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  Central High, Room 365

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  Cato I, Room 125

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  704.330.4562
  Harper IV, Room 216

- **Harris Campus**
  704.330.4623
  Harris I, Room 1114

- **Levine Campus**
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[www.palmettoairbalance.com](http://www.palmettoairbalance.com)
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Visit our website to learn more!

cpcc.edu/career
As a child, you probably had dreams about what you wanted to be when you grew up. You might not be so sure now. It is difficult to sort through the tangle of career options, majors and opinions. Career counselors can help you determine the best path for you by guiding you through the Career Development Process. Through participation in career counseling, you obtain the knowledge and tools you need to:

- Learn more about yourself.
- Understand vital occupation information.
- Conduct reality checks.
- Plan education and training.
- Take advantage of experiential opportunities.

The steps that make up the Career Development Process contribute to solid career decisions and successful job searches within your field. Career counseling can also save you time and money. You are less likely to change majors repeatedly if you work with a counselor regarding career choice—especially early in your education.

Considering that the typical American works between 80,000 and 100,000 hours in a lifetime, finding and keeping satisfying work is important. Ever had a job that you disliked? Imagine doing that job for 80,000 hours or more!

Aside from the amount of time we spend at work, our jobs are tied closely to our identity. This fact is revealed by the way we often respond when someone asks us what we do for a living. We reply, “I am a firefighter,” or “I am a paralegal,” as if we were asked “What are you?”—not “What do you do?”

Because work is so important to us, the quality of our job situation affects us deeply. When things at the office are bad, the negative feelings have a tendency to follow us home. Job dissatisfaction can compromise our personal life or enrich it. When we love our job, we feel better about life in general.

Imagine the peace of mind that you can experience from having a career goal and knowing how to achieve it. You owe it to yourself to develop a career plan. Learn more by contacting us at career.services@cpcc.edu.
Job Shadowing and Information Appointments

Job shadowing and information appointments are an important part of determining whether or not a career is right for you. Job shadowing involves following and observing a professional who is in the field you are interested in. An information appointment/interview is a meeting with a professional in the field you are interested in to ask specific questions about the career, industry and culture of the field.

The benefit of job shadowing and informational appointments is that you get a feel for the daily realities of a job that you cannot learn from a website. Additionally, job shadowing and information appointments help build relationships with professionals in the field.

Just remember, these experiences are to learn whether a career is a good fit, not to inquire about specific job opportunities. Follow these steps to prepare for a successful job shadowing or information appointment experience.

1. **Identify people to meet.**

   Start with people you know: family, friends, faculty and neighbors. If this route proves unsuccessful, try other resources, like LinkedIn, Facebook or Twitter. You might also try connecting with professional associations, or review the Business Journal or Chamber of Commerce website to identify professionals in your field.

   If you need to reach out to a company where you do not have a personal connection, try contacting the human resources department or reach out directly to the department you are interested in.

   "Hello, I am ____, a student from Central Piedmont. I am interested in entering the marketing field and would like to talk with someone who might answer a few questions about this field. Can you suggest a person who is willing to help?"

   Remember, you are asking for a favor. While it is preferable to set up a face-to-face interview or job shadowing experience so you can see the environment the person works in, if the professional is busy you may need to schedule a phone interview instead.

   Don’t forget! It is important to keep track of your contacts. Write down the person’s name, title, company, phone number and email address.

2. **Research the field and the company’s role and prepare a list of questions.**

   Before your job shadowing or information appointment, take time to learn some information about the career to ask insightful questions. Write your questions out, and bring them with you in a nice folder or portfolio.

   - What do you like most/least about your work?
   - How did you get into this career?
   - What other careers or industries could you work in with your education and experience?
   - Can you describe a typical day?
   - What area of study do you recommend for someone pursuing this career field?
   - What is the employment outlook for this field? Do you expect the workplace to change in the next five years?
   - Can you suggest other people I might contact to learn more about the profession?

3. **Meet with your contact.**

   Job shadowing and informational interviewing give you a chance to make a good impression. Dress neatly and professionally and arrive five to 10 minutes early. When you first meet, shake hands confidently and introduce yourself. If bringing your résumé, do so only to receive feedback. Remember you are conducting research not interviewing for a job.

   Ask the questions you prepared. Take good notes, and respect the person’s schedule by ending the meeting on time. Thank the contact for his or her time and shake hands again.

4. **Finalize your thoughts and notes.**

   After you are finished, reflect on your experience and note any additional details from your discussion. Think about your reaction to the meeting, the work environment and what you learned about the profession.

5. **Send a thank you note.**

   Write and send a brief, personalized thank you note within 24 hours. A hand-written message on a nice thank you card will be valued greatly by the contact. Refer to the Thank You Letter Examples section.

6. **Talk to more than one person and evaluate what you learned.**

   Each person has unique experiences and opinions. It is advisable to conduct at least two information appointments or job shadowing experiences for each of your top-choice careers to hear a variety of perspectives. If, after meeting with several professionals, you do not think the occupation is a good match, reevaluate your list of occupations. Research more related occupations and schedule more information appointments.
No matter the format, your résumé is an important job search tool. Employers rely on them for vital information about applicants as they search for people to interview. Your résumé is often the first (and sometimes only) thing an employer sees, and it must interest the reader and stand out from hundreds of other documents. The best way to catch his or her attention is to provide information he or she needs and present it in a manner that is logical, easy-to-read and customized to the employer.

How do you know what an employer needs? Look at jobs the company has posted. Highlight the experience, education and skills that you have and the employer requires and prefers. Include matching items on your résumé in the appropriate place. Read about a company’s values and culture on its website to determine what education, skills and experience are likely to be desirable.

Standard résumé sections and content
- Your name, mailing address, phone and a professional-sounding email address
- A targeted objective or profile that tells the employer what you seek and what you can contribute
- Coverage of relevant education and training (school name, city and state, degree and major/program title and expected/actual graduation date)
- An experience section that helps you illustrate your accomplishments in relevant work, internship and volunteer settings (company/organization name, city and state, job title, start and end dates and bulleted, action-oriented job duty descriptions). To better illustrate accomplishments, use statistics when possible and appropriate
- Skills section that contains your relevant competencies and uses keywords from the job posting

Potential résumé sections and content
- Related coursework for in-progress degrees or unique education programs
- Relevant awards, honors and accomplishments
- Extracurricular and professional leadership activities in clubs and associations
- Licenses and certifications
- A separate military section
- Languages

Check the usefulness of each piece of content. Ask:
- Will this information help me achieve my objective?
- If it will, does the content stand out on my résumé?

Do not include personal information about you, your family, health, religious beliefs, political ideas or salary.

Waste neither your, nor a potential employer’s time with dishonesty. Résumés should contain truthful information. Recruiters check.

Content is important, but style is too. Formatting should be appropriate and applied consistently.

Bold
- Your name
- All section headings
- Job titles
- Degree/program names
- Positions held within clubs or organizations

Organize
- Show that you understand logical order of information. (We recommend that you start with the most closely related and noteworthy information.)
- List education and experience in reverse-chronological order—start with the most recent and work backward.
- Organize content so you can guide the reader through the résumé and reveal the reasons why you should be interviewed.
- Résumés should be no longer than two pages. The second page is acceptable, as long as the most relevant information is on the first page. The second page contains useful—but supplemental—information.

Flair?
Not much is required. Format just enough to catch recruiters’ attention and make it easy to read. Make your name the largest text on the résumé (size 16-18 is usually appropriate). Black ink is best, and no graphics or images are necessary.

Résumés feature a “just the facts, ma’am” approach and an assertive writing style. There is no need for complete sentences, passive statements (Responsible for), articles (a, an, the) and personal pronouns (I, me, my, we, etc.).

Final word
Spelling, grammar and punctuation must be flawless. Also, look out for typing mistakes. Employers have no tolerance for sloppy résumés. Use spell-check and get others to proofread.
Objectives & Summaries

Do you want to catch employers’ attention and get them to read through your résumé? Use an objective or summary to let recruiters know which specific job you are applying for. Your objective or summary statement can provide a glimpse of your important skills and/or experience, plus some adjectives that describe your work ethic.

The best objectives and summaries target employers’ needs directly and explicitly. Employers like to see that job seekers took the time to customize their résumé to the requirements listed in the job posting. The other résumé sections are used to help justify why the applicant is the best candidate for the job he or she wants.

Objectives

An objective is a short statement (usually one phrase) that you write to identify the job you are applying for.

Objectives typically work well for:
1. New graduates
2. Career changers
3. Job seekers using a functional résumé style

Objectives should be composed of three key ingredients:
1. Name of position
2. Name of company
3. Quick mention of relevant and notable skills, education and/or experience

Try filling in the underlined sections below
To obtain the __________ position at __________ utilizing my _______________, ___________ and ___________.

Examples:
To obtain the Customer Service position at Autobell utilizing my customer service experience, interpersonal skills and business management education.

To secure the Medical Assistant position at Johnson Family Practice utilizing my clinical, laboratory and administrative skills.

Note: You do not have to mention skills, education and experience in every objective—only when they are worthy of special attention should you include them.

What if you are attending a networking event or a career fair, and you do not have a specific job or company of interest? You always want to conduct research and learn as much as you can about the employers in attendance and the jobs they have available; however, there may be times when you need a generic objective statement.

Examples: Seeking a paralegal position using my strong research skills, attention to detail and ABA-approved paralegal certification.

Experienced retail sales associate seeking a buyer position that will take advantage of my knowledge of the industry and my certificate in marketing and retailing.

Summaries

Qualification summaries or profiles are a little longer. Job seekers use assertive, marketing-style writing to advertise their background to the employer.

Summaries are an excellent choice for individuals who have:
1. Multiple years of experience in a specific field
2. Accomplishments they wish to advertise
3. Developed skill sets

Try completing your own summary
Over ______ years experience as a ______________________ in _____________.

Examples:
Over four years experience as a Security Guard in a retail setting, specializing in loss prevention. Keen ability to read non-verbal cues, develop rapport quickly and diffuse situations. Personality that is detail oriented and investigative in nature. Proficient with technology and experience working with multiple surveillance systems. Developed current alert system, and continuously trains staff on proper usage and reporting procedures. Central Piedmont Community College student currently enrolled in the A.A.S., Criminal Justice degree program.

Creative and organized graphic designer with extensive experience providing effective and friendly client service. Knowledgeable in typography, Web design and printing processes. Effective project management and teamwork skills, specializing in expert usage of Illustrator, Photoshop and InDesign. Graduate of Advertising & Graphic Design degree program at Central Piedmont Community College, and very active in AIGA (national and Charlotte chapter).

For assistance, contact Career Services at cpcc.edu/career.
Marketing Your Skills

What is a skill?
A skill is an ability or talent you possess. You develop skills through many experiences, including your education and coursework, employment, community service and volunteer work and simply life experiences.

Why are skills important to employers?
Employers hire job applicants who possess the skills necessary to perform job duties, work well with coworkers and supervisors and succeed in an organization.

What are skills examples?
Check the list below to help you jumpstart a list of skills you have developed.

- Ability to multi-task
- Ability to work independently and in groups
- Ability to delegate responsibilities
- Analytical skills
- Computer skills (list)
- Conflict resolution/mediation skills
- Creativity
- Customer Service
- Detail-oriented
- Editing
- Follow directions
- Generate new ideas
- Interpersonal skills
- Perform tasks efficiently
- Language skills (list)
- Listening skills
- Lead groups and by example
- Meet deadlines
- Management experience
- Motivation skills
- Organizational skills
- Prioritize tasks
- Problem solving skills
- Public speaking
- Research skills
- Supervision experience
- Take initiative
- Time management
- Work well under pressure
- Writing skills

Where do I talk about my skills?

1. **On your résumé:** Create a skills section that clearly lists the skills this particular employer requests of candidates applying for the job. Many employers now use scanning software to scan your résumé for keywords before a person ever sees it. Use bullet points to list your skills. Organize them in order of importance to the job. Use descriptions to exemplify your expertise. Emphasize skills and keywords from the job posting to ensure your résumé makes the cut.

   Example: Proven customer service experience (awarded Sales Associate of the Month)

2. **In your cover letter:** Mention specific skills the employer describes in the job posting. Reference how or where you developed the skill(s).

   Example: Your job posting indicates a need for strong communication skills. In my current job, I am consistently recognized as an employee who demonstrates interpersonal skills when interacting with customers.

3. **During the interview:** Talk about skills you have used to complete particular tasks.

   Example: “The customer I was assisting was angry because he was dissatisfied with his purchase. I used patience and positive customer service to address his concern. Following proper protocol, I apologized for his experience and immediately responded to the customer’s request to speak to a manager. The customer voiced his frustration to my manager about the product, but my manager complimented my professionalism in handling the situation.”

Courses, volunteering, campus activities and employment are all areas where you can develop new skill sets or improve the ones you currently have.
Action Verbs

When creating your résumé, using concise wording is essential. The effectiveness of your résumé rests upon an employer wanting to read through the entire document. The goal is to make it as easy as possible to read, while showcasing your skills, education and experience. Action verbs are a great way to effectively list your job duties.

Below is a selection of common action verbs (in past tense) that you can use to illustrate what you have accomplished in your jobs, internships and volunteer roles.

**TIP:** Use present tense action verbs to describe your current job and past tense action verbs to describe previous positions.

### Communication
- Addressed
- Defined
- Edited
- Persuaded
- Reported
- Arranged
- Developed
- Interpreted
- Presented
- Spoke
- Communicated
- Directed
- Marketed
- Promoted
- Summarized
- Counseled
- Drafted
- Motivated
- Published
- Wrote

### Creative
- Acted
- Conceptualized
- Developed
- Introduced
- Refined
- Applied
- Created
- Drew
- Performed
- Used
- Composed
- Customized
- Formed
- Presented
- Utilized
- Conceived
- Designed
- Illustrated
- Produced
- Wrote

### Helping
- Advised
- Coordinated
- Educated
- Facilitated
- Modeled
- Aided
- Counseled
- Enabled
- Guided
- Referred
- Assisted
- Developed
- Encouraged
- Helped
- Taught
- Coached
- Diagnosed
- Explained
- Taught
- Tutored

### Leadership/Management
- Assigned
- Developed
- Hired
- Managed
- Recommended
- Conducted
- Directed
- Implemented
- Oversaw
- Scheduled
- Coordinated
- Evaluated
- Improved
- Planned
- Supervised
- Delegated
- Executed
- Led
- Managed
- Published

### Organization/Detail
- Arranged
- Compiled
- Generated
- Organized
- Purchased
- Balanced
- Completed
- Implemented
- Planned
- Recorded
- Budgeted
- Edited
- Maintained
- Prepared
- Retrieved
- Calculated
- Filed
- Ordered
- Processed
- Updated

### Technical
- Assembled
- Examined
- Maintained
- Painted
- Transported
- Assessed
- Fabricated
- Moved
- Removed
- Troubleshoot
- Built
- Inspected
- Mowed
- Repaired
- Upgraded
- Constructed
- Installed
- Operated
- Scheduled
- Utilized

---

**How to use action verbs in your résumé**

**Duke Energy, Charlotte, NC**

**Paralegal, January 2017-Present**
- Conduct legal research, and review applicable principles and precedents
- Work with litigation group and clients to establish and monitor legal holds
- Assist attorneys and other staff with daily case needs
- Schedule and maintain organized timelines
- Prepare reports, according to and surpassing government regulations
- Review and proofread documents for accuracy, completeness and writing standards

**Harris Teeter, Charlotte, NC**

**Office Assistant, May 2015-December 2016**
- Supervised 13 employees per shift
- Reconciled store funds nightly
- Created deposits and performed cash register transactions
- Ordered money and supplies
- Filed store, shipping and employee information
- Provided customer service

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**Take your résumé to the next level!**

Use action verbs to create accomplishment statements in the experience section of your résumé. Unlike job duties (shown in the examples above) accomplishments focus on the results or outcomes you achieved.

**Accomplishment statements = Action Verb + Project + Result**
- Proposed new staff scheduling guidelines resulting in 10 percent lower turnover rate
- Developed new lunch menu increasing lunch revenue an average of $2,000 monthly
- Facilitated customer service workshop for support staff increasing scores on customer satisfaction survey 20 percent in the first three months following training

**TIP:** This list is just a sample of the many action verbs you can use when creating your résumé. There are many more words you can use. Consult your dictionary and thesaurus for additional suggestions. Think of how you can use these words to improve your résumé, and remember them when you need to replace the phrase, “responsible for...”
Résumé Example –
(Functional-AA/AS/AE)

Tyler Delgado
123 Lake Street, Charlotte, NC 28215
(704) 999-5555, tyler.delgado@example.com

OBJECTIVE
To obtain a customer service position that will allow me to contribute my interpersonal, communication and organizational skills.

EDUCATION
Associate of Arts
Central Piedmont Community College
May 2019
- Maintained 3.2 GPA
- Coursework includes: Public Speaking, Introduction to Computers, Argument-Based Research, Ethics, Statistics, Critical Thinking, and Intermediate Spanish

SKILLS
Interpersonal
- Worked in a team of students to plan and present a semester-long group project
- Participated in workshop for student leaders to learn about personality types and work styles
- Collaborated with other students to develop ideas for activities at Central Piedmont

Communication
- Marketed student programs by developing flyers and staffing promotional events
- Developed a social media marketing plan to publicize campus activities
- Received high marks in college professional research and writing and public speaking courses

Organizational
- Managed time to effectively balance school work with involvement in several student activities
- Researched ideas for campus activities by investigating best practices at other schools
- Attended several group volunteer opportunities, including Habitat for Humanity and Big Brothers/Big Sisters
- Well versed in Microsoft Office and social media

ACTIVITIES
Rotaract Club, Member, August 2018 – present
- Take part in a college-level Rotary club
- Attend local Rotary meetings as a liaison
- Join in monthly service projects on-campus and within the Charlotte community
- Gain leadership skills by attending community leaders’ presentations during club meetings

Central Piedmont Student Government, Representative, August 2017 – present
- Attend weekly meetings to discuss upcoming events
- Manage events from concept to completion, including keeping within a budget
- Participate in college committees as a student representative and advocate for students

Service-Learning Volunteer, Central Piedmont, August 2017 – May 2018
- Contributed 35 hours of community service through coursework, including Service in Action events, Animal Care and Control and 5ks
- Developed clerical skills during volunteer opportunity at Animal Care and Control by preparing adoption packets, filing, and photographing animals for social media posts
- Participated in Nights of Service project for Linux Project, making blankets for children in local hospitals, and care packages for Charlotte area homeless

Trying to decide if a functional résumé is right for you?
- Are you seeking your first job?
- Do you have gaps in your employment history?
- Are you changing careers?
- Is your most recent experience unrelated to the job you are seeking now?
- Do you feel your work history is unimpressive to potential employers?

If you answered “yes” to any of the above questions, then a functional résumé might be right for you.
Résumé Example –
(Functional-A.A.S.)

Marjorie L. Perry
Concord, NC
704-999-4444 • mlp222@isp.com

EDUCATION
Central Piedmont Community College, Charlotte, NC
A.A.S., Office Administration, May 2020
• Relevant coursework includes Administrative Office Management, Advanced Software Applications, Records Management, and Principles of Financial Accounting

SKILLS
Records Management
• Filed confidential, hardcopy documents according to alphabetical system
• Created and updated electronic files
• Proofread files to ensure accuracy and completeness
• Followed security guidelines for access to files

Customer Service
• Provided responsive customer service in retail setting
• Used telephone, email, and in-person communication skills to work with customers
• Recognized for excellent customer service in May 2016
• Collaborated with volunteers and vendors when planning events

Computer & Office Skills
• Used Microsoft Word to create professional business documents
• Created and used Microsoft Excel spreadsheets to keep track of and organize numeric/financial data for community service organization
• Created new databases in Microsoft Access, ran queries and reports for group presentations and assignments
• Demonstrated resourcefulness with Internet searches and other web-based applications
• Typing Speed: 45 WPM
• Gained experience with taking notes and transcribing, effective use of copier, fax and other office equipment

EXPERIENCE
Sales Associate, Deborah’s Cards & Gifts, Charlotte, NC, 2016-2018
Waitress, Wine and Dine Bistro, Charlotte, NC 2014-2016

COMMUNITY
Volunteer, Girl Scouts, Hornets’ Nest Council, Charlotte, NC, 2015-present
Literacy Volunteer, Academic Learning Center, Concord, NC, 2011-2013
Volunteer, Meals-on-Wheels of Cabarrus County, 2009-2011

REFERENCES
Available upon request

Should you always include a street address on your résumé?
• Are you concerned about privacy issues?
• Are you posting your résumé on a public job board?
• Is a street address not typically important in your industry?

If you answered “yes” to all of the above questions, then you may want to only include city and state. Remember, missing information may make some employers cautious. It is always important to update your résumé information based on the intended audience.
Résumé Example – (Chronological)

Jamal T. Crest
955 Tower Street • Charlotte, NC 28211 • 704-555-5555 • jtcrest@isp.net

RELATED SKILLS
• ServSafe
• Ingredient & Supply Management
• Creativity
• Cooperation & Teamwork
• Detail-orientation
• High volume production and smaller-scale capabilities

EDUCATION
A.A.S., Baking & Pastry Arts
Central Piedmont Community College • Charlotte, NC
• GPA: 3.71; Dean’s List, Spring & Fall 2018
• 1st Place Winner, Central Piedmont Student Baking & Pastry Competition, Chocolate Artistry
• 2nd Place Winner, Central Piedmont Student Baking & Pastry Competition, Specialty Breads

EXPERIENCE
Baking & Pastry Cooperative Education Student
Ilios Noche • Charlotte, NC
January 2019-present
• Pipe sauces onto dessert plates and place garnishes on desserts
• Help prepare and bake bread for daily service
• Observe and work closely with head pastry chef, Angelo Kaltsounis
• Assist with ordering ingredients for bread and dessert service
• Keep work area clean and sanitary

Baker Assistant/Cashier
Great Harvest Bread Company • Charlotte, NC
October 2016-November 2018
• Helped Head Baker prepare several varieties of breads for sale
• Mixed and baked breads according to recipes
• Maintained clean, sanitary work environment
• Provided customer service at front counter, performed cash and credit transactions at register

Server
Jerry’s Deli • Charlotte, NC
May 2014-October 2016
• Memorized menu and weekly specials
• Provided courteous and attentive service to diners
• Submitted food orders to kitchen and delivered dishes to tables
• Accepted payment for diners’ bills
• Maintained clean and safe working environment and helped clean restaurant at closing

COMPUTER SKILLS
Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Access and Adobe Photoshop

If you hold multiple certifications, you may choose to list them in a certifications section.

Objectives are optional if the job you are applying to clearly relates to information presented in your education and/or experience sections.

Trying to decide if a chronological résumé is right for you?
• Is your most recent experience related to the job/field where you are seeking employment now?
• Do you have a strong work history without major gaps in employment?
• Are you trying to create a basic résumé?
• Would you like to use the most traditional format available for your résumé?

If you answered “yes” to all of the above questions, then a chronological résumé might be right for you.
Trying to decide if a combination résumé is right for you?
• Do you have strong writing ability?
• Would you like to use a hybrid format that combines the advantages of the functional and chronological styles?
• Is it okay if your résumé is two pages long? Most combination résumés exceed one page.

If you answered “yes” to all of the above questions, then a combination résumé might be right for you.
My Résumé Plan

1. Résumé formats:
   • Functional summarizes experience into skills categories instead of listing employment in reverse chronological order.
   • Chronological lists previous employment in reverse chronological order, with the most recent position listed first.
   • Combination may include a skill section and relevant work experiences highlighted in reverse chronological order.

My résumé style will be:  
- functional  
- chronological  
- combination (please refer to previous examples)

At this point you will want to list sections in order of importance. Most students typically have their contact information, objective/summary followed by education.

2. Name, contact information, including professional email goes at top of résumé

3. Objective/Summary: Pick either an
   - Objective (To obtain a position as a __________); or
   - Summary Statement if you have significant related work experience already

4. Education (Order schools with the most recent education first, and you do not need to list high school if you have already graduated.) For all colleges include this information:
   • Name of school
   • Degree (specify degree, diploma/certificate)
   • Graduation Date (a future date is okay)
   • City and State

5. Experience - For each job include the following:
   • Job Title
   • Company Name
   • Dates
   • City and State

   In your experience section, include a description (only if you are using a chronological or combination style): Utilize bullets, beginning with action verbs to describe responsibilities/accomplishments. You only need to go back 10 years for employment history. Please remember to list all your jobs with your most recent job first.

6. Skills (include for all résumé styles, but this is the main focus of the functional résumé format).
   My skills: ____________________________________________________________

   Remember, you need to write your skills section differently depending on the résumé style you are using. Refer to the appropriate pages (functional, chronological, combination).

7. Optional Résumé Sections – Adding one of the following sections can be a terrific way to personalize your résumé format.

Check other sections you would like to add:
   - Leadership
   - Community Service (ongoing commitments)
   - Volunteer (short term events)
   - Languages
   - Computer (name specific programs)

   - Student Activities/ Organizations
   - Professional Association
   - Professional Development (i.e. seminars and workshops)
   - Certifications
Writing Cover Letters

Sending a cover letter with your résumé is a great way to introduce yourself, market your attributes and communicate your reason for contacting a company. It could be the first thing an employer sees, so it has to shine. Connect with the hiring manager by identifying your best skills and notable experience. Indicate how your qualities relate to the position’s qualifications.

Cover letters can be sent by email or uploaded when applying online. The format is somewhat different for the email version, as you will see in the templates below. Try to address your letter to someone specific. This shows you did your research or took time to call. Make sure your letter/email is professional, short and friendly. Always use spell check and review grammar and capitalization. Paper-based cover letters should be on the same type of paper as your résumé and should be signed in black ink.

Email cover letters—although quick and easy to send—demand the same level of attention and detail. When you are emailing a résumé for a job, the body of the email message becomes your cover letter. Regardless of the format, follow the employer’s directions for submitting your cover letter and résumé. Consider sending the email to yourself, first, to test the formatting you used.

Use these templates as a guide to create your cover letters.

Cover letter template

Your street address
City, State, Zip Code

Date

Recipient’s full name with salutation (Ms., Mr., Dr., etc.)
His or her job title
Company name
Work street address
City, State, Zip Code

Greeting (Dear Ms. Smith:)
State the position for which you are applying, how you found out about it, and ask for consideration. Usually consists of 2-3 sentences.

Write 3-5 sentences describing how you are the best candidate for the job. Use some well-chosen adjectives to describe your best attributes, skills, education and experience that relate to the position for which you are applying. Provide information specifically requested in the job listing that might not be fully covered in your résumé. You should not just summarize the contents of your résumé.

Restate your interest and enthusiasm for the position. Remind the reader of your phone number and email address, and state that you look forward to meeting him or her. We suggest that you tell them that you will initiate the follow-up. Just be sure that you make contact when you say you will. Thank the reader for his or her time.

Sincerely,

LEAVE SPACE TO SIGN YOUR NAME HERE (between your closing and your name)
Your full name typed out
Enclosure: Résumé (list other documentation required and attached)

Cover letter email template

Subject Line of Email Message: Title of job, Number (if listed), your last name
Email Message:
Greeting (Dear Ms. Smith:)
Use the same 3-paragraph format for your email as you would for a paper-based cover letter. See template on left for what to include in each paragraph.

Sincerely,
Your full name typed out
Address
Email
Cell Phone
2034 Tyvola Road
Charlotte, NC 28211

September 15, 2018

Mr. Michael J. Balthern
Human Resources Manager
ABC Office Supplies
1983 4th Street
Charlotte, NC 28205

Dear Mr. Balthern:
The advertisement on Central Piedmont Community College Career Services’ student job board for an assistant manager with ABC Office Supplies caught my eye. This position sounds like a wonderful opportunity. Please accept my application for consideration in filling the position.

This December, I will complete an Associate in Applied Science in Business Administration at Central Piedmont. Through my coursework, I have gained a broad understanding of business, marketing, and management. I have worked in several retail establishments, and have developed a reputation for taking initiative and getting results.

My instructors and supervisors can tell you that I am a hard worker who is prompt, courteous and able to learn complicated concepts quickly. I have also won several awards through my work in sales and participation in ENACTUS at Central Piedmont. You will find that my proficiency in Microsoft Office software matches your technology needs, and my fluency in Spanish lifts my customer service capabilities to a higher level.

I am very interested in discussing how my skills and experience match the requirements for employment with ABC Office Supplies. I will contact you in one week to set up an appointment to further discuss your needs and my qualifications. Please feel free to contact me at marielram650@email.cpcc.edu or 704.555.5555.

Sincerely,

Marielena A. Ramirez

Enclosure: Résumé
Cover Letter Email Examples

Responding to a job posting

**Subject line of email:** Job #41668, Customer Service Representative, Pertsen

Dear Ms. Katz,

I am interested in being considered for the Call Center Customer Service position (#41668) which was posted on the Central Piedmont Community College student job board. I have attached my résumé for your review.

My education and work experience make me a strong candidate for this customer service position. I am earning an Associate in Arts at Central Piedmont, and plan to transfer to the University of North Carolina-Charlotte to major in Communications. I have maintained a 3.7 grade point average while working full time at Acme Systems. Supervisors and colleagues at Acme will tell you that I am a patient and friendly worker who puts customers first. Many returning customers request to speak with me when they call, and, last year, I piloted a program that provided customer service through the use of social networking and other internet applications.

I am excited about the opportunity to join your team. Please feel free to contact me at kmpert1244@email.com or 704-555-8080 to discuss how my qualifications make me a good fit for this position. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Diandra Pertsen

555 Main Street, Apt. B

Charlotte, NC 28210

kmpert1244@email.com

704-555-8080 (cell)

Reference a specific job in your email subject line.

**Subject line of email:** Job Opportunity Inquiry, Mann

Dear Ms. Sorenson,

I read about XYZ Company in the Charlotte Business Journal, and I would like to inquire about opportunities within the Reach Higher Management Trainee Program. My résumé is attached, and I think you will find that I have the background you are seeking.

I will graduate in May from Central Piedmont Community College with an Associate in Applied Science in Business Administration with a concentration in Marketing. I have held leadership positions, including Vice President of the Honors Society and co-founder of a volunteer group dedicated to helping our community. I started my own landscaping company in high school, and, in college, I exceeded monthly sales goals each month by up to 50 percent at my job as a sales associate at Target. As a result, I was honored as Employee of the Year in 2017.

My research shows that XYZ Company is among the top 10 in its industry, I would be proud to work for a company recognized for its innovation and integrity. The management trainee program is of particular interest to me because it would allow me to fulfill my desire to lead and work with a team. XYZ Company’s reputation for customer service is impeccable, and my dedication to customer satisfaction would be a true asset to your company.

My skills, qualifications, and interests match the values that your company holds. I would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you. I will contact you early next week. If you have any questions or would like additional information, you can reach me at 704-444-5522. Thank you for your time, and I look forward to speaking with you.

Best regards,

Leticia Mann

128 Church Street

Matthews, NC 28105

Laticiama455@email.cpcc.edu - linkedin.com/in/leticiamann

704-444-5522 (cell)

Include the web address for your LinkedIn Profile in communications with employers.
Providing References

An often forgotten and confusing piece of the job application puzzle is the management and delivery of professional references. Use this advice to determine how and when to provide references to employers.

Maintain a group of at least three current references who will be ready, when called, to speak well about your abilities. References can be current or former supervisors, teachers, managers or Workplace Learning Coordinators. You should not list relatives or close friends as professional references.

Let your references know you are releasing their name and contact information and that potential employers may contact them. The best way to get someone to serve as a reference for you is to ask them in-person or send them a professionally written email.

Providing your reference list

Read all job postings carefully.

• If the employer wants names, job titles, addresses, phone numbers and email addresses for three references, provide that information on a reference sheet. See the example reference sheet to the right.

• If only a résumé and cover letter are requested in a job listing, do not send your list of references. Keep the list and bring it to the interview. The references heading and statement can remain on your résumé in this situation.

Keep references informed and happy

• Give references a copy of your résumé so they know your background. Provide a description of the job to which you’re applying. Knowing the duties and responsibilities ahead of time prepares references for questions and helps them relate your experience to the job.

• If you believe your references may be contacted by an employer, let them know. Tell them the name of the company and the position for which you interviewed. If you know the name of the person who will check your references, offer that information, too.

• Keep your references informed if you are offered and accept a job.

• When you accept a job, take time to write each of your references a thank you note. They played a valuable part in you receiving an offer.

• Don’t end contact with your references. Send an email, call or meet for lunch on occasion. You never know if and when you may need to contact them in the future.

If you are asked to provide references, remember to remove the “references available upon request” statement and heading from your résumé.

Tessa Forman
333 Star Lane
Charlotte, NC 28277
704.999.9999 • formant@isp.com

REFERENCES

John Doe
Manager, Best Buy
1055 Metropolitan Ave.
Charlotte, NC 28204
330.999.9999
johndoess@bestbuy.com

Shaia Tanner
Supervisor
AutoBell Car Wash
903 Charlottetowne Ave.
Charlotte, NC 28204
704.797.7777
stanner@autobell.com

Dr. Theresa Snow
Professor
Central Piedmont Community College
PO Box 35009
Charlotte, NC 28235
704.330.5555
theresa.snow@cpcc.edu
Using Social Media in Your Job Search

Employers are using social media more than ever to find potential job candidates, so it is important to have a professional online presence. Use these social media tips to help you get noticed by employers.

Know what is out there – Google yourself
Sure, you know what you have posted online, but do you know what others have posted about you? Make it a habit to regularly search Google with your name to see what you find, and do not be shy about asking others to take down information that you do not want an employer to see.

LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter – what is the difference?
• LinkedIn is a professional networking site that is the most commonly used by employers to find potential employees. You can look for jobs on LinkedIn, create a profile featuring your work experience, education, and skills in a résumé-like format, make connections with others, and join groups related to your field of study or industry. You can also receive recommendations from co-workers and supervisors.

• Facebook is a popular social networking site. It is not used as widely by employers, but is still viewable, depending on your privacy settings. Because others can post information and pictures on your Facebook timeline, careful monitoring and maintenance is key.

• Twitter is a microblogging site that you can use to network and share information. Twitter is a great resource to follow and interact with companies you are interested in working for and to become part of an established online community related to your field.

Be professional
Check all social media profiles, including Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. Examine your profile carefully to make sure you would want a potential employer to look at it. Things to look for:
• Pictures – Remove any photos you have posted featuring unprofessional behavior. Untag yourself in unflattering photos that have been posted by others or ask them to be removed entirely.

• Language – Employers do read what is posted on your profile by you and others. Delete any comments containing foul language and be mindful of spelling and grammar.

• Content – Avoid controversial topics and carefully monitor what others are posting on your page.

Quick Tips
LinkedIn
• Actively participate in group discussions by asking questions and providing feedback.

• Do a reverse look-up of a company you are interested in working for to see if you know anyone who is working there. Ask your contact for an introduction; once introduced, let the insider know you have applied for a job.

Twitter
• Interact with companies you are interested in working for, and follow and connect with industry leaders.

• Try to tweet a few times a day.

• Use hashtags (#) to search and post information related directly to your field.

Facebook
• Maintain a clean profile and limit the pictures you post.

• Post content relevant to your job search.

• Monitor others’ contributions to your timeline.

Develop an online presence
Since more employers are using social media to connect with potential job candidates, not having an online presence can be almost as bad as having a negative online reputation. An easy way to begin building a professional online profile is to use LinkedIn. It is free and it is the site employers use most frequently to search for potential job candidates.

Keep track of the time you spend online and remember to network in-person too. Fortunately, many social networking sites are connected, so you can post something on one site, and it will automatically post in your profiles on other sites.

Make an appointment with a career counselor if you would like assistance with using social media in your job search!

Connect with us!
• Visit cpcc.edu/career

• Follow us on Facebook and Pinterest!
Networking: Building Career Connections

Networking is one of the most important job search tools. Most job openings aren’t advertised and even if they are, many are still filled through personal contacts and referrals. If you aren’t networking with professionals in your targeted industry, you’re missing out on job opportunities and the chance to learn about trends and topics in the field.

Myths about networking keep people from using this important job search method. Which of these myths do you believe?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Myth</th>
<th>Reality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professionals won’t want to talk to me.</td>
<td>They will if you present yourself professionally. People who enjoy their job or company enjoy talking about both with others who share the same professional interest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The goal of networking is to land a job.</td>
<td>Networking means learning about career paths and trends in an industry or particular company. Job openings aren’t discussed unless the person you’re speaking with mentions them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Networking is superficial.</td>
<td>When you successfully network you develop and maintain professional relationships with others throughout your career. Meeting with one person only once isn’t the goal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I haven’t worked in my industry yet I can’t network.</td>
<td>It’s critical to begin building career connections early. Remember that professionals you’re speaking with were once in your shoes and will appreciate the opportunity to pass along knowledge they’ve gained to someone breaking into the field.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Networking only takes place at “networking events.”</td>
<td>Networking takes place anywhere - in formal situations like conferences or any informal setting where conversations occur.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How to Network

Setting up a networking meeting is similar to scheduling an information appointment because you’re seeking information from the contact person. Review the information presented here that highlights items unique to networking.

1. Identify people to meet and set up an appointment. Use personal contacts, professional organizations and social media. Reach out to the person via email or phone. Clearly identify yourself and state how you obtained their contact information and what your purpose is for contacting them. Do not say that you are looking for job openings.

2. Research and prepare a list of questions. Questions asked during a networking appointment focus on the person’s progression in the industry and tips he or she might have.
   • Can you tell me about your career path and how you got to where you are today?
   • What do you know now that you wish you’d known when you were entering this field?
   • Could you talk about the work culture at your company?
   • Are you a member of any professional groups or associations? How can I get involved?
   • Based on our conversation, do you have specific recommendations for me on how to proceed in my search?
   • Are there other people in the profession or this company that I could speak to?
   • Would you be willing to provide their contact information and can I mention that you referred me to them?

3. Meet with your contact. Bring copies of your résumé, but don’t present one unless asked to. The person you’re speaking with may ask you some questions you’d anticipate in a job interview. This is entirely their decision (you shouldn’t initiate specific job search questions). If they do ask such questions, be prepared (review the “Common Questions Asked in an Interview” section).

Being able to present your skills, qualifications and interests as they relate to the profession or company is important. Review the “My Elevator Pitch” section to develop a way to market yourself.

4. Send a thank you note. Promptly send a thank you note within 24 hours thanking the person for their time. Email or handwritten is appropriate. Use your judgement as to what style would be best. Refer to the “Thank You Letter Examples” section.

5. Keep track of who you talk to. Develop a system that helps you manage your networking contacts. For each person you meet with, note their name, title and contact information as well as the date you spoke, what you discussed and any referrals to other people.
How to Work Job Fairs and Hiring Events

Research employers. Recruiters will see hundreds of job seekers during the course of the day. Stand out from the rest by preparing early. Many event websites list which employers are coming.

Visit Career Services early to create a targeted résumé. Bring or email your résumé to Career Services several weeks before the event to have it critiqued by a career counselor and discuss how to target it to a specific employer or job.

Strategize. Arrive early. Identify and locate the companies you are most interested in talking to and visit their booths first. Remember, it is about quality, not quantity!

Bring plenty of résumés. Target your résumé objective to each employer you want to speak to and bring at least two copies for each.

Apply online, and do not be discouraged if an employer cannot accept your résumé at a hiring event. Many companies require online applications because of legal reasons, so apply in advance and tell recruiters you have taken this extra step to demonstrate your enthusiasm for their opportunity. Once you make a good impression in-person, your online application will rise to the top.

Dress to impress. Many career fairs require professional dress. Not sure if what you plan to wear is appropriate? Talk to a Career Services counselor for advice.

Know what you want to say. Talk about your achievements and accomplishments. Use our Elevator Pitch worksheet to plan what you want to talk about or you can meet with a career counselor for assistance.

Listen up! While you wait to talk to recruiters, use your time wisely. Listen to the conversation recruiters are having with other job seekers. You can use the information you learn to develop some great questions and points to wow the recruiters! Also, network with other job seekers.

Ask good questions. Do your research ahead of time so you can ask the recruiter insightful questions. Do not waste the limited time you have to ask, “What does your company do?” If you have done your homework, you already know the answer. Some examples of good questions:

- What are you looking for in a successful candidate?
- What kind of entry-level positions (or internships) exist within your organization?
- Does your company hire on a continual basis or just at certain times of the year?

Be enthusiastic and have a positive attitude. Whether you are looking for a job or internship or are simply getting practice talking to employers, a job fair is a rare opportunity for you to get face-to-face time with those who can help you get ahead.

Collect business cards and follow up. Always follow up with the recruiter to thank them for their time and remind them of your conversation with them. It is best to send them an email the afternoon/evening of the event.

Organize before you leave the hiring event. Take a moment before you leave the event to jot down some quick notes about the recruiters and companies you met with while it is still fresh in your mind.
Tips for Successful Interviews

Before
• Practice as much as possible before your actual interview. Practice with a friend, use Perfect Interview, our online interview practice software or complete a mock interview with a career counselor. Anticipate questions that may be asked and try out your answers aloud—especially for difficult questions.
• Dress appropriately, turn off your cell phone and use good manners. Your appearance should be polished, and you should address everyone in a polite manner.
• Be on time. If you are late for the interview, you could ruin your chances. Arrive between five and 10 minutes before the scheduled time. There is such a thing as arriving too early (20 minutes or earlier).
• Show that you are knowledgeable about the company. Interviewers look more favorably on a candidate who has made the effort to research the company and the position.
• Self-doubts and fear of failure can damage your performance in an interview. Be calm and aware of any nervous habits (nail-biting, fidgeting, etc.). Do some deep, slow breathing exercises before entering the building and think of this experience as just another chance to practice your interviewing skills.

During
• Unfreeze your face and smile! Smiling exudes confidence and a positive attitude. Show your enthusiasm for the opportunity to meet with the employer.
• It is important that you exhibit effective communication skills during the interview. Speak clearly and concisely. Listen attentively and maintain eye contact. Resist distractions.
• Follow the interviewer’s lead, and stick to the point. Listen carefully. Sometimes, interviewers will rephrase a question to check for alertness and consistency. The interviewer is also interested in attitudes that might affect your job performance. Avoid revealing negative opinions about other people and organizations.
• Express your interest in the job. Ask if you can call back to find out about the decision.

After
• Send a thank you note(s) within 24 hours—either by email or U.S. Mail. If there is an interview committee, thank each member for his or her time and restate your desire for the job. Mention your qualifications again and refer to something you discussed during the interview.

Handling illegal interview questions
Asking certain questions during a job interview may be prohibited by law. Many times, interviewers ask inappropriate questions because they are unaware of the law or what types of questions are too personal. Some questions that seem like they are illegal are not because they relate directly to the position’s essential job functions.

Illegal and inappropriate questions commonly focus on the following topics:
• Religion • Race • Ethnic origin
• Marital status • Age • Disability

A smart job hunter is aware of illegal questions, knows options for handling them and stays cool when responding. Here are some options to help you maintain professionalism. There are pros and cons to each of these, and you need to decide what makes you most comfortable.
• Simply answer the question.
• Try to determine the interviewer’s motivation for asking a particular question. Ask, “How does my answer to this question relate to the position?” Depending on his or her answer, decide whether or not you want to answer the question.
• Bring the interview back to your qualifications. If you think the employer is worried about something in your personal or professional life, assure them that you can handle the requirements of the job and mention some of your qualifications that relate to the question.
• Decline to answer the question by saying, “That question makes me uncomfortable. I would rather not answer it.”
• If you think you were denied a job based on discrimination, contact the Equal Opportunity Office for more information. Be aware that even if you have a legitimate claim, it may be difficult to prove.

Preparing and practicing for an interview will help you in sticky situations such as those related to inappropriate interview questions.
Dress to Impress

Dressing professionally
A neat and clean appearance will help interviewers focus on your qualifications, not your clothes or accessories. Clothing styles should be fashionable but not too trendy, and if you are unsure about how to dress for a particular interview, opt for the more conservative choice. Do your research ahead of time, and keep the company’s culture in mind when you are picking out your interview outfit. Here are some additional tips:

What to wear
• Choose conservative colors. Dark, solid, and neutral colors work best.
• A suit or dress pants/skirt with a jacket will make a great first impression for a professional or office environment.
• When interviewing for technician and trade jobs, a collared shirt tucked into dress pants, dress socks and polished leather shoes are acceptable.
• If applying for creative positions, your attire should still be professional, but you may be able to add some visual interest with unique color, accessories or clothing.

Look professional and polished
• Close-toed dress shoes should be clean and non-scuffed. High heels should be less than three inches.
• Skirts should be no shorter than 2 inches above the knee, and tops should neither be too low-cut, too tight or sheer.
• If wearing a skirt to an interview, most career professionals recommend that you wear pantyhose. Make sure they are sheer, not textured, and neutral in color.
• Avoid flashy, excessive jewelry, remove unconventional body piercings and cover tattoos.
• Hair and nails should be clean and nicely groomed. Make sure teeth are brushed and breath is fresh.
• Makeup and nail polish should be minimal and natural looking.
• If you wear fragrance, use only the slightest bit, or forego it altogether.
• Carry the smallest number of items with you as possible. Pockets should not bulge and your right hand should be free so you can shake hands easily.
• Bring multiple copies of your résumé in a professional looking folder or padfolio.

THE INTERVIEW: WHAT CAN I EXPECT?
The interview is your opportunity to show employers that the skills and experience that motivated them to grant you an interview come from a talented and enthusiastic person who would be a great addition to the staff. Most interviews can be divided into three phases.

Phase 1: Making contact
Before serious discussion about the job and your qualifications begins, most interviewers like to spend a few minutes in casual conversation. This can be about the weather, some major event that happened over the weekend or something about your background that attracted their attention. This is an opportunity to make a special connection with the interviewer, which will help you stand out.

Phase 2: Establishing qualifications and opportunities
The two-way conversation about your qualifications and the job are the nuts and bolts of the interview. The best strategy is to elaborate on your résumé, highlighting the preparation and experience most relevant to that position. What do you have that is of special interest to the employer?

Your mood should be positive. Comment favorably on your education, past employers and your ambitions. Your work ethic is also being evaluated. Make sure that everything you present relates to the job.

Finally, come prepared with genuine questions to ask—questions that reflect your research and specific knowledge about the company.

Phase 3: Closing the interview and determining the next step.
As the interview draws to a close, if you are interested, ask for the job and inquire about the next step. Does the interviewer need any more information from you? Are there additional interviews? Thank the interviewer for his or her time. End with a firm handshake and follow up with a thank you note within 24 hours.

For more interview attire examples, join us on Pinterest! (Search CPCCCAREERS)
My Elevator Pitch

Your elevator pitch is a statement of basic introduction—who you are and what you are seeking.

It is a great way to market yourself to employers at career fairs and networking events. The elevator pitch also comes in handy during interviews when you get asked tough interview questions like these:

• Tell me about yourself.
• Why should I hire you?
• Why do you want this job?
• Why do you think you are qualified for this job?

To get started, make a list of five things you want to make sure the employer knows about you. Employers want proof that you can get the job done. Focus on your education, skills and experience. Make sure your key points match what the employer is looking for—this means you may need to revise your elevator speech based on the jobs you are interested in.

1. __________________________________________________
2. __________________________________________________
3. __________________________________________________
4. __________________________________________________
5. __________________________________________________

Every good elevator pitch includes a “hook,” or a way to get the employer to take action. A hook will come at the end of your elevator pitch and will help the employer remember you and your qualifications later. A great “hook” is to ask the employer for something, such as a business card or the opportunity to schedule a meeting. Another good “hook” is to tell the employer why you are interested in their company. What is it about their job opening or organization that is so attractive to you?

My hook ____________________________________________

Now use your five key points and your hook to write an elevator pitch script. Practice saying it until it becomes (and sounds) natural. It is not necessary to memorize your elevator pitch—but rather more important that you are able to speak about your strengths naturally.

____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________

Want to try out your elevator pitch?
Visit Career Services to talk to a career counselor!
Common Questions Asked in an Interview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Ways to answer and prepare</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tell me about yourself.</td>
<td>Provide a summary of your work history, education and character, as they relate to the job qualifications.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why do you want to work for us?</td>
<td>Research beforehand, describe why you want to work for the company and connect your talents to the company’s culture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why should we hire you?</td>
<td>Cite your accomplishments and unique qualities and mention how they complement the employer’s needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give me your definition of a [position you are interviewing for].</td>
<td>Research the job description, read about successful people who have the same title and give a positive, knowledgeable description.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tell me about your strengths.</td>
<td>Indicate several of your best strengths, include an example of when you used them and connect them to the job.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is a weakness of yours?</td>
<td>Mention a real weakness that you have, but avoid ones that directly affect essential duties of the job you want. Finish your answer by including specific things you are doing to improve in this area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What important trends do you see in our industry?</td>
<td>Keep up with the latest news in your field. Identify and understand trends that affect your job, company and industry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is your greatest accomplishment?</td>
<td>Employers are usually looking for professional accomplishments that relate to the job. Do not cite revealing personal milestones such as getting married.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do you work under pressure and with deadlines?</td>
<td>Describe how you work under pressure and provide examples to help employers visualize how you will perform for them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you prefer to work alone or with a team?</td>
<td>State your preference, but indicate that you are capable of doing both. Think how this question relates to the type of job for which you are applying.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are your salary expectations?</td>
<td>Research salary through various resources. Give a range based on what similar positions in your region pay for people with your skills, education and experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How would a supervisor or colleague describe you?</td>
<td>List positive adjectives that others would use to describe you. Include a specific accomplishment that got others to compliment you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe your short- and long-term professional goals.</td>
<td>Mention your short- and long-term professional goals. Explain how you think the company plays a role in your plans and describe how you will contribute along the way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What would you have changed about your last job if given the chance?</td>
<td>Never speak negatively about a former job or manager. Focus on what you look forward to in your new job (more responsibility, a new career path, opportunities for advancement, etc.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How would you describe your technology skills?</td>
<td>Discuss your current skill level and mention specific software, applications or equipment you use well. Emphasize unique and in-demand technological competencies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How long would it take you to make a meaningful contribution to our company?</td>
<td>Cite an example of how you learned quickly in a previous job and state that you will do the same in the new position.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give an example of how you have updated your technology skills.</td>
<td>Discuss how you are skilled in using current technology and express you are willing to learn new technology as needed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Practice makes perfect. You can try answering these and other questions on our interviewing practice software and in mock interviews with a career counselor. Visit cpcc.edu/career to learn more.
The Behavioral Interview: Be Prepared

Behavioral interviewing is a common type of interviewing for employers who believe that past behavior predicts future behavior. Behavior-based questions are designed to demonstrate how you applied specific competencies (skills, personal characteristics, or knowledge) in an actual situation or how you would behave in a possible situation. Most employers will include at least a few behavioral questions during their interviews, and some will focus solely on behavioral style throughout the entire interview. Your answers show how well you think on your feet.

Examples of behavioral questions

• Describe specifically a time when you used good judgment and logic in order to solve a problem.
• Provide an example when your people or coping skills were put to the test.
• Give an example of a situation in which you had to make a decision quickly.
• Tell me about a time when you had to use your written communication skills to make an important point.
• Your team is almost finished with a major project and you just discovered one of the members will not finish their assignment. How would you handle this situation?
• Provide an example of a past goal and explain your success in reaching it.
• Describe the most significant or creative presentation you completed.
• Elaborate on an experience when you performed beyond the call of duty to get a job done.
• Describe a situation in which you recognized a potential problem as an opportunity. What did you do?

The interviewer asks behavioral questions to gather important details about your work style. Honesty and preparation are crucial. It is extremely difficult to invent answers on the spot because these probing questions require you to relay details. If you think you need to prepare carefully for a behavioral interview, you are correct. You may notice that practicing your answers to behavioral questions will also help you respond more effectively to non-behavioral-based questions!

How to prepare for a behavioral interview

First, analyze the position and identify the key assets you want to emphasize during the interview. Think of at least six specific situations that demonstrate these qualities. These examples can be from past jobs, classroom interactions or internship activities. Compile a collection of stories that include positive scenarios in which you showed off your strengths as well as others that presented a challenge that you overcame and from which you learned a valuable lesson.

Practice

Practice for a behavioral interview by role playing with a career counselor or a friend. Get used to customizing your stories to match the interviewer’s questions. Use the STAR method to build and state your answers. Use the lines following each step to try writing out what you would say. Notice how your answer is similar to a very short story that has a beginning, middle and end.

S – Describe a specific situation or problem you experienced in the past.

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

T – Tell the employer about the task or the challenge with which you were presented.

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

A – Relay the action you took in response to the specific situation and task.

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

R – Talk about the result of your action. Help the employer understand what happened by including supporting details, such as statistics (Sales improved by 44 percent in a year, as a result of my action!).

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________
You Ask the Questions

You did your homework before the job interview.

You put together a professional-looking appearance, memorized all of your best career and educational highlights and brought plenty of copies of your résumé in a beautiful, leather-bound portfolio. Double-check again. Did you remember everything? Did you remember to compile a list of questions that you will ask the employer?

Interviewers audition you during the interview. Take advantage of the opportunity to turn the tables and ask them questions. Because good and bad employment fit goes both ways, it is essential that you use every chance you get to exert some control in the hiring process. It is an opportunity to become proactive and make sure this job will benefit your needs too. Dr. Barbara Moses states in her book, “What Next? The Complete Guide to Taking Control of Your Working Life,” “when you are a career activist, you expect good work as a right, not a privilege.” Finding good work takes work. Asking questions in an interview is one aspect of being a career activist. Many job seekers think that employers are just being nice and asking ceremoniously for their questions at the end of the interview. That is not true. Employers expect you to ask questions. Asking intelligent questions shows the interviewers that you are fully engaged in the process of finding—not just a job—but a good fit for you and the company.

Employers want to see if you researched the company and are willing to dig a little deeper to find the information that is important to your decision. The worst thing you can say is, “No. You have answered all of my questions.” You show, by asking appropriate questions that you are capable of independent thought and investigation.

Questions you can ask

What questions qualify as appropriate and intelligent? Ask only questions that have not yet been answered in other portions of the interview and questions that fit your needs. Do not just choose questions blindly from the list. You may bring a typed list of your questions to the interview for your reference. Some employers will answer all your prepared questions before you get to ask them. Be ready to pull questions from the items the employer discusses with you from the interview. You may have to make a note on paper so you don’t forget. Just be quick about it, so as to not interrupt the attention you are giving the interviewer.

- What are the training procedures for new employees?
- Please describe the company culture/values.
- What management style do supervisors use?
- What are some detailed expectations of the person who takes this position?
- Why is this position vacant?
- May I call or email if I have any more questions about the hiring process and the job?
- Please describe the ideal employee for this job.
- Who will review my work, and how often?
- Please describe a typical week or day in the life of a [job title].
- What are the next steps in the hiring process?
- When do you expect to have a decision made, and how will you contact me?
- How will the merger with XYZ Company affect this department?
- What is the future of ABC Company?

Questions to avoid

Although you may truly want the answers to the following questions, they are not appropriate to ask in an interview. They are best asked after a job offer has been made and before you accept or decline the offer. Some of these questions could make you seem focused only on compensation, vacation and other items, whereas employers are looking for candidates who are truly interested in the position itself. Also, bringing up salary before a job offer has been made can damage your negotiating power down the road.

- How many paid holidays are offered?
- What is the salary range for this position?
- When can I use my vacation days?
- Is there an expense account available?
- Is overtime required?
- What does your company do?
- When will I get promoted?

Take the time to craft a list of effective questions for each interview. Doing so will contribute greatly to your job search success.
Thank You Letter Examples

Follow up email

**Career Fair Follow-up:** Calvin Davis

Dear Mr. Smith:

It was great to speak with you at the Central Piedmont Community College Career Fair last week. The Engineering Technician position sounds like an exciting opportunity. I have applied online, and I want to follow up to say thanks and send my résumé.

As I mentioned during our conversation, my education and work experience make me a strong candidate for this position. At the end of this semester, I will finish my associate degree in Mechanical Engineering Technology at Central Piedmont. I already have real world CAD drafting experience in engineering through my Co-op at R.E. Mason (REM), and my grades are excellent. I made the President’s List for the past two semesters.

I am truly committed to the field of engineering technology, and I think that Ingersol-Rand is a great company with which to start and continue my career. When you begin interviewing for the Engineering Technician job, please contact me. I look forward to learning more about the position and demonstrating how my qualifications meet your needs. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Calvin Davis

56 College Street
Charlotte, NC 28235
Caldavis59@isp.net
704-555-9876 cell

Thank you email

**Thank you:** Barnett Interview

Dear Ms. Black:

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me yesterday to discuss the Medical Assisting position in your office. I enjoyed meeting you and your staff. Learning more about the skills and qualifications you are looking for in a medical assistant was extremely helpful.

After meeting with you, I am more excited about the position. I believe that my education and clinical experience will fit well with what you are seeking, and my dedication to customer service would be an asset as well. If selected for the position, I am confident that I will make a significant contribution to your office and become a valuable member of your team.

Again, I am very interested in getting this position and working with you and your staff. If you need additional information, please feel free to contact me at 704-888-0022. I look forward to hearing from you soon, and thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Alex Barnett

76 Water Street
Concord, NC 28025
Alexbar885@email.cpcc.edu
704-888-0022 cell

A thank you letter helps to restate your interest in a position and can offer an opportunity to provide further clarification on an interview question. Taking the time to write a thank you letter sets you apart from other candidates.
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   Charlotte, NC 28125
   Cato 1, Student Success desk
   704.330.4836

2. Central Campus
   1201 Elizabeth Avenue
   Charlotte, NC 28235
   Central High, Room 365
   704.330.6433

3. Harper Campus
   315 West Hebron Street
   Charlotte, NC 28273
   Harper IV, Room 216
   704.330.4562

4. Harris Campus
   3210 CPCC Harris Campus Drive,
   Charlotte, NC 28208
   Harris I, Room 1114
   704.330.4623

5. Levine Campus
   2800 Campus Ridge Road
   Matthews, NC 28105
   Levine 1, Student Success desk
   704.330.4267

6. Merancas Campus
   11930 Verhoeff Drive
   Huntersville, NC 28078
   Transport Systems, Room 221
   704.330.4135

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