

# Career Services Resource Guide

## Career Center

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Student Success Center

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# Career Center Resources

The Career Center offers a variety of services and resources to assist you in the career planning process and making a sound career choice, both during your time as a student and after graduation. Staff is available to offer assistance with wherever you are in the decision-making process. This publication contains a wealth of information to help prepare you for your career.

The Career Services Coordinator is located in the Student Success Center in the Mickelson Center building. There are also various resource materials located in the Library. If you would like to visit with the coordinator, please contact the Student Success Center at 605-367-7466 to set an appointment.



### **Career Exploration Assessment:**

If you are unsure of the major you originally selected or want to explore various majors and careers, Southeast Tech has provided you access with an online assessment that can assist you with career and major explorations.

### **Job & Internship Listings:**

Start with Southeast Tech Career Connections. Career Connections is where Southeast Tech refers all employers to post their openings for students and alumni to view. You have access to Career Connection through STInet. There are additional electronic search tools you can use:

- Career Connections
- South Dakota Department of Labor: <https://www.southdakotaworks.org/vosnet/Default.aspx>
- Careerbuilder.com
- Indeed.com
- ZipRecruiter.com
- Kelolandemployment.com

### **Employer Information:**

Career Connections has an employer directory. Use this to view company information of those employers who connect with Southeast Tech. This directory is continually changing and certainly not ALL who connect with Southeast Tech. Technology will help; however, you still need to do a lot of work. Do your due diligence and research companies in your preferred industry.

### **Résumé & Cover Letter Assistance:**

Southeast Tech offers résumé and cover letter assistance. These documents are critical to your job search. From providing assistance to get started with the right format to proofing, the Career Center can help. Additionally, there are some résumé & cover letter examples located in the back of this document. Please visit with the Career Center to look at additional examples.

### **Mock Interviews:**

Schedule a mock interview with the Career Center to provide actual interview experience followed by immediate performance evaluation.

### **Job Fairs:**

Southeast Tech hosts a number of career fairs each year. ALL students are encouraged to attend regardless of graduation date. Employers come to campus to interview candidates for positions within their organizations. Employers are also welcome to visit with students in the commons on campus.

The Career Center also collaborates with area organizations on off campus career fairs. The BIG Job Fair is held each year in the Spring and Southeast Tech students are invited for FREE. Watch for the Career Services Weekly Announcements email for event information.



### **Additional Partnerships:**

Southeast Tech partners with other organizations to assist students and graduates with job preparedness and placement.

### **South Dakota Department of Labor**

The South Dakota Department of Labor provides training and education to help individuals attain sustainable employment by providing various services by assisting with a job search, career exploration, training, etc.

Contact:

SD Department of Labor  
811 East 10<sup>th</sup> Street Dept 41, Sioux Falls, SD 57106  
605-367-5300

### **Dress for Success**

Southeast Tech is a referral agency for the services provided by Dress for Success. Their purpose is to offer long-lasting solutions that enable women to break the cycle of poverty. Dress for Success is part of global movement for change, empowering women to obtain safer and better futures. They provide each client with professional attire to secure employment and offer additional assistance with job search tools to furnish a women with confidence while searching for employment. View more information online at <https://siouxfalls.dressforsuccess.org/>.

Contact: Student Success Center for a referral

### **Multi-Cultural Center**

The Multi-Cultural Center in Sioux Falls provides FREE assistance for immigration and refugees entering the workforce. They can assist with the job search, interview techniques, and understanding U.S work rules and culture. View more information online at [www.sfmcc.org](http://www.sfmcc.org).

Contact:

Multi-Cultural Center  
515 N Main Ave, Sioux Falls, SD 57105  
605-367-7401



# Career Exploration Assessment

If you are unsure of the major you originally selected or want to explore available careers, Southeast Tech can provide you access to an online assessment to assist you with program and career explorations.

1. Create your account through STInet > Student > Career Services > Career Exploration Assessments or directly using <https://www.FocusCareer2.com/Portal/Register.cfm?SID=1347>.
2. Once you complete the registration, you will have access to the various resources provided. Complete the Self Assessment section and view the Explore the Possibilities section for the most pivotal career exploration information. Here is a snippet of what it would look like:

## Welcome!

### Southeast Tech Career Services Assessments

Let's get started developing your personalized career and education plans!

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My Career Planning Readiness

[START OVER](#) [REVIEW](#) [RESULTS](#)



My Academic Strengths

[START OVER](#) [REVIEW](#) [RESULTS](#)

### Self Assessment

Discover majors and occupations that match your personal attributes

 <p><b>Work Interest Assessment</b> 100%</p>	<p><b>RESULTS</b> Review Start Over</p>	 <p><b>Values Assessment</b> 100%</p>	<p><b>RESULTS</b> Review Start Over</p>
 <p><b>Personality Assessment</b> 100%</p>	<p><b>RESULTS</b> Review Start Over</p>	 <p><b>Skills Assessment</b> 100%</p>	<p><b>RESULTS</b> Review Start Over</p>
 <p><b>Leisure Assessment</b> 100%</p>	<p><b>RESULTS</b> Review Start Over</p>	<p><b>Combine Assessments</b> 5/5 Completed</p> 	

### Explore the Possibilities

Use these tools for ongoing career and education exploration

What can I do with a major in ... at Southeast Technical Institute? ↻

Explore any Area of Study ↻

Explore any Occupation ↻

Explore Occupations by Job Family ↻

Compare 2 Occupations Side by Side ↻



- In the Exploring the Possibilities section, you will be able to view “What you can do with a major in...at Southeast Technical Institute.” You can view the occupations associated with the program areas/degrees/majors at Southeast Tech. You will also notice that there is a “light bulb” next to the area that is a suggested occupation for you based on the results of the earlier assessments when you complete the assessment provided:

**What can I do with a major in at Southeast Technical Institute**

Filter Results
SEE LEGEND

PROGRAMS OF STUDY	SAVED	SUGGESTED
Accounting <span>ASSOC</span> Accounting <span>ASSOC</span>	-	-
Administrative Assisting and Secretarial Science <span>DIP</span> <span>ASSOC</span> Administrative Assistant <span>ASSOC</span> Office Assistant <span>DIP</span>	-	-
Animation, Interactive Technology, Video Graphics and Special Effects . <span>ASSOC</span> Digital Media Production Technology <span>ASSOC</span>	-	💡
Architectural Engineering Technology . <span>ASSOC</span> Architectural Engineering Technology <span>ASSOC</span>	-	💡
Autobody/Collision and Repair Technology <span>DIP</span> <span>ASSOC</span> Collision Repair and Refinish Technology <span>DIP</span> <span>ASSOC</span>	-	-
Automobile/Automotive Mechanics Technology <span>DIP</span> <span>ASSOC</span> Automotive Technology <span>DIP</span> <span>ASSOC</span>	-	-
Banking and Financial Support Services . <span>ASSOC</span> Financial Services: Banking <span>ASSOC</span>	-	-

Name of program area/major/degree at Southeast Tech

Name of occupation area, click on this to view more information about occupation

- As you are viewing the various major and occupations, you will notice there is an opportunity to save majors and occupations. Feel free to save some.
- In the “Create a Plan to Achieve Your Objectives” students can state their plan and save/print for future review.
- Finally, move into the “Career Porfolio” section. View that information and click on the “review and print your portfolio.” This will create a summary of the results.
- You can also view the last section called “Recommended Tools & Websites.” Here are links that may be useful to view when students are searching for employment. There are local job search engines, like Southeast Tech’s job posting site and South Dakota Department of Labor job postings, as well as access to various national job boards.

**After completion of the career exploration assessments, you can schedule a follow up session with the Career Center to assist with interpretation of your results.**



## Career Connections

Southeast Tech Career Connections is another way to explore the careers and another location for additional career services resources. It is most commonly used for **JOB** and **INTERNSHIP** postings. Here is where employers post jobs that they specifically want Southeast Tech students to know about including **ON CAMPUS** jobs. The Career Center updates this resource every day.

### Southeast Tech Career Connections can assist you with the following:

- Job and Internship Postings
- Profile – option to make public profile to allow for employer recruitment
- Documents – upload résumé, cover letter, reference sheet, portfolio, etc.
- Employer Directory – view what employers connect with the Southeast Tech campus
- On-Campus Career Events – job fairs and workshops
- Off-Campus Events – Career Center staff will inform you of such events
- Resources – résumé examples, career exploration, salary expectations, etc.

**Create your account on STInet > Student > Career Services > Job and Internship Postings through Southeast Tech Career Connections or <https://southeasttech-csm.symplicity.com/students>.**

The screenshot shows a web interface for Southeast Tech Career Connections. On the left is a dark blue navigation sidebar with the 'SOUTHEAST TECH' logo and menu items: Home, Jobs, Profile, Documents, Events, Employers, Resources, Calendar, and My Account. The main content area has a search bar at the top. Below it is a header for 'Student Test' (graduating May 2015) with a 'Careers' banner and a 'Profile 16% complete' indicator. The user's email 'mandy.frey@southeasttech.edu' is shown. The 'News Feed' contains three announcements: 1) 'Southeast Tech On Campus Jobs' for Fall and Spring 2017-2018; 2) 'Summer Career Activities by Department of Labor' from June 8th to July 27th; 3) 'Getting Started' with a list of instructions: 'Welcome to Southeast Tech Career Connections! Here students/alumni may: View the large employer directory for contact information for area employers, Explore job postings, RSVP for Career Fairs, RSVP for Career Services Workshops, Share your resume with employers recruiting at our school. Get started by completing your "Profile" and uploading a Resume using "Documents".'



## Profile on Career Connections

Career Connections allows students to create a profile. This profile is unique to you and should be professional. This profile should match your résumé. The profile allows you more space and a unique way to showcase your qualifications.

This profile will remain viewable to you and you alone UNLESS you decide to make it public. You have access to change the security setting to PUBLIC. If you change to public, than anyone who knows your URL can access your profile information. This could be beneficial if you want to be recruited by potential employers without applying for a job. If you choose this option, your URL would be [www.southeasttech-csm.symplicity.com/profiles/firstname.lastname](http://www.southeasttech-csm.symplicity.com/profiles/firstname.lastname).

### Public Profile Tips

- Complete as much of the profile as possible
- Remain professional
- Check for capitalization, grammar, spelling, punctuation, and all typos
- *Keep in mind – if you make your profile public, it is public and does make you more susceptible to illegitimate employers and scams.*



# Conducting the Search

Most Southeast Tech graduates who work hard at finding a job are successful. Perseverance, determination, and a good education do pay off. If you are willing to apply yourself, here's how to get started finding a position you want.

## Job Search Strategies

*This section offers descriptions of the most commonly used and successful job search strategies.*

**Electronic Job Search:** In recent years, technology has made an incredible impact on job hunting. The internet offers unlimited resources to assist in your search. Southeast Tech encourages your first electronic job search to be through Southeast Tech Career Connections. When employers contact Southeast Tech about a job opportunity, it will be posted on Career Connections. Even after you graduate, you still have access to Career Connections.

**Employer Websites:** Many employers list job openings on their website. Additionally, many provide an opportunity to submit a résumé online. By becoming familiar with growing companies and types of employers, you can use the internet to your advantage.

**Internships – Volunteer – Part Time Jobs:** Working for an organization in an internship, volunteer or a part time employment situation is an excellent way to gain insight, experience, and skills in your targeted field. It could result in continued employment after graduation.

**Cold Calls:** Identify a number of employers you would like to work for, visit them, and make contact with a hiring representative to inquire about job openings. This can be useful in a small-town setting where casual contacts are normal. *Keep in mind – be professional in communication, appearance – make a good impression!*

**Human Resources Departments:** Most medium to large companies have Human Resource departments, designed to do initial screening of candidates who are then referred to other departments for interviews and selection. Always make a favorable impression because often they can influence hiring decisions.

**Mailings and Targeted Communication:** This method markets you through mail and telephone contacts, concentrating on people, fields or areas where the potential seems the greatest for being hired. You may find some employer information from Career Connections. This is where you would send your cover letter and résumés to employers.

**Employment Agencies:** Private employment agencies assist clients and employers for a fee. Costs vary but are usually 10-20% of the first year's salary. Consider ONLY employment agencies where the EMPLOYER PAYS the fee. The quality of services can vary widely so it is important to screen carefully to find a reputable agency.

**NOTE:** Do NOT consider an employment agency that only provides "JOB SEARCH" assistance for a FEE! You can get that from the Career Center for FREE!



## Networking

Networking is considered by many to be the most successful job search strategy. I'm sure you've heard "it's not WHAT you know, but WHO you know." A well-maintained and well-utilized network can lead to unadvertised job openings you would not have discovered on your own. However, it is important to remember who you know can get you the interview, but it's what you know that gets you the job.

Start networking with people you know well, other students in class, instructors, and advisors. Ask them to pass on any job openings they hear about.

Attend JOB FAIRS. You will visit with potential employers about job opportunities and gain contact information to pursue in the future.

**Social Media:** Many people see online networking as a great way to begin building relationship with potential colleagues and employers. The following are the three most common social media sites used for networking. If used correctly, social networking sites can help you cultivate and maintain a positive, professional online presence.

**LinkedIn** is the most common online professional networking site and has much to offer if used properly. Keep in mind these tips:

- Complete your profile.
- Business etiquette still applies – be polite and personalize your invitations
- Use to research an employer before an interview – research interviewer if possible
- Search for job openings under the "Jobs" tab

**Facebook** provides a venue for personal networking, but that doesn't mean you don't have to be careful about what you post. Potential employers frequently look at the personal website of a job seeker.

- Edit your privacy settings to make your profile as private as possible, but still consider whether what you are posting can be considered offensive. Avoid inappropriate language and/or photos altogether. Be sure to review old posts and photos and un-tag yourself if harmful to your job search.
- Utilize Facebook in your job search. Let your friends know that you are looking for a job and how they can help you. However, be careful about sharing your job search if currently employed.
- Many businesses now have their own Facebook pages. "Like" the pages of companies and organizations that interest you. These pages are also potential resources as you research before a job interview and search for job openings.

**Twitter** is another personal site that can be useful. The same rules of etiquette and appropriateness apply.

- "Follow" users who share your same interests and companies/organizations that you support or are relevant to your job search.
- Post your own tweets, but always make certain the content is appropriate/professional.



## Job Fairs

Attending a job fair provides you an opportunity to:

- Collect information from potential employers
- Learn more about potential career paths
- Make contact to build a professional network
- Develop your professional communication skills on how to talk to an employer
- Learn more about available internships and employment opportunities

**ALL** students should attend job fairs even if they are not looking for a job immediately or already have a job lined up for after graduation. It is a great networking experience and you never know what opportunities you could be missing out on!

**BEFORE:** Take some time to prepare for the job fair:

- Register for the job fair – you can RSVP to all Southeast Tech job fairs on Career Connections. As part of the RSVP process, you will be asked to upload your résumé. If you RSVP, you will be able to see what employers will be in attendance and the employers can see your résumé. You will stand out when you visit the employer’s table.
- Research the employers
- Prepare your “sales pitch”:
  - Give your name
  - Mention the job you’re looking for
  - State your qualifications – education, skills, experience
  - Offer your unique selling point – what sets you apart from the competition
- Create or update your résumé
- Dress appropriately for the industry – dress for success!

**DURING:** Arrive early. Get a list of the employers if possible and plan your order.

- Visit with all the employers – Southeast Tech hosts career fairs that are specific to your industry so it is safe to say that all employers there may be looking to hire your skill set. You never know what opportunities may exist.
- Carry a notebook and pen to take notes, but leave your bag at the door or in your car
- Provide your résumé to employers and collect business cards from employers
- Be enthusiastic – speak up and make eye contact – make a good impression!
- Visit individually with employers rather than with a number of classmates by your side to set yourself apart from the other attendees.

**AFTER:** Follow up with employers and make yourself memorable! Think of the job fair as your first contact with employers, not your last. Successful job hunters put in extra effort after the fair.

- Send thank you notes to the company representatives you visited with. Statistics show that only half of job hunters send thank-you notes so this extra effort will help you stand out. Hand-written note is more personal and memorable, but email would suffice.
- Mail a cover letter and résumé to all employers from the fair including the ones who were unable to speak with



## TIPS TO MAKE THE MOST OF THE FAIR:

- Research Career Connections to view a list of employers who are attending the fair to identify which employers to visit with. Try to choose employers who may be less familiar to increase your knowledge of careers and employers!
- Dress appropriately to make a good impression
- Create or update your résumé to show your college major and skills obtained in school
- Plan what you will say. A starting point could be:
  - “My name is Jack and I am a Landscape Design Technology student. I am exploring career fields and would like to learn how this skill can be applied in your organization.”
  - “My name is Sam and I am currently enrolled in the Diesel Technology program at Southeast Tech. Throughout my classes, I have learned how to... Would these skills be applied at your business?”
  - “Hello, I am graduating in May with a degree in Electroneurodiagnostic Technology and liked how your website was really clear in how you serve your patients. Can you tell me about the types of people you have working in your organization?”
- Request information from the company – job listing, business card, and of course the goodies!

### **Career Fair Myths for First Year Students:**

**Myth #1: “Career Fairs are just for students who are graduating.”**

**The truth:** There are numerous companies attending career fairs that are interested in hiring part-time employees and interns. Employers want the opportunity to speak with all students.

**Myth #2: “I’m too young to be at a Career Fair, I don’t even know what I would say to an employer!”**

**The truth:** Participating in a career fair as a first-year student is a great way to learn about companies you may want to work for in the future. Listen to other conversations to hear what is being discussed. Learning how to speak professionally with employers is a valuable, life-long skill!



# Cover Letter

A cover letter should always be included when mailing a résumé. This is your opportunity to stand out! The cover letter serves many purposes. It introduces you to the employer, tells them something about you, and why you are qualified for the job. The cover letter is a positive way to express your goals, personality and chances for success on the job.

## There are two types of letters commonly used in job hunting:

1. **Letter of Inquiry:** sent to potential employers when you are uncertain of any openings/vacancies. You are “inquiring” about a possible opportunity. Bring this to a job fair!
2. **Letter of Application:** sent when you know of a specific opening. The position was advertised in a newspaper/job listing or you were told of the opening.

## Parts of a cover letter:

- **Identification** – lets the employer know what position you are applying for and how you heard about the opening
- **Statement** – highlights your skills and abilities in relation to the job you are applying for
- **Selection** – states why you would like to work for this particular business
- **Request** – indicate whether or not you would like to schedule an appointment for an interview or more information regarding a career path

## Cover Letter Suggestions and Guidelines

- Regard the letter as a sales pitch and an attention getter. Identify the single most important reason why you should get further consideration for the job.
- Address the letter to a specific person by name and title. If unknown, contact the company for a general Human Resource query or address “Dear Hiring Manager”
  - Each letter should be tailored for a specific opening or inquiry.
  - Be sure to specifically indicate the position you are applying for and why you are qualified.
  - Should be a personal communication between you and the employer.
- Express your knowledge in the company.
- Mention why you would like to work for the company.
- Do not repeat, but highlight information in the résumé.
- Keep it short and to the point – no more than half a page; however, format it so it fits the page appropriately.
- You must have perfect grammar and spelling.
- Avoid starting each sentence with the word “I.”
- Sign your letter with blue ink to show originality.
- Provide appropriate contact information.



# Résumé

The résumé can be looked at as a brief commercial about yourself, an advertisement designed to sell **you** to potential employers. It lets the employer know why you are qualified for the job – why they should hire you! While a job application provides the basic facts, a résumé lets your personality show. Hiring officials only spend 15 to 45 seconds reading a résumé. Because of this fact, you want to make sure you have the best résumé possible.

## There are two types of résumé styles:

1. **Chronological:** provides a synopsis of your qualifications and abilities as demonstrated in past job descriptions. This format is most frequently used.
2. **Functional:** allows you to focus on transferable skills by highlighting abilities you have developed in many areas in addition to work. This style is helpful to those who have not worked in areas related to their current career objective.

## *Sections of a Résumé*

Required:

- **Heading** – full name, mailing address, telephone number and email placed at the top of résumé
- **Education** – list the highest level of education & most recent first. Include the name of the school, degree (Diploma or Associate of Applied Science), major, and the timeframe. If you feel your GPA is at a level you would like to share with a potential employer (generally above a 3.0), include it as a bullet in this section.
- **Work Experience** – start with most recent employer. For each job, include the name of the employer, city and state, job title, and description of duties/skills/abilities. List the duties, skills, and abilities in bullet form, not sentence/paragraph form. You can also include internships and volunteer work in this section or create its own section if you have enough information to share.
- **Skills** – For functional résumés, you will use this in place of an “experience” section. This will be the “meat” of your résumé and will include detailed descriptions of skills you have obtained from your education, experience, and activities. For chronological résumés and Southeast Tech students, a skills section is suggested. During your time at Southeast Tech, you will develop many skills that can be highlighted here.

Optional:

- **Military History (if applicable)** – include date of separation, highest rank and rate along with branch of service. Many times a functional résumé may be more applicable here.
- **Awards and Honors** – include scholarships, awards, and other accomplishments
- **Professional Memberships** – list memberships of any professional association along with any offices held: Student Government, Skills USA, SHRM, etc.

## Things to consider

- Candidates are often screened out on the basis of poor letter and/or résumé.
- Employers don't read résumés; they skim them! Résumé = advertisement
- The majority of résumés sent to employers are excellent, just like yours!
- Your accompanying cover letter can make the difference – most people devote their greatest effort to the résumé.
- In both letter and résumé, emphasize your qualities and skills.



### ***Résumé Format:***

- Length should be one page, but never exceed two pages. Give it a KISS (Keep it Short and Simple).
- Make margins (top, bottom, left and right) approx. 1-inch.
- There should be plenty of white space and it should be easy to read.
- Font size should be 10 or 12 using conservative font styles.
- Use black fonts that are easy to read.
- Layout should be easy to follow and information easy to locate.
- Appearance should be neat and clean, no errors or corrections.
- Use standard 8½" by 11" paper.
- Cover letter paper should match résumé paper.

### ***Résumé Content:***

- Show responsibility and results that relate to the needs of the company.
- Give examples of accomplishments and the ability to solve problems.
- Show statistics and numbers.
- Be honest, positive and specific.
- Refrain from using personal pronouns such as "I" to refer to yourself.
- Avoid jargon and abbreviations. Don't use sentence format, instead use action statements and a few words with lots of impact.
- Include volunteer experience, languages, internships, and certificates that relate to the position.
- Research the company and know what information would impress them.
- Use industry terminology.
- Repetitive statements should be avoided.

### ***General Tips:***

- Write your own versus using a template. Many candidates use templates and résumés tend to look the same. Start by writing down a list of everything you've done, your work record, education and all your accomplishments.
- Leave off salary information and only provide it when requested.
- Do not mass mail résumés – personalize each résumé to the specific job you are applying for
- Never provide names of references on the résumé. Either attach a reference sheet or provide references when requested.
- Do not staple or fold your résumé.
- A cover letter should always be included when mailing your résumé.

### ***Positive Phrases:***

- Completely responsible for
- Successfully implemented
- Improved output percentage
- Seeking a challenging position in
- Responsible for the operation of
- Planned and directed
- Extensive experience
- Coordinated and prepared proposals
- Very personable and tactful in achieving objectives
- Developed programs, procedures
- Skilled in
- Highly skilled in effectively developing
- Well versed
- Rated as outstanding in human relations and objective attainment
- Wide range of skills including
- Action oriented
- Extremely flexible
- Responsible for all phases of
- Planned and implemented
- Ability to work well with all types of people
- Experience in supervision
- Competent in both oral and written communications



## Tips for Creating an e-Friendly Résumé

Gone are the days of handwritten cover letters, typewritten résumés and hand-delivered job applications. Given the increasing number of online job boards that require Web-based applications, many employers don't want a hard copy of your résumé; instead, they'll ask you to submit an electronic résumé by email or online. Always have paper copies to bring to job fairs and interviews!

- Use common font like Times New Roman or Arial and font size around 12
- Approximately 1 inch margins
- Save 2 documents – one as a Word Document and another as a PDF
  - Send the PDF document to the employer
  - Keep the Microsoft Word document for editing for future employment opportunities

Some companies use scanning software to eliminate unqualified applicants. The software is looking for key words and phrases, education, experiences, skills and abilities, etc. It's important to speak industry language and refer to the job description to watch for those key phrases!

## Reference Selection and Etiquette

The phrase "references available upon request" is no longer encouraged. This phrase takes up valuable real estate where you could use the space to share your skills and qualifications. It is assumed that you'll be able to produce 3-5 references who can validate your experience and key skills. Normally, this will be requested after an interview.

While many employers will not contact everyone on your list, it is important to thoughtfully select your references. Positive feedback from a reference will help your job search, while a negative comment or evaluation or an impersonal letter of recommendation can harm your image and reputation. Think carefully about the kind of reference you need and someone who knows you and/or your accomplishments well and can attest positively to your qualification, work ethic, and skills. Examples of appropriate references include previous supervisors, co-workers, instructors, mentors, or coaches. Do NOT include family members or personal friends on your list of references. Restrict these references to education and work-related experiences.

Be sure to ASK individuals if they are willing to serve as a reference for you **before** you mention their names to prospective employers! After receiving permission from your reference, make sure you have all contact information and know their current position title. Keep this information current. Let your references know what kind of position you are seeking; perhaps they know of job openings or places of employment that you have not considered. **Always thank your references!**

Here is an example of how you might format a reference page:

**Reference Name**  
**Current Title or Relation to you**  
**Street Address**  
**City, State Zip Code**  
**Phone Number**  
**E-Mail Address**



# IDENTIFY YOUR SKILLS

One survey of employers found that 90 percent of the people they interviewed could not explain their skills. They could not answer the question “Why should I hire you?”

Knowing what you are good at is very important during an interview. It also helps you decide what type of job you will enjoy and do well. Most people think of “skills” as job related skills. A secretary, for example, needs to type. But everyone has other skills that are very important to succeed on a job. There are three basic types of skills: Job Related, Adaptive, and Transferable. Best résumés will be able to showcase skills from all 3 categories.

## **Adaptive Skills**

- ⇒ Describe your personality
- ⇒ Allow you to adapt to new situations
- ⇒ Make you a good worker

## **Transferable Skills**

- ⇒ Can be used in a variety of jobs
- ⇒ Often called “universal” skills
- ⇒ Can transfer from one job to another

## **Job Related Skills**

- ⇒ Required for a particular job
- ⇒ Usually require some training or experience
- ⇒ Often used for screening applicants

## ***The Top Skills Employers Want***

To illustrate that employers highly value adaptive and transferable skills, here is a list of the top skills that employers want in the people they hire. This information came from a study of employers conducted jointly by the US Department of Labor and the American Association of Counseling and Development. Note that all skills are either adaptive or transferable.

1. Willing to learn
2. Basic academic skill in reading, writing, and computation
3. Listening and oral communication
4. Creative thinking and problem solving
5. Self-esteem and goal setting
6. Personal and career development
7. Interpersonal skills, negotiation, and teamwork
8. Organizational effectiveness and leadership



## ***Eight Keys to Employability***

### **1. PERSONAL VALUES**

#### **Valued Workers:**

- Are honest
- Have a good self-esteem and positive self-image
- Demonstrate emotional stability
- Exhibit a good attitude

### **2. PROBLEM SOLVING AND DECISION- MAKING**

#### **Valued Workers:**

- Are flexible
- Are creative and innovative
- Can adapt to changing demands of a job
- Can reason and make objective judgments
- Keep their mind on several parts of a job at a time

### **3. RELATIONS WITH OTHER PEOPLE**

#### **Valued Workers:**

- Work well with others
- Accept authority and supervision
- Accept constructive criticism
- Are team players
- Are friendly
- Are consistent in their relations with people
- Are cooperative
- Accept assignments pleasantly
- Are tactful
- Accept all types of people
- Respect the rights and property of other people
- Have leadership qualities

### **4. COMMUNICATION SKILLS**

#### **Valued Workers:**

- Ask questions – seek help when needed
- Notify supervisors of absences and reasons
- Clearly express them self
- Listen well

### **5. TASK RELATED SKILLS**

#### **Valued Workers:**

- Complete work on time

- Can follow oral, visual, written and multi-step directions
- Are not distracting or distractible
- Stick with a task and keep busy
- Care for tools and materials
- Are accurate
- Constantly improve their performance

### **6. MATURITY**

#### **Valued Workers:**

- Work well without supervision
- Are reliable and dependable
- Accept responsibility
- Don't let their personal life interfere with work
- Are willing to perform extra work
- Show pride in their work
- Show initiative
- Remain calm and self-controlled
- Demonstrate maturity in thoughts & actions
- Are patient
- Are assertive when necessary
- Show self-confidence

### **7. HEALTH AND SAFETY HABITS**

#### **Valued Workers:**

- Observe safety rules
- Maintain a good work pace and production rate
- Practice good personal hygiene & in good health
- Dress appropriate and are well groomed
- Perform well under stress and tension
- Have appropriate physical stamina and tolerance for the kind of work they are doing

### **8. COMMITMENT TO JOB**

#### **Valued Workers:**

- Are punctual and have good attendance records
- Observe all organization policies
- Consider their work more than a job
- Are interest and enthusiastic
- Want to learn more
- Give their best efforts consistently and strive to please



# Interview

Always remember, “Résumés get interviews, *interviews* get jobs!” Preparing for your interview and practicing your skills are the most important steps in getting a job! Your role is to provide adequate and accurate information to assist the employer in evaluating your skills, experiences, goals, objectives, and personal traits. Your other role is to listen and obtain information from the employer regarding the position and work environment.

## **SEVEN PHASES OF AN INTERVIEW**

### BEFORE YOU GO TO THE INTERVIEW

- Research the company
- Research common interview questions
- Check your appearance – dress professionally as fits the position/industry
- Get there early – do a trail run if necessary
- Be conscious of waiting room behavior – the receptionist may offer feedback

### OPENING MOVES

- Make a good impression
- Initial greeting – offer a firm handshake
- Good posture
- Use a strong voice
- Make eye contact
- Avoid distracting habits
- Establish a relationship

### THE INTERVIEW ITSELF

- Be prepared to answer tough questions

### CLOSING THE INTERVIEW

- Summarize at the end
- Let the interviewer know you’re interested in the job
- Request a call-back date

### FOLLOW-UP

- Send a thank you note within 24 hours
- Make notes
- Follow up as promised

### NEGOTIATING SALARY AND BENEFITS

- Never negotiate salary until you are being offered the job

### MAKING A FINAL DECISION

- Consider the positives and negatives of accepting the job if offered



# Questions Employers Ask Candidates

Employers ask questions during the interview with a special purpose in mind. The manner in which you respond, and the thought given to responses, will determine if you are invited for a follow-up interview or a job offer. Always provide a thoughtful descriptive response versus simple answers to questions – make it more of a conversation!

## Sample Interview Questions

- Tell me about yourself. Provide an overview of your education and relevant work experience.
- What are your greatest strengths? Weaknesses? For strengths, talk about those most useful to the company and use examples! For weaknesses, relate a weakness that could be a strength.
- What qualifications do you have that will make you successful in your career?
- Do you consider yourself a leader or a follower? Why?
- Give an example of your experiences in a teamwork environment.
- Give an example of how you work under pressure.
- Briefly describe your employment history.
- Why are you interested in this organization?
- What are your short-term goals? Long term goals? Express desire to grow in your job through learning, experience, and accomplishments.
- What major problem have you encountered and how did you deal with it?
- Describe the relationship that should exist between a supervisor and subordinates.
- What kind of work environment do you prefer?
- Give me an example of a time you had to go above and beyond the call of duty to get a job done.
- Give an example of effective use of your leadership skills.
- Give an example of effective use of your organizational skills.
- Why should we hire you?

**\* Knowing the job requirements is VERY helpful here. Match your experience and skills to the job description for the position!**

## Key Points to Remember

- Be on time!
- Be patient if process takes longer than expected.
- Always check your appearance before being greeted by the interviewer.
- Initiate a firm handshake and introduce yourself in a confident manner.
- Provide thoughtful and descriptive responses!
- Match your experiences and qualifications to the job description.
- Present yourself in a positive, logical, and confident manner.
- Ask intelligent questions about the job, company, or industry. **Don't** ever *not* ask any questions – it shows a lack of interest.
- Close the interview by telling the interviewer(s) that you want the job and ask about the next step in the process.



# Questions To Ask Interview Team

As the interview draws to a close, the interviewer will ask you if you have any questions. Having well thought-out questions will further impress the interviewer. Your questions should show a sincere interest in this particular employer, an awareness of employer's needs, and how you can fulfill those needs.

\* Questions regarding salary and benefits are inappropriate during the initial screening interview.

1. If hired, would I be filling a newly created job or replacing someone?
2. Was my predecessor promoted?
3. Would you describe a typical workday and the things I'd be doing?
4. What duties are most important for this job?
5. How would I be trained or introduced to the job?
6. How is the job important to the company?  
How does it contribute?
7. What are the department's goals for the year?
8. Who are the other people I'd be working with and what do they do?
9. Can someone in this job be promoted?  
If so, to what position?
10. How will I get feedback on my job performance?
11. If hired, would I report directly to you or someone else?
12. Does another corporation own this company?
13. What major markets does this company compete in?
14. Are sales up or down over the last year?
15. If you were to offer me this job, where could I expect to be five years from today?
16. Do you think I'll find this job to be challenging and stimulating?
17. Could you give me a tour? I'd enjoy seeing where your people work.
18. I want this job. Could I have a 30-day trial period to prove myself?
19. What kind of benefits does this company offer?
20. When will you be making your final decision?
21. How much travel is involved?
22. Is there a lot of teamwork?
23. Will I be encouraged to attend professional conferences?
24. What is the next step in the interview process?
25. Could you describe your training program?
26. What kind of assignments could I expect in the first six months?



# Follow Up Letter

Within 24 hours of having a job interview, send a thank you letter to the person(s) who interviewed you. Fewer than half of people who go on a job interview bother to send a note thanking the interviewer for their time and consideration. A thank you letter is often what makes an employer choose one job applicant over another and keeps your name fresh in the employer's mind.

The following should be included in a thank you letter:

- Name the job you interviewed for and the date of the interview.
- Help the interviewer to remember who you are. Bring up something positive that happened or was said during the interview. Make it personal.
- Show your strong interest in the job. Be enthusiastic.
- Did you forget to add something? Do you have qualifications you didn't tell the interviewer about? Do it now.
- Sell yourself. Work on what you know to be the employer's needs. Tell the interviewer of your ability to answer these needs.
- Offer to give more information and to come in for another interview.
- Thank the interviewer for the interview or for considering you for the job.

If there are multiple people conducting the interview, such as a panel interview, send a separate thank you letter to each person. Use a plain white paper, 8½" x 11", for your letter. Type it or write it in black ink. It should have a neat and clean appearance. There should be no mistakes in grammar, spelling, or punctuation. Have someone read it for mistakes before you mail it.

# Evaluate Job Offer

A job offer is what the interview process is all about. This is the reward for the hours spent preparing for and excelling in the interview. Now you have an important decision to make. Do you accept or reject the offer? No matter what you decide, a decision is required and demands prompt action!

Most employers will expect your decision within a short period of time. If additional time is needed to consider more than one offer, it is appropriate to ask the employer for an extension. Depending on their situation they may allow you a few days to a few weeks to give your response.

If you decide to **ACCEPT** the offer, make sure you understand all of the details of the offer:

- Initial assignment and salary meet your satisfaction
- Starting date is understood
- Location of your assignment
- Opportunities for future professional growth

If you decide **TO NOT ACCEPT** an offer, respond in a timely manner letting the company know that the position isn't a fit for you at this time.



# Appendix

In the Appendix of the Career Services Resource Guide, you will find examples of Cover Letters, Résumés, Reference page, and Follow Up Letters. Use these as guides to assist with the development of your own professional correspondence.

*\*Some examples may be from previous Southeast Tech students who volunteered to showcase their work. Names and contact information have been altered to protect the identity of the student.*



## Cover Letter Example

October 8, 2015

Ms. Karin K. Boom, Hiring Manager  
Residential Department  
Sioux Empire Electricians  
100 West Electrician Hwy  
Sioux Falls, SD 57100

Dear Ms. Boom:

This letter is in response to your ad located on Southeast Tech's Career Services website for the Residential Electrician position at Sioux Empire Electricians. I am enclosing my résumé for consideration.

This position caught my attention because of my interest in the industry. A review of my résumé will show that I've completed my Associate of Applied Science degree in Electrician at Southeast Tech in Sioux Falls. Throughout my education, I obtained knowledge in residential, commercial, industrial, and agricultural operations including installing and maintaining electrical systems. I have multiple years of experience in customer service roles so I'm prepared to work for an organization that prides itself in quality service to its clients.

Having looked at your website, it is clear that Sioux Empire Electricians provides a wide variety of services to its clients. Being a recent graduate, I'm excited to enter this industry. I would like to bring that energy and commitment to your growing company.

I am available for an interview at your convenience and would appreciate the opportunity to further discuss this position with you. Please contact me at 605-123-4567 or [Chris.smith@schoolname.edu](mailto:Chris.smith@schoolname.edu).

Sincerely,

*Chris Smith*

Chris Smith  
100 East 1<sup>st</sup> Street  
Sioux Falls, SD 57100  
605-123-4567  
[Chris.smith@schoolname.edu](mailto:Chris.smith@schoolname.edu)



## *Chronological Résumé Example*

Chris Smith  
100 East 1<sup>st</sup> Street, Sioux Falls, SD 57100  
605-123-4567  
chris.smith@schoolname.edu

### **SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS**

- 3 years of experience and education in Business Administration support
- Experience performing administrative duties for at least five regional managers
- Experience processing payroll transactions
- Completion of an Associate of Applied Science Degree in Business Administration (May 2018)
- Dependable, responsible, and committed to excellence and success

### **EDUCATION**

Southeast Technical Institute, Sioux Falls, SD August 2015 – May 2017  
Electrician, Associate of Applied Science

- Install and maintain electrical systems for residential, commercial, and agricultural operations
- Plan layout and installation of electrical wiring, equipment, or fixtures, based on job specifications and local codes
- Connect wires to circuit breakers, transformers, or other components

South Dakota State University, Brookings, SD August 2014 – May 2015  
Agricultural Science

### **WORK EXPERIENCE**

Dock Handler May 2015 - Present  
FedEx, Sioux Falls, SD

- Perform freight handling using appropriate motorized and manual equipment, including but not limited to: forklift, pallet jack and hand truck
- Secure freight inside trailers using appropriate tools and supplies
- Assist customers with freight and freight documentation as needed

Waiter September 2013 – August 2015  
Applebees, Brookings, SD

- Waited on tables and answered phones for takeout orders/delivery
- Monitored and recorded accurate inventory supplies
- Trained new staff with computer software and improving customer service skills

### **SKILLS**

Extensive use of hand tools, power tools including cable reels and stripping tools  
Computer Skills: Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint; plus FileMaker, Quark, Photoshop  
Foreign Language: conversational Spanish

### **ADDITIONAL**

Volunteered as mentor for Big Brother/Big Sister  
Recipient of Build Dakota Scholarship



## Functional Résumé Example

Natalie Johnson  
1234 Park Ave. Apt 15, Tallahassee, FL 32303  
(850) 555-700  
Example123@gmail.com

### EDUCATION

Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL  
Bachelor of Science, Biology, August 2010  
G.P.A. 3.55 with Honors, Dean's List

### HEALTHCARE EXPERIENCE

Healthcare Services, Tallahassee, FL 6/07 - Present  
*Self-Employed*

- Initiated my own business working with mentally handicapped adults
- Rehabilitate clients on a mental, emotional, and physical level
- Develop and incorporate daily routines that utilize physical and mental exercises

Starlight Child Center, Tallahassee, FL 01/06 – 8/06  
*Counselor*

- Mentored and advised children ages 3 – 11
- Prepared programs integrating physical and mental activities for youth success

Bobby E. Leach Center, Tallahassee, FL 12/04 – 12/05  
*Counselor*

- Successfully refined fitness goals and introduced proper technique to over 150 clients
- Motivated and enhanced client's work-life balance by incorporating physical and fitness into their daily routine

### MARKETING AND SALES EXPERIENCE

Vector Marketing, Orlando, FL 4/03 – 8/03  
*Sales Associate*

- Effectively met sales goals for quarter
- Worked sales and marketing functions for CUTCO product

Mail Boxes Etc. – UPS, Orlando, FL 8/02 – 8/03  
*Counselor*

- Responsible for generating store marketing plans and refining customer service processes

### VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

- **Gretchen Everhart School:** Aide to children with a wide range of mental disabilities
- **International Medical Outreach:** Medical Mission trip serving a third-world population
- **Clairbridge Nursing Home:** Program facilitator for elderly
- **Hospital:** Shadowed physicians and assisted with daily routines

### ACTIVITIES & HONORS

American Medical Student Association (V.P)  
F.S.U Career Center Advisory Board

Golden Key International Honor Society  
Seminole Torchbearers



## *Follow Up Letter Sample*

Chris Smith

October 8, 2015

Ms. Karin K. Boom, Hiring Manager  
Residential Department  
Sioux Empire Electricians  
100 West Electrician Hwy  
Sioux Falls, SD 57100

Dear Ms. Boom:

Thank you for visiting with me today about your position as a Residential Electrician. You gave me a good picture of what would be expected of someone filling this position.

I believe I can make a contribution to the continuing growth of Sioux Empire Electricians. I want to make a long-term commitment to my place of employment, and the people I met from your organization impressed me as both professional and knowledgeable. It is with people such as these that I would like to work.

Please contact me if you need any additional information or wish to schedule a second interview. Once again, thank you for considering me for the service representative position.

Sincerely,

*Chris Smith*

Chris Smith  
100 East 1<sup>st</sup> Street  
Sioux Falls, SD 57100  
605-123-4567  
Chris.smith@schoolname.edu



## *Professional Reference Page Example*

Chris Smith  
100 East 1<sup>st</sup> Street, Sioux Falls, SD 57100  
605-123-4567  
chris.smith@schoolname.edu

### **Professional References:**

Cindy Anderson  
Manager  
101 East Sunny Drive  
Sioux Falls, SD 57101  
605-123-4567  
[Cindy.anderson@company.com](mailto:Cindy.anderson@company.com)

Bob Turner  
Controller  
411 South 1<sup>st</sup> Street  
Tea, SD 57100  
605-123-4567  
[Bob.turner@company.com](mailto:Bob.turner@company.com)

Nancy Larson  
Surgical Technologist  
100 North Happy Lane  
Miami, FL 60100  
123-456-7890  
[Nancy.larson@company.com](mailto:Nancy.larson@company.com)

