

# Career Services Guide for Seniors

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*CAREER SERVICES CENTER*

*Where Xceptional Careers Unfold!*

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# *A Message to Our Graduates*

Dear Graduating Student:

As you begin your final year at Xavier, it's time to reflect on what you have accomplished – the skills, interests and values you have developed – and how you plan to apply this knowledge in achieving your long-term career goals.

Some of you will go on to pursue graduate studies, while others will begin the search for employment. Whatever your choice, this final year will be one of preparation for this transition, and the time to start that preparation is now.

The Career Services Center is available to assist all students in defining and developing their career goals. The job search process requires a great deal of time and energy, so plan ahead. To be successful, you must develop the necessary job seeking skills, focus on a career objective, target companies/organizations of interest and obtain other occupational information to accomplish your objective.

Reading the information contained in this “Career Services Guide for Seniors” is just the first step in this process. We also encourage you to meet individually with a counselor, attend CSC workshops and programs, and utilize our resource library and website in planning your job search.

In today's job market, the successful candidate is the one who has done his or her “homework.” Preparation is the key. So ask for help, take advantage of our services and be an energetic participant in your own career search process.

Sincerely,

The Staff  
Career Services Center

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## **CSC SERVICES**

- Career Counseling
- Mock Interviews
- Pre-Law and Pre-Health Mentor Programs
- Career Workshops
- Full-Time Job Postings
- Summer and Part-Time Employment Options
- Networking Opportunities
- Employer Resume Request
- Career Fair Information
- Web-Based Recruiting
- On-Campus Interviewing
- On-Campus Employment
- Career Information Resources

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# Where Are You in Your Job Search?

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This checklist is designed to assess if you are “on target” in your job search. The way you answer the following questions may yield some important clues. Answer each question “Yes” or “No.” Then tally your “Yes” answers at the end of the form and consider discussing the results with a CSC counselor.

**A. What You Know About Yourself and Your Preferences**

1. Can you clearly state your career goals?
2. Can you explain why you chose your major?
3. Can you describe your greatest strength?  
Your greatest weakness?
4. Can you name the work activities you do best and most enjoy?
5. Can you list at least five job skills and abilities you have?
6. For each of your most important job-related experiences, can you list:
  - a. Five things you did?
  - b. Five things you learned?
  - c. Several contributions you made or things you have accomplished?
7. Have you clearly defined your geographical preferences and limitations.
8. Have you determined your expenses and the salary range you will consider?

**B. What You Know About Employers**

9. Can you name at least three fields of employment into which you might fit?
10. Can you name at least 10 kinds of employers that might hire a person with your background?
11. Can you name at least 10 position titles that might fit you?
12. Do you know four or five resources to help you find the answers to questions 9, 10 and 11 above?
13. Can you name at least four sources of information that could help you discover potential employers in a particular geographical area?
14. In the past month, have you talked to at least three people who are employed in your field of interest with the purpose of learning more about what they do?

15. Can you name five employers to whom you have applied for work in the past two weeks?
16. Are any of these employers curious as to how your skills could help their organization?

**C. Your Job Seeking Contacts to Employers**

17. Do you rely on more than just advertised job vacancy listings as your source of job leads?
18. Have you prepared a resume with which you are satisfied?
19. Have you asked anyone for feedback on your resume? Have you asked employers for feedback on your resume?
20. Are you familiar with the organizational structure, services, programs and products of the employers to whom you are applying?
21. Do you know the questions employers are likely to ask you in an interview?
22. Can you clearly state why you are interested in working for each employer to whom you apply?
23. Have you used any of the following methods to prepare for an interview:
  - Role-playing with a friend or relative?
  - Writing out answers to common interview questions?
  - Role-playing by yourself in front of a mirror?
  - Reading various CSC materials on interviewing or participating in a mock interview?

**Now what?** Add your “Yes” answers for each section and enter them below:

**Section A-Yourself** \_\_\_\_\_

**Section B-Employers** \_\_\_\_\_

**Section C-Contacts** \_\_\_\_\_

**Total Score 25-30:** You are off to a good start! You just need to fine-tune your approach.

**Total Score 1-25:** You need to clarify your goals and spend more time on the job search.

# **Career Services Center**

## **Mission Statement**

The Career Services Center (CSC) serves Xavier students by providing opportunities to gain essential career development, leadership and lifelong learning skills through a variety of developmental programs, services and practical experiences. The center prepares students to articulate and apply the skills gained through their leadership, service and employment experiences to the community at large and life beyond Xavier. The mission of the center is realized by working collaboratively with campus constituents, employers, service providers, civic leaders, students and alumni helping all groups to contribute to and benefit from the learning environment.

To accomplish this mission it is expected that both the CSC and the student will work together. The expected roles each will play in facilitating the career search process are defined below:

### **ROLE OF THE CSC:**

- Assist all students with developing and defining career choices including graduate school.
- Create a program of workshops and counseling services to teach career search skills (resumes, cover letters, interviewing, employer expectations, etc.)
- Serve the needs of employers through employment services and opportunities to interact with students.
- Create opportunities (on-campus recruiting, career fairs, etc.) to give the majority of registered students access to various career opportunities
- Maintain and develop a viable and accurate employment resource (Xavier eRecruiting) to support the career search process.
- Bring employers and students together for career development, college relations and communication.
- Encourage students to create their own job search plan, based on their goals and research in their particular field.

### **STUDENT'S ROLE:**

- Be an active and energetic participant in your career search process.
- Develop the necessary job seeking skills, focus on a career objective, target companies of interest and obtain other occupational information to accomplish your objective.
- Commit to conducting a thorough job search in your particular career area.
- Maintain an accurate file of employment materials for employers (address and phone updates).
- Explore, diagnose and prepare for each employer contact in your career search.
- Inform CSC of all second interviews, employment offers and acceptances (even after graduation).
- Make ethical and responsible decisions concerning interviewing, the accurate portrayal of credentials and consideration of employment offers (commitment).
- Ask for help, take advantage of programs and assume self-responsibility for your career search.

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## Decisions...Decisions!!!

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Employers are saying, “Your degree is not enough.” They are very interested in **career-related work experience**. If you have not defined your career goals or acquired a career-related experience, now is the time to do so.

Some students are very concerned and think: “But I can’t imagine limiting myself to one profession and giving up other possibilities.”

Here is a good response to that concern:

You’re right, up to a point – pursuing a career does mean giving up options. You can’t become a nurse, while simultaneously pursuing full-time careers in teaching, administration and acting. You can look at this negatively, as a terrible limitation, or you can see it positively, as the chance to specialize. While it’s true that in choosing a career you give up the unlimited horizons of childhood where any future seems possible, you now have the exciting opportunity to really know one area, to become an expert.

But let’s not overstate the point about closing off options. Careers, after all, are multidimensional. They let you express different sides of yourself. So

if you do go into nursing, you can still end up teaching nursing, being a hospital administrator or becoming a health educator who draws on acting skills. You grow in careers, too. Your duties change as you gain experience and expertise. Also, don’t forget that you can pursue interests in your free time. If you have a glorious tenor or soprano voice that must be muzzled at the office, it can burst into full song when you clock out at 5:00 p.m.

Bear in mind, too, that a career decision isn’t a lifetime sentence. If you want to try a new career in two, five or even 20 years, then you can switch careers as millions have done.

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## Success Factors: Resume and Interviewing Tips

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- ❑ Attend a CSC resume or interviewing workshop early in the semester.
- ❑ Sign up to participate in a mock interview
- ❑ Stop by the CSC for handouts on resumes, job correspondence and interviewing.
- ❑ Read the current edition of NACE's *Planning Job Choices*. It has good articles on the job search process. The other NACE volumes are employer profiles – find the one for you!
- ❑ Utilize the CSC resource library for books on resumes, cover letters, interviewing and the job search. Also be sure to check McDonald Library for additional career search materials.

### *A Few Suggestions:*

#### Resume Tips

- ✓ Determine the type of resume that would best represent your background as it relates to your career goals. Resumes should be one or two full pages depending on your experience.
- ✓ Ask for input from a CSC counselor, a faculty member or a professional in your desired field and then decide for yourself what advice will work best for you.
- ✓ Appearance counts. Proofread, have others proofread and proofread again. Consider visual appeal. Look at layout, letter size and spacing, and quality reproduction. Make it easy to skim.
- ✓ Tailor your resume to the position you are considering. You will need more than one resume if you are applying for different types of jobs.
- ✓ Emphasize skills, especially those that transfer from one situation to another.
- ✓ Keep your resume saved on the computer for easy updates. Make sure your phone number and e-mail addresses are always current.

#### INTERVIEWING TIPS

- ✓ Preparation is essential. Take a personal inventory of your qualifications for the job.

Also be aware of any factors that you may have to overcome in an interview. Be prepared to talk about what you potentially can do for the organization.

- ✓ Familiarize yourself with the company's history, products and/or services (see literature in the CSC, McDonald Library and on company websites). Be prepared to state and explain your interest in the organization.
- ✓ Prepare at least two good questions about products/services, policies, career path, etc. These should not be questions readily answered by reviewing corporate or agency literature.
- ✓ Anticipate their questions. Work through possible constructive responses that exhibit self-direction, self-awareness, ability to overcome weaknesses, interest in a type of job or industry and a sincere interest in the organization.
- ✓ Be aware of any nonverbal behavior you exhibit. Prepare for the interview by developing a natural, effective communication style.
- ✓ Dress for the interview as you would if you were already employed at that or a similar job. When in doubt, dress in conservative good taste.

- ✓ Allow time to arrive early to the interview. Remember that the interview begins as soon as you enter the door.
- ✓ Near the end of the interview, ask the interviewer for a business card. Keep it for

reference with notes about the interview. Also, use it to properly address the thank you letter that you send as soon after the interview as possible.

## Professional Standards: Ethics in the Job Search

As a student conducting a job search, you are now a potential candidate for employment. With that status there are certain guidelines and expectations required of you by the CSC and your potential employers.

The following principles are based on the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) *Principles for Professional Conduct*. They are intended to provide a framework for the professional relationships between candidates, employers and universities.

- Candidates should conscientiously prepare for the interviewing process and accurately present their qualifications and interests.
- Candidates should honor the policies and procedures of their institution.
- Candidates and student groups should coordinate with the CSC any activities involving organizations that recruit on campus.
- Candidates are responsible for researching the organization prior to an interview.
- Falsifying data, such as GPA, date of graduation, major or minor, institutions attended and eligibility to work in the United States, is not only unethical but may be grounds for dismissal if the candidate begins employment with the organization.
- Candidates should interview only when seriously considering the position for which the organization is interviewing. Interviewing for practice takes advantage of employers.
- Candidates are responsible for notifying organizations of their acceptance or rejection of offers by the earliest possible time and no later than the time mutually agreed upon.
- Candidates should expect offers to be confirmed in writing. Likewise, candidates should respond in writing to offers with acceptances or refusals as soon as they make their decisions, regardless of the deadline date. If candidates have legitimate reasons for extended considerations of offers, they should contact potential employers to establish mutually satisfactory decision dates. Candidates are expected to respond to all organizations whose offers they have received.
- An accepted offer is a contractual agreement that is expected to be honored. After accepting an offer, candidates should withdraw from the interviewing process and notify other organizations with offers pending.
- Continuing to interview after an accepted offer or renegeing on accepted offers is unethical.
- Reimbursements for visits at an organization's expense should only be for those reasonable expenditures pertinent to the trip. If other organizations are visited on the same trip, the candidate should inform the organizations and prorate the costs.

<i>Your job search creates ethical obligations for you as a candidate.</i>	<i>ethical and professional job search.</i>	<i>University depends on your professionalism.</i>
<i>You need to be aware of what it takes to conduct an</i>	<i>Your credibility as a potential employee and as a representative of Xavier</i>	

## Job Search Strategies and Options

As you begin your job search and define your goals in relation to your strengths, skills and values, be open to different kinds of environments in which you might like to work. Here are some options:

**SMALL BUSINESS:** Small business is *big*. As the corporate giants continue to lay off, they are turning toward small businesses to contract out work that was previously completed in-house. So if you or your friends and family have never heard of an organization before, don't be too quick to decide against them. Be sure to research small businesses carefully to try and establish their level of stability. Typically, small businesses do not have the time, resources or long-range hiring plan to interview on-campus. Since their hiring needs are usually more immediate, we often hear from them through our job posting system. Check the full-time listings in the CSC database, and target specific employers to contact on your own.

**NON-PROFIT:** Not-for-profit agencies are often small service-oriented organizations, which, like small businesses, afford employees the opportunity to learn the wide range of the operation. Gaining the skills it takes to be a generalist can prepare you to move up within the non-profit sector or out to the business environment.

**GOVERNMENT:** There are many employment opportunities across disciplines in local, state and federal government. Administrative Careers With America (ACWA) is one example of programs that are available through the government. The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) in Columbus, Ohio has a website for information about job openings.

CSC has a variety of information on government jobs.

**THE HIDDEN JOB MARKET:** "It's not what you know, but who you know." Networking is probably the number one way people land jobs. (See pg. 11 "The Off-Campus Job Search" for more information.)

**MARKETING YOUR LIBERAL ARTS SKILLS:** You'll need to be able to articulate the value of your liberal arts education to employers. Remember, you have gained some very marketable skills.

Here are some examples of career-related liberal arts skills:

**Information Management Skills:** *ability to...*

- Compile and rank information
- Apply information creatively to specific problems and tasks
- Synthesize facts, concepts and principles

**Design and Planning Skills:** *ability to . . .*

- Identify alternative courses of action
- Follow through with a plan or decision
- Manage time effectively
- Set priorities

**Research and Investigation Skills:** *ability to . . .*

- Use a variety of sources of information
- Apply a variety of methods to test the validity of data
- Identify problems and needs

**Communication Skills:** *ability to . . .*

- Listen with objectivity and paraphrase the content of a message
- Use various forms and styles of written communication
- Speak effectively to individuals and groups
- Use media formats to present ideas imaginatively

**Interpersonal Skills:** *ability to . . .*

- Maintain group cooperation and support
- Delegate tasks and responsibilities
- Understand the feelings of others
- Use argumentation techniques to persuade others
- Teach a skill, concept or principle to others

**Critical Thinking Skills:** *ability to . . .*

- Identify quickly and accurately the critical issues when solving a problem
- Identify reasonable criteria for assessing the appropriateness of an action
- Adapt one's concepts and behavior to changing conventions and norms
- Analyze the interrelationships of events and ideas from several perspectives

**Management Skills:** *ability to . . .*

- Identify people who can contribute to the solution of a problem or task
- Motivate and lead people
- Organize people and tasks to achieve specific goals

**Valuing Skills:** *ability to . . .*

- Make decisions that will maximize both individual and collective good
- Appreciate the contributions of art, literature, science and technology to contemporary society
- Identify one's own values
- Assess one's values in relation to important life decisions

**Career Development Skills:** *ability to . . .*

- Develop personal growth goals that are motivating

- Identify and describe skills acquired through formal education and general life experience
- Identify one's strengths and weaknesses
- Accept and learn from negative criticism
- Accept the consequences of one's own actions

***Consider all types of organizations in your search.***

- ***Remember that small businesses, not-for-profit agencies, and local, state and federal government offer many employment opportunities***
- ***Apply your career-related liberal arts skills in your job search.***

**Tips for Teaching Candidates**

1. Display your licensure or certification prominently near the beginning of your resume. It's the bottom line requirement for the school's search.
2. Always include your student teaching as a work experience. It's the most current and relevant snapshot of you as a teacher.
3. Be sure to obtain a copy of *Job Search Handbook for Educators*, a booklet from the American Association for Employment in Education that is packed full of ideas and answers to your job search questions. It addresses topics such as a job search timetable checklist, advice on portfolios, how to select a school district, school expectations and other search tips and strategies.
4. Prepare for the interview by reviewing possible questions with a list available at the center for career and leadership development. For the ultimate interview preparation, schedule a mock interview.

5. Develop a portfolio and know how to quickly identify a few highlights to the recruiter as you

interview. This will ensure that the recruiter views a few key points of your work.

## *The On-Campus Job Search*

Be sure to complete the CSC registration process in order to take advantage of these services:

### *On-Campus Recruiting*

Perhaps the most visible employment service offered by the CSC is On-Campus Recruiting. Beginning in early October, as many as 100 employers visit campus to interview graduating students for entry-level positions. Generally interviews are scheduled at half-hour intervals beginning at 8:30 a.m. and ending at 4:45 p.m. Sign-up for an on-campus interview is managed through Xavier eRecruiting, web-based system. Information on this system appears on a separate sheet accompanying this handbook.

### *No Show Policy for Interviews*

Once you have scheduled an interview, you are responsible for being present at that interview. Interview cancellations will be accepted up to two full business days prior to the day of the scheduled recruiting visit. A student who needs to cancel after a schedule freezes in Xavier eRecruiting must contact the CSC at 745-3140. Late cancellation will be considered the same as a “no show” as outlined in the following.

**“No Shows”** - If you miss an interview, your file will be designated inactive. Before you can sign up for any other interview schedules, you must write a letter to the company explaining the reason you missed the interview. This letter must be reviewed by CSC prior to being sent to the employer. We must be copied on the email you send to the employer with the attached letter prior to being reactivated in the eRecruiting system. A student

who misses two interviews in a year will be suspended for the remainder of the year.

### *Company Information*

1. Be sure to check the Employer Profile and Job Details sections of Xavier eRecruiting for information regarding specific on-campus recruitment positions.
2. Also check the company website and/or read any literature prior to your interview. This literature is available in the CSC resource library and you can connect to a company’s URL through Xavier eRecruiting.

### *Job Listing Resources*

The CSC receives hundreds of full-time job listings each year. As a student registered for CSC employment services, you will have access to these job listings through Xavier eRecruiting 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. You will be able to search job listings based on a variety of criteria including career interest area, location, major, etc. These same job listings are then filed in the Resource Library by category. Black binders contain business, technical, health/human services, public administration, education and communication listings.

The CSC also subscribes to many national employment newsletters covering business, social services, communications, and government. These are especially helpful if you will be doing a long distance job search.

## *The Off-Campus Job Search*

You will need to spend much of your time on the off-campus job search. Once again, the key will be having some clear-cut goals in mind, knowing your strengths and how they fit with the needs of a potential employer.

### **Targeting Employers**

When it comes to identifying employers, the most successful job seekers are able to answer three critical questions.

1. What do you want to do?
  - knowing a job title within a specific career field.
2. In what industry do you want to work?
  - government, business, non-profit, university, etc.
3. Where do you want to be geographically?
  - Midwest, Northeast, Southeast, etc.

If you are able to answer these questions, you are ready to focus on the specific employer and position in which you are interested. There are a number of resources available to job searchers in every community.

If you plan to stay in the Greater Cincinnati area, *The Greater Cincinnati Business and Industry Directory* put out by the Chamber of Commerce is a good resource to find lists of employers grouped by the Standard Industrial Codes. If you'll be looking out of the area, each city's Chamber of Commerce produces a similar publication.

The CSC has some information on companies that do not recruit on campus. McDonald Library has a section on Company Annual Reports. Also check Global Access, the database in the library's computerized reference area.

### **Private Employment Agencies or Placement Firms:**

Check to see whether they have openings in their database that match your interests and determine whether the contract is "fee paid" by their clients. Otherwise you will have to pay the commission fee.

### **Office of Personnel Management or other Public Employment Agencies:**

These centralized offices maintain vast files on employment opportunities.

### **Temporary Agencies:**

An excellent way to make inside contacts at companies and move into full-time positions. At the same time, you earn money without the commitment of a full-time position while job hunting.

### **Local Job and Career Fairs:**

An excellent resource to tap into a local job market, most job and career fairs are advertised in community papers or the CSC.

### **Public Libraries, Community-based Centers and Chambers of Commerce:**

These sources offer information on job searches, local companies and organizations, and types of positions available locally.

Once you have identified employer targets, use these tips to make that connection as successful as possible.

1. Conduct research on the employer.
  - Learn about the organizational structure, various operations, profit and growth areas, professional growth opportunities, career path and overall performance of products and services.
2. Match your skills to the target job position and organization.
  - Look at the position description and identify those skills that best correlate with your own.
  - If a job description does not exist, do the same exercise for the organization.

- Target your resume and cover letter to the organization's and/or job position's needs.

3. Send letters of inquiry and your resume to these employers.

- Use the names found through the employer targeting process as the contact person for the particular organization. State in the letter that you will follow up with a telephone call to request an interview. If you have no contacts, call the organization and ask them to whom this letter should be sent.

4. Follow up the letter and resume within one to two weeks.

- Call and request an interview to discuss present or future job opportunities.

- If the employer states he/she does not have any openings, ask to set up an appointment to learn more about the organization.

- If the employer states he/she is too busy, ask him/her to recommend someone else with whom to speak.

5. Maintain contact with employers.

- Update your employer contact every month or so to determine whether new opportunities exist.

## Using the Internet

The Internet can be a tremendous resource for finding job listings, company information and job searching advice. One can use the Internet in the following ways:

- To target employers by searching under certain subject headings. (Type in Public Relations and you will find listings of home pages of Public Relations Firms.)
- Search for job openings in a variety of fields. There are many excellent sites that simply list open jobs at all levels from entry-level to executive.
- Access the home pages of companies that you are interested in and search their human resources page, which often contains job openings for that company.
- Check out the career website of the CSC at: [www.xu.edu/career](http://www.xu.edu/career) This site will provide additional information about our services and contains links to other valuable web sites.

## Networking

Networking is meeting, developing and cultivating professional relationships in your area of interest. One way to begin a network is to conduct informational interviews.

Informational interviewing is a way to learn more about a specific occupation by talking with someone who actually works in the job. An informational interview is usually conducted at the professional's place of business so you can get a feel for the work environment. The purpose of this type of interview is to gather information, **not** to ask for a job.

When contacting potential informational interviewees, you will find that most people are receptive to your request of spending 20 or 30 minutes talking about their jobs and career path. Again, be clear about your intentions of gathering information.

Here are some resources to explore in order to gather possible contact names for informational interviewing:

- The presidents of the various Xavier University National Alumni Chapters
- The Chamber of Commerce Directories
- Professional associations' membership lists/meetings
- Company literature
- Family, friends, professors, previous employers

Stop by the CSC for a list of sample questions to ask in informational interviewing, or sign up for an appointment with a counselor to discuss potential candidates for informational interviews.

## *Job Fairs*

Job fairs are great time savers. Many employers are gathered in one place, on one day to talk with you about potential employment. Here are some suggestions for making the most of a job fair:

### **Preparing for a Job Fair:**

\* Clarify your goals and what you want to get out of the job fair. Check to be sure your goals and expectations are consistent with the purpose of the event. Employers attend job fairs for several reasons: to increase awareness of their organization; to provide career information; to increase their applicant pool, and to locate good candidates for jobs they are trying to fill now or in the future.

\* Research the employers and narrow the list to the most promising. Know enough about these employers to tell why you are interested and to connect your background to their needs.

\* Prepare a resume that presents your background and interests clearly and concisely. Employers will want to know about your education, such as your major, relevant courses and GPA, as well as your employment experiences, extracurricular activities and volunteer work.

\* Prepare a one-minute “commercial” that introduces yourself, demonstrates that you know something about the organization and the work it does, expresses why you are interested in the organization and briefly relates your background to what you know about the employer’s needs.

\* Practice your commercial, and try to anticipate the kinds of questions employers might ask and prepare sample answers.

The best way to make a positive lasting impression is by relating your interests and goals to what you know or can discover about the employer’s needs. When approaching an employer you know little about, ask several probing questions that will obtain information needed to connect your background, interests and goals.

\* Prepare questions you want employers to answer.

### **During the Job Fair – Getting the Message Across**

Employers will be impressed by job candidates who:

- Dress and act professionally
- Demonstrate confidence, interest and enthusiasm
- Have good non-verbal skills and avoid distracting mannerisms
- Answer questions clearly and concisely
- Ask questions that demonstrate knowledge of their chosen field and that are appropriate (e.g, avoid initial questions about salary and benefits)

- Are well-organized and have their resumes available

### **The Follow-Up**

It is important to take the initiative to make timely, appropriate and effective follow-up. Before leaving an employer, ask how you should best follow-up, who the contact person is and do they have a business card. Ask the employer how soon it will be before you hear from the organization and/or if you should call or write yourself. Obtaining a business card from the employer is helpful.

### **CSC Job Fairs:**

The CSC hosts two career fairs annually. In the early fall, the "Business & Industry Career Apo offers students interested in careers in business and industry the opportunity to meet with a variety of companies and organizations. Each spring, the CSC hosts the “Spring Career & Internship Fair that showcases as many as 100 employers representing non-profit, health care, educational and business organizations. Check with the CSC for dates times and details for both fairs.

## *The Long Distance Job Search*

If you are looking for a job out of state, there are many things you can do before graduating. Listed below are some suggestions of things to do while you are on campus and when you are in your desired location.

### THINGS TO DO WHILE ON CAMPUS

1. Have someone send you the help wanted ads from the Sunday newspaper to educate you about the hiring trends. The want ads section of many newspapers can also be found on the Internet – free of charge and accessible on the day of the publication.
2. The CSC's Resource Library contains a great deal of information on different cities, (*NACE Annuals, Job Bank Series, etc.*), which list names and addresses of organizations by career field.
3. Consult the telephone Yellow Pages for lists of potential employers.
4. Contact the Xavier Alumni Chapter President in the area to find out about the local job market and the date of the next alumni club event
5. Consult with a Alumni Association for help identifying individuals to contact for informational interviews in Cincinnati. This way you can learn about various careers and industries before relocating.
6. Ask the CSC office to draft a letter for you requesting reciprocal services at local university career centers. Follow up by calling those universities to learn which resources you can access.
7. Find out when professional associations in your field of interest will meet next.

8. Ask the local Chamber of Commerce to send you any newcomer materials or lists of employers.

### THINGS TO DO WHEN YOU ARE IN THE RELOCATION AREA

1. Visit the local state employment office to inquire about career field trends in hiring new college graduates. Consult their job vacancy listings.
2. Consult the current job listings and campus recruiting schedule at local colleges that will grant reciprocity. Consult the bulletin boards for career fairs in the area.
3. Conduct no more than three "informational interviews" a day with alumni or potential employers. These meetings should focus on gathering information regarding the local job market and the individual's career field.
4. Visit real estate agents and apartment rental services to determine rents, cost of living, etc.
5. Consult the bulletin boards in human resources offices of potential employers for job vacancies (you don't need an appointment for this).
6. Look for intern jobs; contact temporary employment agencies.

### FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

- ◆ Promptly send thank you letters to everyone you interviewed or who provided any assistance.
- ◆ Send resumes and cover letters requesting an interview to employers for whom you would like to work. Follow-up assertively.

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# Analyzing Your Potential Employer

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There are many important areas of preparation to deal with prior to the interview. By thoroughly preparing, you increase your chances of making a positive first impression. One of the most important steps involves researching the company.

It is annoying for a recruiter to talk with a candidate who doesn't have any knowledge about the company. A favorite question asked is, "Why are you interested in our organization?" If you don't know anything about the employer, you won't be able to answer the question intelligently.

Researching the organization also helps determine whether your goals will fit the promotional structures defined by that employer. For example, there are some employers who have a reputation for being conservative and if you cannot fit in with this type of work environment, you know that talking to the recruiter would be a waste of time.

## Organization Is the Key to Success

It's wise to begin researching weeks before your interview. You may find reams of information and you must be able to sort out the pertinent information and retain the key facts. Additionally, it may be difficult to find some information and some digging will be required.

If you are interviewing with a number of different employers, it's smart to keep a file on each one. As you do more research, the file will help you keep facts organized, making the preparation easier.

The information in each file should include articles from periodicals or newspapers, tips and comments from others, and annual reports. When it is time to prepare for the interview, you can organize the information in a way that will impress the recruiter during the interview.

## What Information to Look For

Before hunting for background information about a potential employer, first ascertain what kind of information you're looking for. Then determine where to find that information. Take this research project one step at a time and allow yourself enough time.

*It's a mistake to assume you know enough about the organization without doing any research.* You may be talking with a subsidiary of a much larger company and not realize it if you don't do your research.

Some information will not be available and you should ask the recruiter for clarification during the interview. Tell the interviewer you are aware of certain policies within the organization (thus proving you have some knowledge of the company), but would like to discuss certain management policies in more detail.

Never leave the interview without knowing the recruiter's name (including correct spelling), title and address. This information will be invaluable when you begin your correspondence with the organization. If you are not comfortable asking the recruiter, consult the CSC for this information or contact the company.

### **Facts to Know about the Organization**

- ◆ Size of organization in industry
- ◆ Potential growth
- ◆ Annual sales growth for past five years
- ◆ Complete product line or services
- ◆ Potential new products or services
- ◆ Competition
- ◆ Age of top management and their backgrounds
- ◆ Geographical locations
- ◆ Location of corporate headquarters
- ◆ Number of plants, stores and outlets
- ◆ Organizational structure
- ◆ Type of training program
- ◆ Promotional path
- ◆ Recent developments via news stories
- ◆ Relocation policies
- ◆ Typical career path in your field
- ◆ Name and correct spelling of recruiter
- ◆ History of organization

## **Information Sources Available**

Researching an organization can be done through a variety of sources. The primary source should be annual reports and employment brochures. While this information is prepared by the organization and includes predominantly positive information, it is a good starting place. All publicly held companies are required to report to their stockholders via annual reports. If the library does not have the necessary information, you can contact the organization directly.

The library should also have different business periodicals and newspapers. Robert G. Traxel, author of *Manager's Guide to Successful Job Hunting*, suggests using the following publications:

1. *The Wall Street Journal*
2. *Barron's*
3. *Dun's Review*
4. *Business Week*
5. *Forbes*
6. *Fortune*
7. Trade Publications

There are also directories available that can be useful sources. Check with the reference librarian and ask for advice. If the library doesn't have the information you need, they can often refer you to an alternative source. Useful directories include:

1. Standard and Poor's corporation records
2. Dun and Bradstreet reference library
3. Moody's manuals
4. *Thomas Register of American Manufacturers*

## **Is It Really Necessary?**

This may seem like a lot of trouble to go through just to be prepared for the interview. Finding the right job is hard work and should be approached in such a manner as to stack the odds in your favor.

There is keen competition and you're trying to market a product – yourself – successfully. There is rarely a professional position open that does not draw at least five highly qualified applicants.

Remember, you are trying to create a positive impression by appearing informed and goal-directed. One way to demonstrate your goals is to indicate during the interview what interested you in the specific organization and how your goals, qualifications and personality fit that employer's opportunities.

You only get one chance to leave the right impression; so take the time to do your homework and research the organization.

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# How to Read an Annual Report

By Jane Bryant Quinn

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To some business people I know, curling up with a good annual report is almost more exciting than getting lost in John le Carre's latest spy thriller.

But to you it might be another story. "Who needs that?" I can hear you ask. *You* do – if you're going to gamble any of your future *working* for a company, *investing* in it, or *selling* to it.

## Why should you bother?

Say you've got a job interview at Galactic Industries. Well, what does the company do? Does its future look good? Or will the next recession leave your part of the business on the beach?

Or say you're thinking of investing your own hard-earned money in its stock. Sales are up. But are its profits getting better or worse?

Or say you're going to supply it with a lot of parts. Should you extend Galactic plenty of credit or keep it on a short leash?

## How to get one

You'll find answers in its annual report. Where do you find *that*? Your library should have the annual reports of nearby companies plus leading national ones. It also has listings of companies' financial officers and their addresses so you can write for annual reports.

So now Galactic Industries' latest annual report is sitting in front of you ready to be cracked. How do you crack it?

Where do we start? *Not* at the front. At the *back*! We don't want to be surprised at the end of *this* story.

## Start at the back

First, turn back to the report of the *certified public accountant*. This third party auditor will tell you right off the bat if Galactic's report conforms with "generally accepted accounting principles."

Watch out for the words "subject to." They mean the financial report is clean *only* if you take the company's word about a particular piece of business, and the accountant isn't sure you should. Doubts like this are usually settled behind closed

doors. When a "subject to" makes it into the annual report, it could mean trouble.

What else should you know before you check the numbers?

Stay in the back of the book and go to the *footnotes*. Yep! The whole profits story is sometimes in the footnotes.

Are earnings down? If it's only because of a change in accounting, maybe that's good! The company owes less tax and has more money in its pocket. Are earnings up? Maybe that's bad. They may be up because of a special windfall that won't happen again next year. The footnotes know.

## For what happened and why

Now turn to the letter *from the chairman*. Usually addressed "to our stockholders," it's up front, and *should* be in more ways than one. The chairman's tone reflects the personality, the well-being of his company.

In his letter he should tell you how his company fared this year. But more important, he should tell you *why*. Keep an eye out for sentences that start with "Except for . . ." and "Despite the..." They're clues to problems.

## Insights into the future

On the positive side, a chairman's letter should give you insights into the company's future and its *stance* on economic or political trends that may affect it.

While you're up front, look for what's new in each line of business. Is management getting the company in good shape to weather the tough and competitive economy?

Now – and no sooner – should you dig into the numbers!

One source is the *balance sheet*. It is a snapshot of how the company stands at a single point in time. On the left are *assets* -- everything the company owns. Things that can quickly be turned into cash are *current assets*. On the right are *liabilities* – everything the company owes. *Current*

*liabilities* are the debts due in one year, which are paid out of current assets.

The difference between current assets and current liabilities is net working capital, a key figure to watch from one annual (and quarterly) report to another. If working capital shrinks, it could mean trouble. One possibility: the company may not be able to keep dividends growing rapidly.

## Look for growth here

*Stockholder's equity* is the difference between total assets and liabilities. It is the presumed dollar value of what stockholders own. You want it to grow.

Another important number to watch is *long-term debt*. High and rising debt, relative to equity, may be no problem for a growing business. But it shows weakness in a company that's leveling out.

The second basic source of numbers is the *income statement*. It shows how much money Galactic made or lost over the year.

Most people look at one figure first. It's in the income statement at the bottom: *net earnings per share*. Watch out. It can fool you. Galactic's management could boost earnings by selling off a plant. Or by cutting the budget for research and advertising. So don't be smug about net earnings until you've found out how they happened – and how they might happen next year.

## Check net sales first

The number you *should* look at first in the income statement is *net sales*. Ask yourself: Are sales going up *at a faster rate* than the last time around? When sales increases start to slow, the company may be trouble. Also ask: Have sales gone up faster than inflation? If not, the company's real sales may be behind. And ask yourself once more: Have sales gone down because the company is selling off a losing business? If so, profits may be soaring.

## Get out your calculator

Another important thing to study today is the company's debt. Get out your pocket calculator, and turn to the balance sheet. Divide long-term

liabilities by stockholders' equity. That's the *debt-to-equity ratio*.

A high ratio means that the company borrows a lot of money to spark its growth. That's okay – if sales grow, too, and if there's enough cash on hand to meet the payments. A company doing well on borrowed money can earn big profits for its stockholders. But if sales fall, watch out. The whole enterprise may slowly sink. Some companies can handle high ratios, others can't.

## You have to compare

That brings up the most important thing of all: One annual report, *one* chairman's letter, *one* ratio won't tell you much. You have to compare. Is the company's debt-to-equity ratio better or worse than it used to be? Better or worse than industry norms? Better or worse, after this recession, than it was after the last recession? In company-watching, *comparisons are all*. They tell you if management is staying on top of things.

Financial analysts work out many other ratios to tell them how the company is doing. You can learn more about them from books on the subject. Ask your librarian.

But one thing you will never learn from an annual report is how much to pay for a company's stock. Galactic may be running well. But if investors expected it to run better, the stock might fall. Or, Galactic could be slumping badly. But if investors see a better day tomorrow, the stock could rise.

## Two important suggestions

Those are some basics for weighing a company's health from its annual report. But if you want to know all you can about a company, you need to do a little more homework. First, see what the business press has been saying about it over recent years. Again, ask your librarian.

Finally, you should keep up with what's going on in business, economics and politics here and around the world. All can – and will – affect you and the companies you're interested in.

Each year, companies give you more and more information in their annual reports. Profiting from that information is up to you. I hope you profit from mine.

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# Evaluation/Negotiation of an Offer

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## Evaluating an Offer

Evaluating an offer may require that you review again the factors that you identified as important to you during the self-assessment stage of your job search.

Issues you should consider in order to effectively evaluate an offer in relation to your own skills, interests and values include:

- Responsibilities, tasks, scope of work, skills needed
- Working conditions, size of organization
- Colleagues, supervisor
- Performance Reviews (frequency, process)
- Salary, salary review and increases
- Training and development opportunities
- Professional membership and association activities
- Taxes (federal, state, local)
- Insurance benefits
- Retirement savings plan
- Vacation time
- Profit sharing opportunities
- Geographic location
- Signing bonus
- Relocation allowances
- Educational reimbursement
- Lifestyle issues
- Likelihood of geographic transfer
- Number of hours expected in a typical work week/day
- Parking, transportation
- Travel on the job
- Job security

For most students salary is a principal factor in evaluating an offer. Can I live on this salary given the costs I will incur on a weekly or monthly basis? In addition to helping you determine the viability of living on the offered salary, knowing these costs gives you the knowledge to negotiate salary if appropriate. At left are three budgets associated with a range of typical entry-level salaries. Use this chart as a guide to evaluate a salary offered.

## Negotiating an Offer

Negotiation of an offer can take place on a number of issues including salary, start dates, benefits, job responsibilities, titles, travel and sign-on bonuses. It is also common to negotiate the time frame in which you must accept or reject the offer itself.

The organization has invested a great deal of interest in you and in turn you are seriously considering their offer. It is, therefore, essential that negotiations be handled professionally and confidently. Listed below are some tips to prepare you for a negotiation session.

- Determine the factors you wish to negotiate.
- Be prepared to support your position with examples.
- Be willing to listen to the employer's issues and find common ground.
- Be prepared to accept an offer if the issue can be settled.

**It is often not possible to negotiate salary for an entry-level position**, but it is still appropriate to follow up with questions about a signing bonus, a 60-, 90- or 120-day performance review and raise, annual bonuses and supplements to salary (car, gas and insurance)

If you are not ready to accept the offer, it is appropriate to ask for more time in which to consider it. You may have other offers to consider or simply be unsure of whether the offer matched the hopes and expectations you have for your first job. While these are valid reasons to pause, companies may pressure you to make a decision. Once again you need to be specific in your assertions as to why you need more time. Ultimately the match between you and the employer will be best if you can take the time upfront to evaluate all opportunities. The employer does not want a dissatisfied employee who made a hasty decision nor do you want to look back at your decision with regret.

### **If You Have Other Offers:**

Explain this to the employer. Reinforce your interest in the offered position along with your need to carefully evaluate the others as well. You can explain that this process will assure that you have investigated the position against your skills and interests will result in far more informed answer and more confident employee ultimately.

### **If You Do Not Have Other Offers:**

Explain to the employer that you need to explore other similar opportunities for the same reasons you would if you had other offers.

If the employer accepts your request for time, you will need to give a specific date by which you will respond, and you need to maintain that commitment by getting back to the organization within the agreed upon time frame, so that they are then able to pursue other candidates for the position they must fill if you turn the offer down.

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## **Considering Graduate School**

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If you are considering graduate school as your next career step, it is important to consider such a decision carefully. Graduate work is an intensified and specialized course of study requiring a great deal of time and energy; attending graduate school

also requires a large financial commitment. We suggest that your decision to attend graduate school be the result of careful introspection and planning.

The first issue to consider in making plans for graduate work is timing. Is it necessary for your career/personal goals to attend graduate school directly after receiving your bachelor's degree? Do the graduate programs in your field of interest look more positively on applicants with some work experience behind them? Can you acquire an entry-level position in your field and have your employer send you on for graduate work when job responsibilities require more training? Is your interest in graduate work personal or professional? If personal, do you feel ready and able to make the necessary time and financial commitments? If your interest is professional, is it imperative that you pursue graduate training now in order to further your career goals? Obviously, there are many questions to ask yourself before making the decision to attend graduate school. It is also important to set your personal and professional goals and priorities before looking at graduate work as an option.

Here are some specific questions to ask yourself:

1. How do you feel about studying? Do you feel ready to continue your studies in a more intense and specialized manner?
2. Do you know what course of study you want to pursue in graduate school? Can you imagine focusing your energies on the subject area for eight or more hours each day.
3. Can you afford more schooling? Graduate school, in the short term, is not an income-producing venture. Financial aid for graduate students is limited.
4. What are you hoping to accomplish through graduate work (the challenge of mastering a particular academic specialty, a job requiring advanced study, etc.)?
5. Are you going to graduate school as a last resort because you can't find a job in your field or don't want to tackle the employment market? Before pursuing graduate work:
  - a. Explore the job market in your field of interest. See if there are opportunities open at the bachelor's degree level. Remember – the employment market, like graduate school, requires time, patience and hard work.

- b. Research graduate programs thoroughly to determine how your time will be spent, what the financial obligations will be and how you will be able to use your graduate degree in the job market or in your future plans.
- c. Do some self-exploration. Try to determine if you are ready for the time and energy commitments graduate work entails.

## How to Research Graduate Programs

1. **Xavier's Graduate Studies Advisory Committee**  
- Contact the chair of this committee for information on scholarships and fellowships.
2. **Faculty Members** – Individual faculty members in a program related to the field you would like to pursue can be excellent resources in recommending programs worth considering.
3. **Other People Working in Your Field of Interest** – Such people are often invaluable resources as many have been through graduate programs themselves.
4. **Professional Associations** – Professional associations are made up of working professionals in particular fields. These associations often serve as clearinghouses for information related to their respective fields. You can write to some associations in your area of interest and request lists of accredited graduate programs.
5. **Contact Graduate Schools Directly** – The best way to acquire information on graduate programs in your field is to contact them directly and request descriptive information and course catalogues and/or check out information on the web. Try to visit schools in person so you can speak with faculty members and currently enrolled students.

Once you acquire this information, you can then begin narrowing down your list. When trying to choose programs, consider the focus of the program, course/thesis requirements, opportunities for practical experience, caliber of students, size of program, faculty (who are they? what kinds of

research/writing have they done?), and the future prospects for graduates. Allow yourself a range in the types of programs to which you apply. Since competition for admission to graduate school is keen, you may want to include alternative choices to help ensure your admission.

- Applications requirements differ substantially among institutions and programs, so read each school's material conscientiously to make sure you file a complete and timely application.
- Admission tests are generally required for most graduate schools. Check when your applications are due to make sure that you take the test on an early enough date. Some admissions tests are:
  - GRE (Graduate Record Examination) – Arts and Sciences
  - GMAT (Graduate Management Admission Test) – Business
  - LSAT (Law School Admission Test) – Law
  - MCAT (Medical College Admissions Test) – Medical
  - MAT (Miller Analogy Test) –Education
- Official transcripts of your undergraduate work must be sent to the graduate school to which you are applying.
- Letters of recommendation are also usually required for admission. It is best to get three letters of recommendations to send to your schools. Usually a student asks two professors in their major for letters of recommendation, and a professor or advisor from another field. Try to get a person that has known you and your work for a while.

Give your selected references pertinent details about you to include in their letter.

- Graduate schools usually require an essay so that they can get a better idea of your writing skills. These essays may include topics such as goals, philosophy, accomplishments, etc. There are books available to help you in preparing your application and essay so be sure to check the library before you begin this process.

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# Countdown to Graduation

(Give your job search at least one hour a week until you graduate.)

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1. Plan of Action
  - Schedule time with yourself daily
  - Do a self assessment
  - Define your short-term and long-term goals and objectives
  - Set a time schedule to achieve your short-term goals
  - Define the specific type of job you want or your graduate school next steps
2. Create or Update Your Resume
  - Use the resources and handouts available in the CSC
  - Ask five people to review your resume, including a CSC counselor
3. Mock Interview
  - Schedule one with a CSC counselor
4. Informational Interviewing
  - Obtain the names of Xavier alumni and others who are willing to meet with you for informational interviews via Alumni & Friends
  - Arrange more than one informational interview
5. Network
  - Write down the names of 50 potential networking contacts (family, friends, previous employers, acquaintances from professional associations, professors, etc.)
  - Get the word out that you are looking for a job – each week contact 10 of the names on your list
6. Direct Mail Campaign
  - Identify the employers in your preferred geographic area
  - Send a targeted cover letter and resume to those companies
  - Follow up with a phone call – get a contact name
7. Check Job Listings
  - Go to the library or subscribe to newspapers from your geographic preference area
  - Check eRecruiting weekly
  - Check third party job boards such as [jobcentral.com](http://jobcentral.com) and [idealists.org](http://idealists.org)
8. Broaden Your Horizon
  - Consider geographic areas
  - Think of other fields which can use your skills
  - Remember to consider medium-sized and smaller companies
9. Consider the “Plan B” Options for Employment
  - Create a second resume targeting temporary or part-time employers
  - Conduct a parallel job search (two different full-time searches at the same time)
  - Consider volunteering in a non-profit organization related to your career goals
10. Hang In There

- Remain optimistic and persistent. In today's job market not having a job at the time of graduation is not uncommon.

## **NOTES**