love of literature has led me to pursue a PhD in English.”

Writing a statement will take time—it’s best to begin working on it several months before the application deadline. Because this document is also an assessment of your writing ability, be very attentive to spelling, grammar, and overall quality.

Have it reviewed by your Career Consultant, Career Advisor, and/or the faculty or professionals writing your letters of recommendation. They can help you decide what to cut, what to keep, what to develop, and what to add.

the portfolio alternative

Portfolios are great tools for students from all majors. A professional portfolio is usually taken to an interview. This type of portfolio is documentation and demonstration of your accomplishments. It shows growth in your skills and understanding over time. A portfolio not only documents your results but also how you got there and what you learned in the process.

Benefits of portfolios. Regardless of how you’ll use the finished product, all portfolios can help you:

- Write or update your resume more quickly, since all the relevant information will be in one place.
- Organize information you’ve gathered over the years, such as awards, certificates, and records of other accomplishments.
- Showcase your achievements, skills, and abilities for an interview.
- See your career as a collection of skills and talents that you’ve developed, rather than just a list of job titles.

E-portfolios: effective and easy. Electronic portfolios are an excellent way to showcase your skills and your computer abilities. Remember: More and more employers are seeking students with high levels of technology skills.

- The most effective portfolios are those targeted towards a particular skill set or career direction. They may include video, photos, files, a copy of your resume, and a short introduction much like your career fair “commercial” (see page 58). Write descriptions or captions for anything you include so that the relevance is clear. Create an e-portfolio yourself to show-off your technical skills, or use a system like Epsilen.com.

- A creative portfolio contains only samples of work relevant to your particular field. Just like a professional portfolio, your creative portfolio should be organized and presented in a quality format.

- Many creative fields also expect a title page, essay, or artist statement and biography. Talk with people working in your field about the specific expectations for this type of portfolio, and whether an electronic or hardcopy format is preferred.
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So, you’re ready to make your move, ready for action. Whether you’re looking for an internship or a full-time job after college, the process of looking for the position (and employer!) that’s right for you is pretty much the same and both involve developing a search strategy. A **search strategy** is a plan or series of steps to help you obtain your goal: Getting an offer for a position that fits your interests, skills, values, and personality.
job search facts

▶ According to information from the U.S. Department of Labor, up to **80% of all positions are filled without employer advertising**. Think about it. It saves time, energy, and money for the employer to hire people they know, who have been referred by a trusted source, or who have made contact directly. And not only is this more efficient, it also often means the employer is getting a candidate who is not just looking for a job, but looking for this job.

▶ **98% of U.S. employers have fewer than 100 employees.** That means these organizations often do not recruit from college campuses. To find these “hidden” employers, you need to have a strategy.

▶ **Using multiple job search methods will help you find a position faster,** as data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics suggests. Read on for more about those methods and how you can decide which might work best for you.

▶ **The average American with a bachelor’s degree has about 10 different jobs between the ages of 18 and 34.** Again, this is data from research done by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. To survive—and advance—you’ll have to become skilled at job hunting. Your first job out of college is just the beginning of a lifelong process.

the bottom line

▶ The Internet should **not** be your only means of searching for jobs!

▶ **Talking to people,** asking questions, and being able to quickly and easily describe who you are (your interests, skills, experience) and what you’re looking for may be your best job search method.

▶ Conduct informational interviews (page 19) and don’t be afraid to network (page 52)!

▶ **Take advantage of MSU resources like MySpartanCareer,** career events, the Career Exposure Series, employer info sessions, SpartanLinks, and other opportunities to meet and discover potential employers.

Using multiple job search methods will help you find a position faster. Use more than the Internet when searching for jobs!
Developing your search strategy

Do you remember those “Choose Your Own Adventure” books you read in elementary school? Well, developing your strategy is a lot like that. You may start off down one path to find that it’s not working, or that it didn’t pan out the way you wanted. You may end up deciding you want to go off in a new direction. An unexpected opportunity might present itself. The job search is also a very personal process. There is no one job search technique that will work every time for everyone.

As you develop your search strategy, you should:

- **Create a list of 5–10 organizations** where you’d like to work. These organizations should get most of your attention. Actively work to meet people in the organizations and learn more about their goals.

- **Create a second list** of organizations you have some interest in. When you have time, do some basic research to refine the level of your interest and find possible networking or career openings.

- **Keep a log of research and activities**, so you know whom you’ve called, when, and next steps. It’s embarrassing to call someone twice because you forgot that you already called, or not to call at all when someone asked.

But how do you narrow the field? Read on!
define what you’re looking for

What are your search criteria? Be honest with yourself and the people you talk with about your search (whether it’s your Career Consultant, Career Advisor, or professional contacts you’ve made). Common search criteria are:

- Geographic location
- Application of your skills
- Connection to interest/passion
- Fit with work values
- Compatibility with personality

If you find that you’re having a hard time putting parameters around your search, start by going back to the “Explore & Experience” section (pages 12–23) for tips on resources, tools, and methods for getting some clarity.

field-specific research: focus & identify opportunities

Focus & identify opportunities. Research can make all the difference in your search. You need to look more like a great potential colleague than a desperate job seeker! It’s your job to do the research needed to understand your top employers’ needs and place yourself in situations where you can demonstrate your abilities. Where do you find the people you want to work with?

Professional organizations. Nearly every profession you can think of has a professional organization — American Institute of Graphic Arts, American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science, Association of American Publishers, American Sociological Association, American Library Association, Society of Illustrators, American Chemical Society, Association of Music Writers and Photographers — to name just a few.

For links to professional organizations that might be of interest to you based on your field of study, check out “What Can I Do with This Major?” and our online Career Research Tools at CareerNetwork.msu.edu (see page 7). Even a basic Google search with the name of your field of interest and “professional organization” will often yield good results.

Organization websites usually have info on current trends, salary surveys, job listings, directories of accredited graduate/professional programs and more. Check to see if they offer a discounted rate for student members and join while you’re still in school to take advantage of the savings!

Developing your search strategy

- Subscriptions to many of these publications can be costly, so make use of copies or electronic subscriptions available through your academic department, Career Services, and MSU Libraries.

- **Job listing and professional resource sites.** There are online communities dedicated to particular fields where you can often find things such as job seeker resources, career guides, discussion forums, job listings, and more. Use resources at the “Exploring Options” tab at CareerNetwork.msu.edu to find links to sites that may be of interest to you.

  Some of our favorite sites are interninMichigan.com, MITalent.org, ideaList.org, indeed.com, MediaBistro.com, GoGovernment.org, USAJobs.gov, and PublishersMarketplace.com. Conduct additional research to find more sites that fit your interests.

- **Social media.** Yes, social media can be a part of your research and job search. See more on page 53.

**employer research: the right place, the right job**

**Find the right place to find the right job.** Some people are completely flexible when it comes to location. In that case, focusing on field-specific resources to identify specific employers is a great move. But if you’ve got some particular geographic areas in mind, or are geographically limited, there are resources that can help you uncover employers by location.

- Click on **Career Research Tools** at CareerNetwork.msu.edu (page 7) to find accurate, up-to-date information on potential employers and contacts in a wide range of industries nationally and internationally. Explore the industry (or industries) and geographic area(s) you’re interested in, and find employers located there! You can also research salary information and get valuable insider information on industries, career fields, employers, cities, and countries.

- **MSU Libraries** has databases and other resources offering a wealth of information on specific employers. And unlike a generic Google search, the MSU library provides employer info that is authoritative, credible, and timely. Library resources are free to current students and it can give you a competitive edge with quality information that employers will notice. They even gave us the okay to let you know about Emily Treptow (treptowe@msu.edu), a librarian who specializes on career and job research—email her for help!

- **Find and make use of local resources** such as newspapers, networking groups, Chambers of Commerce, regional alumni clubs (check alumni.msu.edu for regional and international groups), etc. in your area of interest. They are a great way to find people who are doing work you find interesting.

  **Additional sources include:**
  - Employer websites
  - Annual reports
  - Recruiting materials/packets
  - Marketing materials
  - Media articles and coverage (check out press releases on their website too!)
  - And don’t forget social media!
We want to help you make your job search as productive as possible. But as is probably becoming evident, the job search is rarely, if ever, a quick and easy process. It can be stressful even for those who have a clear idea of what they want to do, where they want to do it, and for whom. And for international students, there are additional issues to overcome.

It can be complicated . . .

There are both legal and cultural barriers involved in international students’ job searches. Visa and work authorization processes can be complicated and the cultural differences in resumes, interviews, and other aspects of the search can be unsettling. It can also be difficult to look for a job in your home country from hundreds or thousands of miles away!

. . . but we can help!

To help meet the particular needs of international students, MSU’s Career Services Network has partnered with MSU’s Office for International Students and Scholars to provide online resources at oiss.msu.edu. Visit the CareerNetwork.msu.edu section “Resources + Tools/Student Resources” for information specifically for international students.

For more information on services and resources available to international students at MSU, please contact:

- The Office for International Students and Scholars
  International Center
  427 N. Shaw Ln., Room 105
  Walk-in Hours: Monday–Friday, 1:00–3:00 PM (no appointment necessary)
  Phone (517) 353-1720

Here are web resources at http://oiss.isp.msu.edu/students/employ/
- How to talk to employers about your immigration status
- Information on U.S. Work Authorization Options
- Resume and Interview Guide for International Students
- Networking Guide for International Students
It’s a big world out there, and it can sometimes feel like you could be finding more opportunities if you just knew the right places to look. There are two sectors of the job market that seekers don’t always tap to their full capacity: government and nonprofit jobs. The good news. There are lots of opportunities with organizations that care more about their mission than the bottom line!
government employment

“why work for government?”

Employees in the public sector get to work on challenging and complex issues often affecting the lives and legacies of many people. Students say “I don’t like campaigns or elections” but the majority of government employees are working outside the election process. Government employees are often eligible for student loan repayment assistance or forgiveness in addition to competitive compensation packages. Government positions touch every part of life in America, from commerce, to education, the environment, law, families, communities, public transportation, safety, and more.

“what do I need to know about government employment?”

Did you know the federal government employs people in all fields from art to zoology and is among the leading employers of liberal arts grads?

In fact, thousands of humanities and social science alums work in federal agencies. And median salaries for these workers tend to be higher in the federal government when compared to other employers. High rates of retirement—more than 100,000 employees are eligible to retire over the next few years—are creating job openings across the government. Some agencies will post openings on their own website while others will post through USAjobs.gov.

The good news is that even though there can be more steps, federal and state governments are more transparent about how to successfully compete for openings. Many agencies include advice for applicants, sample resumes, interview questions, and selection criteria right on their website. The State of Michigan has a Career Services office for applicants and offers resume reviews and individual appointments with their staff. Many agencies also host prospective employee events in large cities or web-based workshops on how to be successful in your search.

There are great resources to help you! The USAjobs.gov website Info Center has special information for students, (including a list of federal jobs by college major), as well as tutorials for how to use the system, tips on applying, and more.

“don’t you have to move to DC?”

Government jobs span all parts of the US and overseas. In fact, only 8% of federal positions are located in Washington, DC. Additionally, state, country, and city governments have all kinds of positions for college students and graduates, too.

Visit the government websites for your locations of interest and talk to your Career Consultant or Career Advisor for assistance.
finding your niche at a nonprofit

If you’re looking for a chance to use your talents with a sense of social contribution, a career with a nonprofit might be right for you. Nonprofits have full-time, paid staff performing all the tasks a for-profit business has, such as management, volunteer coordination, writing, accounting, graphic design, and much more. People from all kinds of academic backgrounds find nonprofits a rewarding and fulfilling career path.

Nonprofit organizations raise and generate revenue, but making a profit isn’t their goal; they are focused on their mission and use their revenue to that end. Nonprofits can be professional associations, political activist organizations, educational institutions, museums and cultural organizations, and human service providers, just to name a few. If there is a cause or issue you care passionately about, chances are there’s a nonprofit doing great work on that issue who may be hiring!

getting started

With so many nonprofit organizations, here are some tips on where to begin:

▶ Be specific. Which causes are you passionate about? Literacy and education, the environment, advocacy, human or animal rights? Which interest area would you like to support? Public health, business services, outreach, research? The more specific you can be, the more successful you will be in finding organization that might be right for you. See resources below to learn more about specific organizations and positions.

▶ Don’t forget the little guys. You may be familiar with large organizations like the United Way, Red Cross, or Sierra Club; however there are many smaller nonprofit organizations that might not be so well known offering great jobs.

▶ Show your skills. Are you a good writer? Event planner? Do you have web-development or graphic design skills? The more you stand out as somebody who offers a number of valuable skills, the more competitive you are.

nonprofits & government agencies come to campus!

These employers attend large events such as career fairs throughout the year (see pages 56–57). They may also attend Career Exposure Series events, workshops, or offer information sessions. Always check your MySpartanCareer account to see which employers are visiting campus and make every effort to connect with them during these events.

to learn more about nonprofits

For more information on nonprofits, including nationwide and international job postings, visit Idealist.org. Be sure to visit their The Idealist Guide to Nonprofit Careers and other great tools. MNAonline.org is another popular site from the Michigan Nonprofit Association. Nonprofits can be found from coast to coast! Visit CouncilOfNonProfits.org for nonprofit listings and resources by state.

Many MSU graduates begin their nonprofit careers through “term of service” programs such as AmeriCorps. Check out AmeriCorps.gov and see more “term of service” opportunities through Idealist.org.
Remember, job seekers are more likely to find a position faster by using more than two job search methods. We’ve given you many to choose from. If you have trouble deciding which will be best for the kind of position you’re seeking, see your Career Consultant or Career Advisor for assistance.

- MySpartanCareer
- career events
- job postings
- employer info sessions
- on-campus interviews
- workshops
- professional organizations
- trade publications & journals
- social media
- field- & industry-specific job listing & professional resource sites
- local resources for geographic area(s) of interest
- online career research tools
- specific employer information
- government agencies
- networking!
We’ve given you methods and tools for finding professionals working in your fields of interest. What are you doing right now to create or establish those important professional relationships? Meeting people gives you an opportunity to learn from them. If you are not sure what career path you would like to pursue, talk with many different professionals… they can help you narrow your areas of interest. (Read more about the first step to building your own personal network, informational interviewing, on page 19.) Remember, networking should begin long before your job search and often you don’t even realize that you are doing it!

Networking is usually an informal discussion with people you already know, or have just met. In fact, most students use networking all the time without even realizing it. When scheduling classes, have you ever asked a friend or classmate about their experiences, or to recommend a good class or section? When making a (relatively) large purchase such as a new cell phone, athletic shoes, computer, or even a car, have you asked people you know what they’ve liked or disliked about theirs? Have you posted questions (or answers) to social media discussing these kinds of topics? Guess what—that’s networking!

Networking takes place whenever you:

- Meet with faculty or staff—especially a Career Advisor (see page 7)
- Attend an employer info session or career event (visit “Events” at MySpartanCareer)
- Meet guest speakers or engage with your peers in class or through a student organization
- Talk with family, friends, and other acquaintances about their work
- Post messages on Facebook, LinkedIn, other websites, and blogs
- Volunteer for a community service event

Since networking can happen anywhere, be prepared to introduce yourself and deliver your pitch about who you are and what you want to do. For some students, this often happens at their part-time job in conversations with customers and clients. “You’re a student at MSU? What are you studying? What do you want to do after graduation?” You never know when that conversation can lead to a new contact or even an invitation to pass along your resume!

The U.S. Department of Labor estimates that up to 80% of positions are filled without employer advertising.
Certainly you've gone online to connect with others in order to share ideas or information! Two popular social media sites are Facebook and YouTube; however, there are many other tools that you may choose to use in obtaining or sharing information that can help you develop your career.

Your Career Services Network at MSU is prepared to help you understand the importance of social media in your career development. Here is a quick overview of several social media web-tools you may want to consider using.

▶ **LinkedIn.** Over 300 million professionals use LinkedIn to exchange information, ideas, and opportunities. See [www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com) for information on how to effectively build your profile, connect with contacts, and find opportunities. **Tip:** Search for and join groups based on interests and affinities. Being a member of a common group expands your network. Don’t forget to join SpartanLinks!

▶ **Plaxo.** A smart, socially connected address book. Tracks feeds from Twitter, Facebook, and dozens of other sites.

▶ **Twitter.** Stay updated with professionals or employers and keep others up to date with this instant information tool. Use Twitter directories like WeFollow.com and Twellow.com to find professionals and organizations related to your interests that you may want to follow. Many organizations have Twitter accounts dedicated to job postings.

▶ **Facebook.** Yes, employers and professionals are on Facebook too. Even if you don't choose to add professional contacts as friends, be aware that employers (and your future colleagues) are very likely to look you up on Facebook or Google you before you even come in for an interview. If you like the idea of using Facebook for both personal and professional reasons, search pages and groups for field or employer specific info or communities. Also consider using your status updates strategically to help your network of friends help you.

**The use of social media** in learning about potential career paths, receiving feedback on job search documents (e.g., resumes), connecting with alumni, and networking with professionals in your field of interest is **becoming one of the most important avenues for successful job seekers.**

▶ **Visit CareerNetwork.msu.edu** and click on the Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube icons for our collection of streams, sites, and channels.

▶ **SpartanLinks is a group on LinkedIn that connects MSU students to alumni** working in their areas of interest. Alumni who join are looking to share insight, advice, and expertise with students and recent graduates. Student, alumni, and employer members within this main group discuss general career topics such as resume writing, interviewing, job search strategies, workplace trends, and employment/recruiting trends.

   Members will also have the opportunity to join subgroups related to their chosen career function (e.g., communications, environment, entrepreneurship, etc.) where they can participate in group discussions, read posted articles, and discuss job opportunities related to their career field.

   The **MSU Alumni Association** also has a large LinkedIn group that students can join to connect with other alumni. In addition, many regional MSU Alumni Clubs have LinkedIn groups specifically for those living and working in that area. If you are planning to relocate or are looking for an internship in a particular area, these groups can be useful resources!

   After you’ve joined MSU groups that fit your interests, search groups to find professional associations, industries, or interest affiliations to join. As a member, you can comment on discussions, find exclusive job listings, and meet people who share interests.
You know that thing about never getting a second chance to make a first impression? Well, it’s true. It’s just as true about a blind date as it is about meeting a professional contact for the first time. Regardless of the circumstances, you want to make the best impression you can the first time around—or you might not get a second chance!

Make your best impression the first time around—you might not get a second chance!
Professional dress matters because it helps you to project an image that lets the employer see you in the professional role you are seeking. The whole working world doesn’t revolve around dark, conservative suits. What you wear for a professional encounter depends on the career field you’re pursuing.

Always follow these general guidelines:

- Hair should be clean, well groomed, and away from the eyes. Simple, classic styles are best.
- No visible tattoos or body piercings.
- Remove extraneous earrings. (Women: one pair. Men: none.)
- Avoid strong mints, perfumes, or aftershaves.
- Clothing should work for you, not against you. Fit and comfort are important considerations in projecting yourself at your best.
- Trendy clothing—like short skirts, low necklines, extreme prints or colors—generally do not project an image appropriate for a professional meeting.
- Crisp, clean, well-pressed clothing is a must.

who wears what?

- For traditional careers—like banking, accounting, finance, engineering, law, and corporate positions—you’ll need a conservative look that conveys competence and authority.
  Suits should have a classic cut or style and be dark in color (navy, dark grey, black, etc.). Shirts and blouses should be a neutral color, like white, ivory, light grey, etc. Ties and scarves should be subtle with a little color.
- For those pursuing technical careers—in areas like engineering, information technology, sciences, etc.—a clean look that conveys knowledge, innovation, and approachability is important.
  Suits should be conservative in subtle dark colors. Blouses and shirts should be a subtle color.
- People-focused careers—counseling, teaching, sales, and social work, for example—require an image that projects expertise but approachability.
  Suits should be conservative in subtle dark colors; coordinate separates can work too. Blouses and shirts should be a subtle color.
- The most opportunity for expression of personal style can be found in creative careers—like advertising, art, design, and entertainment, to name a few. In these fields you’ll need a contemporary image that conveys creativity, innovation, and competence.
  Suits can vary in cut, style, and color; two-piece coordinates are acceptable. Blouses and shirts should accent your total look. While you will often see professionals in these careers wearing jeans and other more casual clothing, it is best for prospective professionals to step it up a notch. Show your creative flair, but remember to look more like a professional than a student.

what to wear for less formal meetings

So, for more formal interactions like career fairs and interviews, hopefully it’s clearer now why suits are usually your best option. But if you’re going to a fair as an information seeker instead of a job seeker, or if you’re attending an event like a conference, informational interview, job shadow, etc., a suit may make you overdressed.

For these kinds of interactions, you always want to dress professionally—no ripped jeans, flip-flops, or T-shirts with obscenities on them. Save these clothes for your friends, not a potential employer.

Follow the "dress essentials for everyone," and consider the items below when you’re picking out what to wear...

- khakis
- blazer
- button-down
- sweater
- dress shoes
- shirt
- dress pants
- loafers

And remember, when in doubt, check with an insider (your employer contact or Career Advisor, for example) about what the appropriate dress in a particular situation might be!
MSU career events

Don’t forget you can use CareerNetwork.msu.edu to get times, locations, and links to see the list of who’s attending and sign up to be a student ambassador. Attendee lists and ambassador sign-up are coordinated through MySpartanCareer.

If you didn’t already, check out why it’s a good idea for freshmen and sophomores to attend career events on page 14. And don’t miss “How to Get Results at a Career Fair” on page 59. Check MySpartanCareer at CareerNetwork.msu.edu for days and times of Career Fair Prep workshops.

career exposure series
presented by the SpartanLinks group on LinkedIn

Ever wondered what it’s really like to work in a particular field? Are you looking for ways to meet MSU alumni who have created rewarding careers in your areas of interest? Here’s your chance to connect with alumni who are out there working and want to share their experiences, insight, and advice with you!

Attend any and all sessions that fit your interests. Bring your curiosity and an open mind. Leave with ideas for how you can create a meaningful career path that will take you where you want to go.

Check CareerNetwork.msu.edu for session topics and details. Information will also be available through MySpartanCareer in the “Events and Workshops” tab. Most require that you RSVP in advance to attend. Events fill up fast!
SEPTEMBER 3
earn, learn & intern
Local businesses, along with on-campus employers, will be present to talk with students about part-time job and internship opportunities.

SEPTEMBER 18
business analytics fair
In addition to meeting hiring employers, attend a corporate panel of industry experts talking about career opportunities in big data management and tips about analytics professionals.

SEPTEMBER 24
law school fair
All students are welcome and encouraged to participate and meet admissions representatives to find out more about law school and the admission process.

OCTOBER 1 & 2
career gallery
The largest fair of the year—a two-day event! Over 300 employers and 4,500 students attend.

► Science, Engineering & Technology Exchange (Oct. 1)
► Business Exchange (Oct. 2)

OCTOBER 1
graduate & professional school fair
Meet admissions recruiters from over 100 institutions to learn more about programs and what they seek in competitive applicants.

OCTOBER 9
science, agriculture, food, environment career fair
A new event connecting employers with undergrad and graduate students interested in fields focusing on science, agriculture, food, health, the environment, and natural resources.

OCTOBER 15
construction management fair
More than 30 employers attend to talk with students about full-time jobs and internships.

OCTOBER 16
nursing fair
This event attracts 30–40 health organizations offering full-time positions, externships, and volunteer opportunities.

NOVEMBER 17
spartan start-up career fair
Dream of starting your own business? Attend the entrepreneur panel to hear about success stories and get expert advice. Visit with Michigan start-up companies looking for students to join their teams.

SPRING 2015

JANUARY (TBA)
diversity career fair
This inclusive event attracts over 2,400 students and 150 well-known employers representing a variety of industries.

FEBRUARY 11
summer job & internship fair
Over 80 employers attend to meet students looking for full- or part-time seasonal jobs or internships.

FEBRUARY (TBA)
criminal justice fair
This annual event exposes students to a wide variety of careers available in criminal justice.

FEBRUARY 20
cas connect career fair
This event connects employers looking for students interested in the fields of advertising, public relations communications, media information, sales communications, telecommunications, and more.

FEBRUARY 26
engineering expo
Come to gain knowledge of companies, interact with alumni, network with professional engineers, and get “insider” info. Coordinated by The Center for Spartan Engineering, egr.msu.edu/thecenter.

APRIL 14
teacher/administrator recruitment fair
This annual MSU event attracts over 125 school districts nationwide seeking to recruit new teachers and staff.
Getting results at a career fair

SU’s largest fairs have hundreds of employers and thousands of students. Knowing what to expect and how to work a fair can ensure that you aren’t simply just another face in a sea of job seekers.
Know who will be attending. Before the fair begins, know which organizations will attend and what positions they are hiring for currently. Get this information through MySpartanCareer. Make a ranked list of employers that interest you.

Research employers of interest. If you want to stand apart, be able to talk to the recruiter about what the organization does and how your skill set fits. At a minimum, go to their website, learn about products, services, or clients, and read the annual report. See pages 45–46 for more ideas.

Prepare your resume(s). Make sure your resume effectively reflects your knowledge, skills, and abilities. You can have a general resume to hand out, but if you really want to make a great impression, make different versions of your resume that target the specific industry or job that interests you. Make sure you give the right resume to the right organization! (See pages 26–33.)

Develop your elevator pitch. You only have about 30 seconds to make an impression with a recruiter, so you need to be able to quickly introduce yourself and let them know your interests and qualifications. Practice a short 30-second to one-minute story that you can present easily while still sounding natural. Things to include:

- Your name
- Your MSU program/major (optional)
- When you’re graduating
- What you’re looking for (more information, full-time employment, an internship or co-op, etc.)
- Your area of interest within the organization and how your skills (or personal qualities or experience) relate to that area

Get organized. Pick up a map showing where organization booths are. You might also want to take a quick walk through the space to get a feel for the layout of the fair. Then what? . . .

They’re watching you! Keep in mind that the moment you enter the fair, recruiters are watching you. They take note of how you dress, how you behave, and how you interact with your friends and with other recruiters.

Approach an organization. It can be intimidating to approach and introduce yourself to a recruiter. Students often say introductions at career fairs are “weird,” “unnatural,” or “forced.” It helps if you remember the recruiter is here to meet you, so don’t be shy! Offer a firm handshake, and then share your elevator pitch. Remember, be direct. If you’re interested in a certain position, let them know.

Talk to the recruiter. Don’t talk over their shoulder or at the free stuff that they’re giving away! Make eye contact and don’t be afraid to let your enthusiasm show. Being truly passionate about the employer and the opportunities they have to offer can make all the difference.

Gather information and be respectful of the recruiter’s time. The truth is that most people at career fairs use them as an opportunity to gather information. This is perfectly fine and a great reason to go if you’re not looking for a full-time job or internship. Remember, career fairs are all about networking, and recruiters love to see 1st- and 2nd-year students at fairs asking questions. It shows that the student is thinking about and making connections for the future!

If you’re at the fair to try to land a job, recruiters need to know you’ve done your research and are ready to go. While speaking with recruiters, be courteous to them and your fellow students by keeping your conversations short and purposeful.

Finally, make sure that you get the names of the recruiters you talk to and, if possible, get their business cards.

Follow up. If, during your conversation with a recruiter, you promised to follow up with more information (website link, portfolio, writing sample, etc.), then make sure that you get the information out right away.

Send thank-you notes. Send a thank-you note within 24 hours to everyone you talked to. This is a little thing that really makes a difference! Almost everyone has the intention, but very few actually get around to it. Don’t know what to write? See information on thank-you letters on page 37 or at CareerNetwork.msu.edu. It doesn’t have to be fancy—the point is to remind them of who you are and let them know you’re serious about your job search.
You’ve got an interview: Now what?

the **PARK** method

P the PROBLEM or situation
   ("What happened?")

A the ACTIONS you took
   ("What did you do?")

R the RESULTS or outcomes
   ("What was the result?")

K the KNOWLEDGE you gained and applied
   ("What did you learn? How did you apply it?")

Q: “Tell me about a time when you had to deal with conflict in a group.”

A: “Last semester I was part of a student advisory board to my academic department. We were developing a set of recommendations to improve faculty student communication. It was difficult to get the various members of the board to agree on which recommendations to choose, because everyone wanted theirs. I focused on helping us look for common elements between each recommendation. The result was that we ended up recommending a faculty-student retreat in which many of the more specific recommendations were used. Through this experience, I learned how important it is to really look at things from the perspective of each team member.”

At right is typical behavioral interview question… and a possible response, using the **PARK** method.
**Interview Basics**

**What’s the Point of an Interview?**

The purpose of an interview is to exchange information. The employer evaluates your ability to do the job. You look for a match between your interests and the work.

Be prepared with information about the company and the job, as well as with questions that you have developed. By taking these steps, you’re ready to be an active participant in this exchange about your future.

**What’s a Behavioral Interview?**

Behavioral interviewing assumes that your past experiences are good indicators of your future abilities. You’ll be asked to tell stories about your past so that the employer can assess your skills and behavior. There may not be a right or wrong answer. There is only your answer that may reveal something about your qualities to the employer.

By thoroughly understanding the nature of the job and the organization, you can more accurately select examples from your life that have meaning to the employer.

“Tell me about a time...”

Being able to talk about your experiences in such a way that employers can identify your skills is a challenge. One way to help organize your experiences is to use the PARK method. The PARK method helps you focus on the most relevant aspects of your experience for the employer in a structured way.

**Be Prepared!**

Being prepared for the interview is very important. The employer has already agreed to meet with you based on your resume and cover letter—you’ve made it this far. Now to be confident in your interview, you need to be prepared. The following things will help you:

- **Research.** Find out everything you can about the organization and the position. The interviewer will be able to tell if you’ve done your homework. The more you know, the more you’ll be able to connect your experiences and skills to the needs of the employer. This will also help you to create a list of good questions to ask at the interview.

- **Make a List of Skills.** Before the interview, make a list of your skills and abilities. These are what will make you an asset to your future employer; use the list to put yourself in a positive frame of mind and help you “sell” yourself to the interviewer. Your portfolio and resume are great starting points for this list, since they both sum up your experience and interests.

- **Practice!** The Career Services Network offers practice interviews throughout the year. Check MySpartanCareer for dates and times to sign up. Click on the "Jobs/View Postings" tab and search using the keyword "practice" to find available interviews. Practice interviews are subject to the Late Cancellation and No Show Policy for an on-campus interview (see page 65 for details). Some schedules may be limited to students in specific majors or colleges.

- You can also use InterviewStream to practice interviewing using a webcam! Seeing yourself in action is a great way to test your ability to answer common interview questions and get prompt feedback on your body language and speech patterns. After all, you’re your own best critic! Find InterviewStream at CareerNetwork.msu.edu under the “Jobs + Internships” tab in the section on Interviewing.

**Interview Tips**

- Arrive early and appear relaxed and organized
- Seem interested and alert
- Connect your skills, background, or experience to the job
- Only say positive things about past employers or co-workers
- Ask questions that you don’t know the answers to
- Realistically present your qualities
- Ask about salary and benefits after you have a solid job offer
- Allow for “quiet time” for the interviewer to think and take notes
Before you get a job offer, or as a condition of your offer, you will likely have to go through one or more of the following:

- Pre-employment testing can include drug/alcohol, agility, genetic, personality, honesty, skills, loyalty, and leadership tests.
- Background screening can include a credit check, criminal records investigation, driver's license check, academic credentials verification, and reference checks.
- Reference checks can include academic, employment, and personal references.

While students and job applicants may think of these tests and investigations as an “invasion of privacy” or “offensive,” there is nothing illegal about employers seeking this information.

The most important question to ask yourself is: Are you excited about this job and the salary? If you are not happy, you will not be a great employee, and you aren’t likely to have a good experience with the organization. But it’s also important to balance your excitement and passion for the field you’re entering with a realistic expectation for financial rewards.

You don’t have to accept the first salary you’re offered. You have the ability to negotiate for better benefits, training, or pay.

Feel free to ask for time to adequately examine your total offer. Get all of the elements in writing, including benefit options, stock options, and wages.

The strongest tools to negotiate with are salary information for your industry and the value of the unique skills that you bring to the table.

The industry’s economic climate and the location of your position will both have a major influence on your salary offer, even when compared to other candidates within the same company. New York City is not the same as Traverse City in cost of living. Use our online Career Research Tools (see page 7) to find salary and cost-of-living information.
Michigan's Best Kept Secret: DART

Dart knows that our most valuable asset is our employees.

In 2012 we acquired Solo Cup Company, making Dart Container Corporation the second largest foodservice packaging company in the United States. We're expanding in mid-Michigan, and with our continued growth you'll see that we offer a wide variety of career paths. We are a multi-national company with plants in 14 states and eight countries.

Join a community-oriented company that offers:
• An Employee Wellness Program
• A Green Care Program - C.A.R.E. (Cups Are REcyclable)

We Hire Individuals in These Areas
- Accounting
- Information Technology
- Engineering
- Logistics Procurement
- Finance
- Sales & Marketing
- Human Resources

Learn more about Dart Container at: www.dart.biz

strive for success & reach your potential
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Follow a career path? Or blaze your own.

THE CHOICE IS CLEAR.
After all, in the Enterprise Management Training Program you’ll lead an ambitious team and run a successful million-dollar business. Get ready to make real decisions every single day as part of an organization repeatedly recognized as a great place to launch a career.

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Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success.

Henry Ford

Join our team! The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) plans, designs, builds and operates the state’s transportation network that includes air, rail, port, highway, transit and non-motorized systems. You’ll find a wide range of career choices and challenging opportunities at MDOT. For a list of current job openings, go to:
Possessing a high level of integrity is critical to happiness and success throughout your educational pursuits, career, and life. It is the very key to defining the person you really are.

Take this to heart—integrity isn’t something about you—it is you. We all have to accept the implications of our decisions and actions—whether they are positive or negative. In some cases, if we act with less integrity, we may not like the consequences. However, it is the reality, and we have to live with it—as well as deal with it!

**expectations**

On campus, we expect you to follow certain policies and practices, and to honor your commitments—and to do this with a high degree of integrity.

Keep in mind that your actions are not isolated and many constituencies will in some manner be affected by your decisions.

Performing with integrity means:

- **Accepting responsibility** for your actions, including your mistakes.
- **Keeping your word** and following through.
- **Making principled decisions** based on personal and professional ethics.
- **Following the Golden Rule**—treating others as you would like to be treated.
- **Acting consistently and transparently** in all your dealings.

**integrity**

*n.* The quality of being honest and having strong moral principles; moral uprightness.
policies

şı falsification of information

Students and alumni registering and submitting their resume and data are certifying that the information is truthful and accurate. Those found providing false information in any way risk becoming ineligible for on-campus interviewing and Career Network services.

şı interview cancellation

You are expected to accept the responsibility for keeping every interview appointment scheduled.

Canceling late or not showing up may result in becoming ineligible for on-campus interviewing.

For these situations, you will be temporarily deactivated from MySpartanCareer (for the first incident) and will be required to follow a process to reinstate your access.

şı acceptance of job offer

If you've accepted a job offer, you should not continue to interview with employers.

Notify employers with whom you may have upcoming interviews and withdraw your application.

şı reneging

Reneging is accepting a job offer and then changing your mind in order to accept an offer with another employer.

Reneging can damage your reputation forever—and may make you ineligible for on-campus interviewing and Career Network services. The university does not sanction reneging on your part for any reason.

Avoid a reneging situation by carefully planning and managing your entire job search process. If you are in a dilemma situation, please discuss it immediately with a Career Advisor.

Policy details can be found at CareerNetwork.msu.edu under the “Services + Locations” tab on the MySpartanCareer information page.
MySpartanCareer FAQ

**should I use the MySpartanCareer job posting system?**

Think MySpartanCareer can’t help you in your internship or full-time job search? Think again. MySpartanCareer is where you can connect with employers seeking Spartans. Search and apply for postings that fit your interests and submit your resume to employers conducting interviews right here on campus. See what organizations will be attending career events, and click on the “Employers” tab to search the 10,000+ employers who have come to campus or posted positions.

It’s also a big help for expanding your professional network through employer info sessions and workshops featuring alumni guests. See page 7 for more.

**how do I find MySpartanCareer?**

At CareerNetwork.msu.edu log in to MySpartanCareer. Fill in your profile information and upload your resume—or you won’t be able to search jobs. You can change your profile and resume at any time.

**do I need a resume?**

Uh huh. You’ll need to upload your resume in order to apply for jobs. Everyone needs a resume in college. You never know when you’ll need it for a scholarship, a job opportunity, or a graduate school application. See page 26.

**how can I find the workshops you offer?**

Great! You want to come to a workshop! They’re offered regularly throughout the school year. We have two ongoing series: the Steps for Success and the Career Exposure Series. New workshops are added because of student demand. See page 7 for more on workshops and Career Exposure Series events.

Find them in MySpartanCareer. Just log in and click on “Events.” You’ll see three tabs—career fairs, employer events, and workshops. Click on “Workshops” and you can search by date or keyword.

**how do I find the jobs I’m looking for?**

It’s easy! Click on “Jobs/View Jobs” and enter your search terms. Click on the “Advanced Search” link for a wide range of search filters: position type, industry, location, and more. It’s best to start out with the broadest search filters and then narrow your choices. Keywords work best.
how do I find **on-campus jobs**?

Click on “Jobs/View Jobs” and use “MSU” in the keyword search. Voilà!

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**can I apply for positions on** **MySpartanCareer**?

Yes! If you see an “Apply” button, follow the application instructions specified by the employer for the job(s) you are interested in. Some may ask for you to submit your resume, others may direct you to their website to complete an online application.

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**can I get email updates about new postings related to my job search?**

You can have your **MySpartanCareer** account send you an email when new jobs are posted that meet your specific job search criteria—email updates can be sent as often as every day!

To set up a Saved Search, click on the “Jobs/View Jobs” tab and then search for jobs using the Search box or list of search filters in the “Advanced Search” link. Example: Search for MSU Jobs by typing “MSU” in the search box. Save this MSU job search by clicking the “Saved Searches” link, naming the search “MSU Jobs,” selecting the email update frequency and clicking the Save button. Check your MSU email tomorrow!

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**how do I find **interviews** with employers when they’re on campus?**

It’s easy. The quickest way is to click on the shortcut, “Interviews I qualify for,” on your homepage. If you want to see all interviews, click on “Jobs/View Jobs” and choose “Interviews” under “Show Me” and any other search terms you like.

You can search for internships as well as full-time positions. You’ll see a list of positions and get information about qualifications, how to sign up, important deadlines, and application status.

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**how do I sign up for interviews?**

Once you’ve found an interview position you are interested in, click on the job title link to get details. You’ll see the job description and all of the dates and information you’ll need to sign up. There are two types of interview schedules employers use for on-campus interviews:

- **Pre-select schedules.** First you submit your resume then employers screen the resumes to select the candidates they wish to interview. Individuals chosen to interview will be able to sign up for an interview time during the specified sign-up date range for that employer. If you submit a resume for a pre-select interview, note the date when you should check to see if you have been chosen to sign up for an interview. You don’t want to miss your sign-up date!

- **Open interview schedules.** As long as you meet screening criteria set by the employer, it’s “first come, first served” as soon as sign-up opens. Once all interview slots are filled, the schedule is closed.

If you sign up for an interview, make sure you read the No Show and Late Cancellation Policy for on-campus interviews (see page 65). Honoring your commitments helps all Spartans keep our professional reputation strong.
UNIQUE LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

That’s what you get when you join the Association of Future Alumni

Set yourself apart through access to influential business leaders and unique campus experiences

• Lead through the Spartan 300, a student leadership council, by escorting Sparty to events on and off campus, by providing tours to prospective MSU students or by cheering in The IZZONE and A-Team student sections

• Connect with prominent Spartans in some of the area’s best companies such as the Detroit Pistons, Herman Miller, Quicken Loans, Vectorform and Whirlpool during behind-the-scenes networking tours

• Save cash by using your members-only discount card at more than 30 of the area’s most popular restaurants, entertainment options and service providers. Your membership will pay for itself in no time!

Now is the time to harness the power of the global Spartan alumni network. Join the Association of Future Alumni today at futurealumni.msu.edu.