

CAREER

GUIDE



CAREER
DEVELOPMENT

CAREER DEVELOPMENT

The Career Development staff is available to assist you with your major, career, and job/graduate school search and planning.

Our office is located in 530 Conaton Learning Commons. We are open 8:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

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FINDING JOB AND INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

1. NETWORKING:

- Talk to people you know; ask for advice and get referrals to their connections.
- Discuss career goals with faculty, staff, and career coaches.
- Conduct informational interviews and job shadowing visits.
- Attend career and networking events.
- Join professional and student organizations.
- Develop a professional profile on LinkedIn and a positive online presence.
- Talk to current supervisors about turning your internship into a full-time job after graduation.
- Contact the XU Alumni Chapter in your geographic area of interest.

2. ONLINE:

- Search available and previous postings at xavier.edu/hireamuskie.
- Search job search boards specific to your field of interest.
- Use the "Jobs" feature on LinkedIn.
- If searching abroad, use GoinGlobal (accessed via xavier.edu/hireamuskie).
- Use job boards within professional organization websites.

3. ON-CAMPUS RECRUITING:

- Attend employer panels and information sessions.
- Sign up for on-campus interviews.
- Attend the Fall and Spring Career Fairs, Education Fair, Grad School/Year of Service Fair, and Meet the Firms events.
- Schedule a resumé critique or mock interview with an employer.



DO

- ✓ Utilize several job search strategies.
- ✓ Tailor your resumé and cover letter for every application.
- ✓ Research the employers to whom you are applying.
- ✓ Dress professionally for interviews.
- ✓ Refine your online search terms to find positions that fit your skills.



DON'T

- ✗ Don't procrastinate! Employers start recruiting in August each academic year.
- ✗ Don't get discouraged. According to Money magazine, the average job-search process takes just over six weeks.
- ✗ Don't apply to jobs you're not interested in.
- ✗ Don't continue to job search/ interview after you have accepted an offer.



LinkedIn® ...IT'S MORE THAN JUST A PROFILE!

Does this sound familiar? You open a LinkedIn account, create a basic profile, rarely update it and log on only to accept connection invitations. Here's the thing: LinkedIn is about so much more than just having a profile. It's useful to you not only in your job and internship search, but also as a growing professional. Meet with a career coach to learn more and create a stronger profile.

FINDING JOBS AND INTERNSHIPS

Input your search terms and location on the "Jobs" tab of LinkedIn. Use the filters at the top to refine your search and get to a reasonable number of results. Try filtering by full-time, part-time, specific location, industry, experience level, and others. Use caution when filtering by salary; those results are often an estimation by LinkedIn rather than a salary actually posted by the employer.

Be found by a recruiter! Keeping your profile up-to-date with industry-specific keywords helps recruiters find you. There is also an option to show recruiters you are open to being contacted.

CAREER EXPLORATION

Not sure what you want to do with your major or what companies hire people with your major? Use the Alumni page ([linkedin.com/alumni](https://www.linkedin.com/alumni)) to see the Xavier alumni on LinkedIn. You can filter that database by major, industry, geographic area, and job function. Search for job titles that interest you, such as "business analyst" or "occupational therapist." The results will show you where XU alumni work, their career paths, and potential companies that might have jobs or internships available. This approach could help find job titles or companies you've not considered.

INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS

Want to talk with someone from a specific company or in a certain career? Use the search box to find connections on LinkedIn and request a meeting, phone conversation or to connect. In your request, be specific about why you are reaching out; do NOT use the generic message.

TIP:

If in the same group, such as "Xavier University Alumni," you can direct message a contact by searching for that contact within the group page.

TIP:

When requesting a meeting/phone call, the focus is on learning about the contact's experience. Do NOT ask for a job lead! See the "Informational Interviewing" section of this book for sample questions to ask.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Professional Development is one of the most overlooked parts of LinkedIn. Yes, LinkedIn is fantastic for posting your profile and looking for jobs and companies. However, it can also be used as a professional development tool. Join groups based on your industry and interests. The more you use LinkedIn, the more customized your home page and results will become. Articles will show up specific to your customizations. Check them out to see what's trending in your areas of interest (useful for interviews) and who the movers and shakers are.

These quick tips can help you truly maximize your LinkedIn experience. Not sure about details or hesitant on how to proceed? No problem. Make an appointment with a Career Coach or visit during our daily drop-in hours. We would love to assist!

INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWING

INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS ARE ONE ASPECT OF NETWORKING IN WHICH **YOU, THE INTERVIEWER, ARE ASKING FOR INFORMATION, NOT A JOB.** THE KNOWLEDGE GAINED FROM AN INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW CAN HELP YOU DETERMINE WHICH COURSES AND QUALIFICATIONS ARE NECESSARY FOR SPECIFIC CAREER PATHS, THE TYPES OF JOBS OR COMPANIES BEST SUITED FOR YOU, WHAT SKILLS YOU MAY WANT TO GAIN, AND MORE. ALL WHILE INCREASING YOUR NETWORK WITHIN YOUR FIELD OF INTEREST. FOR BEST RESULTS, **TREAT THIS LIKE A PROFESSIONAL INTERVIEW.**

INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWING CAN HELP YOU:

- Discover jobs that are not publicly advertised.
- Expand your knowledge of the job market in the field you want to explore.
- Learn how to become a more qualified candidate.
- Build support for your job search.
- Investigate a specific career field.
- Uncover career options you never knew existed.
- Assist in narrowing (or expanding) options.
- Obtain advice on where your skills might be best applied.
- Learn about important issues in a career field.
- Broaden your own network of contacts for future reference.

HOW TO SCHEDULE AN INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW

There are several ways to schedule an informational interview, limited only by your creativity and initiative. However, it is important to remember most professionals prefer appointments. Therefore, it is strongly recommended to call a person to schedule an appointment or request an informational interview by email.

MAKE SURE YOUR EMAIL INCLUDES:

- The name of the person whom you are contacting.
- The purpose of your communication: "Seeking advice, perspective, and to learn about your career path."
- The action that you want them to take: "Set up a time for an interview at your convenience."



From: Anita Job
To:
Cc: John Smyth
Subject: Advice and Perspective

Dear Mr. Smyth,

I am a junior business student at Xavier University and am interested in working at XYZ Employer. I saw your profile on LinkedIn and am interested in how you arrived at your position and what your career path has looked like. Would it be possible to buy you coffee and chat? I would love to hear more about your story and see what advice you might have for me. If your schedule doesn't allow, may we talk via phone or email at your convenience?

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Anita Job
555-555-5555

INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWING

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PREPARING FOR THE INTERVIEW:

- *Keep in mind that you are investigating a career and trying to establish a network at the same time.*
- *Research the organization.*
- *Prepare your questions. See sample questions.*
- *Keep your purpose in mind.*
- *Dress professionally or business casual.*

DURING THE INTERVIEW:

- *Be yourself and relax. Remember, you are the interviewer, and this is NOT a job interview.*
- *Take notes during the interview.*
- *Ask for the names of others you can contact, "Who else do you recommend I reach out to in order to learn more?"*
- *Keep the door open for further contact by asking if you could connect on LinkedIn and maintain communication.*

AFTER THE INTERVIEW:

- *Send a thank you email within two days after your interview.*
- *Send a LinkedIn invite to connect.*
- *Follow up on anything you discussed during the meeting.*

SAMPLE QUESTIONS:

What are the most interesting aspects of your job?

What do you do in a typical day?

How did you enter this job/career?

What part of your work do you consider dull or repetitious?

How would you recommend someone break into this field?

What educational background or certification is required?

What kind of experience would help in this career?

Are there specific courses a student might take that would be particularly beneficial in this field?

What are the disadvantages and advantages of this career?

Is a great deal of travel connected with this job?

What types of training do companies give to people entering this field?

What technologies are integrated into this career?

What recommendations would you have for an entry-level person considering this career?

What special advice would you give to a young person entering this field?

How do you see the jobs in the field changing over the next 10 years? How can I best prepare for these changes?

How can I learn more about this career/job?

What professional organizations are active and responsive in this career field?

Who would you recommend I contact for more information about this career?

RESUMÉS: THE GOOD, THE BAD *and the* LENGTHY

WHY YOU NEED A STRONG RESUMÉ:

- A strong resumé gets you the interview. (The interview gets you the job!)
- An employer spends an average of 15-20 seconds reviewing a resumé.

WHEN YOU NEED A STRONG RESUMÉ:

- Internship Search
- Job Search
- Networking
- Career Fairs
- Job Interviews
- Application for awards and campus/community involvement
- Graduate school admission (depending on your program, you may need a curriculum vitae/CV)



TOP RESUMÉ WRITING TIPS

1. Your goal is to create a visually appealing, concise, easy-to-read, informative and compelling resumé.
2. Be honest and accurate with the content of your resumé. Remember it reflects you.
3. Include only the information that you are willing and able to talk about in an interview.
4. Be concise. Most entry-level resúmes are one page, though can be longer in certain professions/majors. Do not have two pages just to have two pages.
5. Avoid using resumé templates. They are too limiting in what you can highlight and do not reflect your uniqueness. They are also difficult to edit later.
6. Write with your audience in mind. Each resumé should be tailored to the job for which you are applying, with specific skills and qualifications relevant to each position.
7. Keep track of your accomplishments and update on a regular basis. Your resumé is a fluid document and building it is a process, not a one-time event.
8. The most relevant information for the job goes on the top half of the first page or the first page (if 2 pages).
9. Write powerful marketing bullets that highlight your accomplishments.
10. Do not use personal pronouns such as "I" or "my."
11. At the end of the day, avoid trite phrases, slang, or clichés.
12. Mark the document Read-Only or convert to a PDF when emailing your resumé.
13. Accompany each resumé with a strong, specific, and personalized cover letter.
14. Section headings can be changed to meet specific goals.
15. Entries within sections are listed in reverse chronological order (most recent on top).

SAMPLE RESUMÉ

Anita Job

Cincinnati, OH | joba@xavier.edu | (513) 555-5555 | linkedin.com/in/anitajob

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Marketing major with extensive experience in the coordination of social media campaigns to increase customer engagement. Highly skilled at combining analytics and creativity to produce tangible results.

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, Marketing **Expected May 2029**
Xavier University *Cincinnati, OH*
Minor: Spanish

Universidad Loyola Andalucia, Cordoba, Spain **Summer 2026**

RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

Public Relations Intern **October 2025 – Present**
Musketeer Marketing *Covington, KY*

- Provide public relations and advertising council to 5 Cincinnati companies through the use of social media, resulting in a 25% increase in engagement for 2 of the companies
- Research current market trends and marketing strategies to be implemented in the company and across social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, X, and Facebook
- Implement social media strategies such as 1/3 rule in an effort to increase engagement
- Draft 15 monthly press releases about upcoming events and talking points for full-time staff to be used in a new segment for FOX 19

Team Manager **August 2025 – Present**
Xavier University Women's Basketball *Cincinnati, OH*

- Provide logistical preparation for all basketball activities including games, practices, travel and team related events
- Perform administrative duties for the coaching staff to alleviate workload and allow additional time for coaching responsibilities
- Voted "Manager of the Year" for 2023-2024 season for outstanding service to Xavier University athletics and the women's basketball team

ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE

Retail Sales Associate **January 2026 – Present**
All for One Shop *Cincinnati, OH*

- Execute point-of-sale transactions accurately and efficiently, adhering to all store policies and procedures.
- Organize over 300 stock items on sales floor, ensuring product availability and visually appealing presentation.

CAMPUS & COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Treasurer, Women's Club Soccer **August 2026- Present**
Member, Sports Business Club **January 2026 – Present**
Member, 4 Paws for Ability at XU **November 2025 – Present**
Member, American Marketing Association at Xavier **November 2025-Present**

SKILLS

Google Analytics Certification **Certified June 2026**
Social Media Marketing: Instagram, TikTok, X, Facebook, Adobe Creative Suite, Canva
Microsoft Excel: Advanced
Bilingual: English & Spanish

HOW TO SET UP YOUR RESUMÉ

FORMAT AND STYLE

- Margins should be between 1 inch and ½ inch.
- Font size should be between 10 and 12.
- The font size should be the same throughout the body of your document.
- Choose a font that is simple and easy to read (e.g. Cambria, Helvetica, Franklin Gothic, Garamond).
- Use simple symbols for bullet points.
- Be consistent in each section, i.e. if your title is bold for your work experiences, it should also be bold for your student and community involvement.

OVERALL PRESENTATION

- Make a positive first impression that's easy to read with clear subheadings to separate information.
- List most relevant and compelling information first (i.e., Education section should appear near top).
- Limit your resume to one page unless industry allows for more. If two pages, include significant relevant information in at least half of the second page with your name and page number in header.
- Maintain a good visual balance between text and white space.
- Proofread carefully for correct spelling, typos, and proper use of grammar.

CONTACT INFORMATION

- Your name should be the largest font on the page (16–22 pt.)
- Use one email address (preferably Xavier email if you are a current student).
- Include your personal phone number.
- Choose one street address, either your home or school address, depending on which is closest to the position for which you are applying.
- Include your customized LinkedIn URL.

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

- Summarize your essential skills that you want to showcase to an employer.
- Reference the job description to find keywords and phrases that matter to the employer.
- Limit to no more than three lines.

EDUCATION

- List Xavier University and the full name of your degree (e.g. Bachelor of Science, Master of Business Administration).
- Include your GPA if it is 3.5 or above.
- High school should only be on your resum  through the end of sophomore year.
- Study abroad can also be listed in this section.

EXPERIENCE

- Present in reverse chronological order with accurate company name and location, job title, and dates.
- Include both paid and unpaid experiences, including significant club involvement, course projects, internships, volunteer involvement, etc.
- Group experiences into categories in alignment with career objective (e.g. Internship Experience, Marketing Experience, Professional Experience, Relevant Experience, Other Experience, Volunteer Experience, Leadership Experience, Laboratory Experience).
- Use easy-to-read, concise, bulleted statements (not paragraph/narrative form) to describe your experience.
- Rank most important bullet points first. When applying for different positions rearrange ranking to best meet the specific qualifications.
- Be consistent listing months and years (ex: September 2015 or 09/2015 is acceptable).

LEADERSHIP/COMMUNITY/VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES (OPTIONAL SECTION)

- List recent meaningful experiences in reverse chronological order.
- Keep format consistent with experience section; identify leadership titles and organization names.

SKILLS: (OPTIONAL SECTION)

- List language skills with qualifiers: literate, conversational, proficient, fluent.
- List computer skills in regard to specific applications such as Microsoft Word, Powerpoint or Outlook. List proficiency level when applicable.
- List computer languages and software specific to the industry.

OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION (OPTIONAL SECTION)

- Include special licenses, certifications, outside training or tests passed, conferences, presentations, publications that are relevant to career objective.
- Keep this section short and concise. This information should not overshadow other sections.



BUILDING

• BETTER • BULLET • POINTS



The best resumés do more than just describe the tasks you've performed. They showcase your skills and accomplishments related to the job you're applying for. The primary goal of bullet points is convincing your target audience that you possess skills, knowledge and attributes that will help them attain their strategic goals.

TO BUILD POWERFUL BULLET POINTS, ASK YOURSELF THESE QUESTIONS:

- What did you do? (Begin with a strong action verb.)
- Why did you do it? (State the strategic objective.)
- How did you go about it? (Be concise and chronological).
- What was the outcome? (Use measurable outcomes wherever possible.)

Quantify and use numbers whenever possible. The more detail you give, the better the employer will understand why you are the best candidate for the job.

EXAMPLES

GOOD: Wrote press releases.

BETTER: Wrote press releases about upcoming events to enhance publicity and increase participation.

BEST: Wrote 15 press releases detailing upcoming events, sent to 100 local media outlets to raise publicity, and attract up to 2,000 community members to a movie premiere.

ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS:

- Streamlined process for collecting late accounts, securing \$5,000 in past-due accounts.
- Organized and inventoried company's merchandise and office supplies to increase the accuracy and speed of intercompany orders.

ANALYTICAL SKILLS:

- Audited season parking passes which resulted in a complete and organized record for the 2010 season.
- Researched 21 dimensions of taxation in 12 counties, comparing taxes based on dollar assumptions which helped county commissioners compare levels of efficiency in tax collection.

TEAMWORK SKILLS:

- Trained and coached six new associates on store software, procedures, and products to promote a positive customer experience and increase sales.

PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION:

- Initiated redesign of office management systems resulting in easier access to information.
- Evaluated and updated internet site as it grew to over 2,000 pages and images, generating 200 hits daily.
- Surveyed over 500 households through response cards and interviewed 35 veterinary customer service receptionists to collect market research for a customer satisfaction survey campaign for over 20 animal hospitals.

WRITTEN AND ORAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS:

- Presented research findings to panel of eight faculty and students at undergraduate research symposium.
- Persuaded university administration to grant permission for event with attendance of 200 students.

OVERVIEW OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Voted "Team Player" by co-workers and supervisors based on a reputation for working well with others.

ACTION VERBS

Be sure your verb tense is in agreement with each experience:
past tense with past experiences and present tense when describing current positions.

■ CLERICAL/DETAIL SKILLS

approved	compiled	implemented	prepared	recorded
arranged	documented	inspected	processed	systemized
catalogued	finalized	monitored	organized	tabulated

■ COMMUNICATION SKILLS

addressed	corresponded	formulated	negotiated	recruited
arbitrated	developed	influenced	persuaded	spoke
authored	directed	interpreted	presented	translated
collaborated	drafted	lectured	promoted	wrote

■ CREATIVE SKILLS

acted	customized	fashioned	instituted	originated
composed	designed	founded	integrated	planned
conceived	developed	illustrated	introduced	revitalized
conceptualized	initiated	invented	shaped	directed

■ FINANCIAL SKILLS

administered	audited	computed	forecasted	planned
allocated	balanced	decreased	managed	projected
analyzed	budgeted	developed	marketed	researched

■ HELPING SKILLS

advised	contributed	empowered	expedited	motivated
assessed	counseled	enabled	facilitated	referred
clarified	demonstrated	enhanced	familiarized	rehabilitated
coached	diagnosed	ensured	guided	represented

■ MANAGEMENT SKILLS

administered	consolidated	evaluated	oversaw	recommended
allocated	contracted	executed	planned	scheduled
analyzed	coordinated	improved	prioritized	spearheaded
assigned	delegated	led	produced	supervised

■ RESEARCH SKILLS

clarified	eliminated	identified	investigated	surveyed
collected	evaluated	inspected	organized	systematized
diagnosed	examined	interpreted	reviewed	wrote

■ TEACHING SKILLS

adapted	coached	encouraged	facilitated	mentored
advised	coordinated	evaluated	guided	stimulated
clarified	developed	explained	instructed	trained

■ TECHNICAL SKILLS

assembled	computed	engineered	installed	overhauled
built	converted	expanded	maintained	programmed

HOW TO SET UP YOUR COVER LETTER

SEE THE STEP-BY-STEP TEMPLATE BELOW.

Your present address
City, State Zip Code
Email
Phone

Date

Mr./Ms._____, Title *(Skip this line if you do not have a specific name)*
Name of Company
Street Address
City, State Zip Code

Dear Hiring Manager/Search Committee/Ms./Mr./ _____,

1 INTRODUCTION

Demonstrate your employment interest by expressing the specific position in which you are interested. Express your motivation/appeal/reference for applying for this position at this specific company. If you have a personal contact within the company, include it in this introductory paragraph. Be specific about position and company. Perhaps mention the top 3 things you have to give them that they are looking for.

2 WHY YOU?

Explain how you are a great match. Describe why you fit the company and position description. What experiences and education do you have that make you a great candidate? Note that a cover letter does not talk about how you will benefit, but how and what you will give to the business relationship. Avoid regurgitating your resumé. Tell a story; paint a picture; show passion, relevance and how you will add value.

3 WHY THEM?

Why do you want to work at this specific company? Perhaps you do just want a job. Don't let them know that, though. Show your research! Essentially, you can send the same cover letter to everyone, but it shows. What is great is when an applicant truly shows knowledge of the company and shows how they fit into it seamlessly. Wrap yourself into it and show your fit. Show why you want them and how you connect.

4 CONCLUSION

Express your interest in an interview and tell the employer how you may be reached. Close your letter with a simple statement of appreciation for the employer's time in reviewing and considering your credentials.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature *(or just 3-5 lines/spaces and no handwritten signature)*

Typed signature

TOP COVER LETTER TIPS

- Cover letters can be formatted many ways. Just make sure the four points are addressed.
- A resumé should always be accompanied by a cover letter.
- Keep your cover letter precise and to the point.
- Be straightforward and stick to one page.
- Focus on what you can do for the employer, not what the employer can do for you.
- Prepare each cover letter from scratch, individually targeting that specific position at that specific organization.
- Do not regurgitate your resumé. This is your chance to show passion and tell your story.
- Think about the core competencies that the position description mentions. This will give you an idea of what to include in your cover letter.
- A cover letter may have many forms. Some are all paragraphs and some are a mixture of paragraphs and bullet points. There is no absolutely correct way.

PROFESSIONAL REFERENCES

Professional references can make or break your career search. It is therefore important to select references with care to ensure that the feedback they give to your potential employer is positive.

- *References go on a separate document. Do not list them on your resumé.*
- *References are different than letters of recommendation. While some employers may accept letters of recommendation, it is expected that you also supply individuals with whom an employer may speak.*
- *Expect to give three references.*

COMMUNICATE WITH YOUR REFERENCES:

- *Before listing someone as a reference, ASK THEM if they would be willing.*
- *Next, ask for your reference's preferred email or phone number (do not assume).*
- *Keep your references up-to-date about the job search (if you are interviewing, etc.).*
- *If you are interviewing and/or are told that an employer will contact references, let your references know.*
- *Share with them your resumé, cover letter, and the position description. Also share with them the things the employer has talked about and seeks.*

Anita Job

3800 Victory Parkway, Cincinnati, OH 45207
joba@xavier.edu | (312) 555-3764

REFERENCES

Name #1

Position Title

Company/Organization Name

City, State

Phone

Email

Name #2

Position Title

Company/Organization Name

City, State

Phone

Email

Name #3

Position Title

Company/Organization Name

City, State

Phone

Email



REFERENCES TIPS

- *Match your cover letter and reference headers to the heading on your resumé to create a more cohesive application.*
- *Make sure the phone numbers and email addresses are the ones preferred by the references.*
- *Option: Include "Relationship" and state how you know the individual.*

Example: Relationship: Volunteer site supervisor

OTHER TYPES OF INTERVIEWS:

- **Phone Interview:** *Phone interviews are often (but not always) quick, 30-minute interviews used for an initial screening of candidates. However, it is just as important to prep and practice for a phone interview as thoroughly as you would for an in-person interview.*
- **Video Interview:** *Video interviews can take the place of an in-person interview if you are a long-distance candidate or might be a screening interview. For a video interview, you should dress professionally, and find a quiet, well-lit space where you will not be interrupted.*

INTERVIEWING 101

PREPARING FOR AN INTERVIEW:

Preparing for an interview does not just mean researching the company. You also need to understand what skills you have to offer the employer that align with the job posting. Below are the elements of preparation to make you a successful candidate.

DO YOUR HOMEWORK ON THE ORGANIZATION:

This is often overlooked but recruiters believe research is key to interviewing success. Find out as much as you can about the organization including the history, sources of pride, current happenings (i.e. new product, new service). At a minimum, visit the organization's website, review recruiting materials, and even consult local periodicals and newspapers. To go the extra mile, try talking to a current employee.

DO YOUR HOMEWORK ON YOURSELF AND ON THE POSITION:

Review your experience thoroughly. What are the top three to five skills or experiences you can offer the employer?

DRESS FOR SUCCESS:

Your primary goal in dressing for an interview is to feel good about the way you look while projecting an image that matches the requirements of the position and the company. You want to be remembered for your qualifications and fit with the company, not your outfit.

WHAT TO BRING:

Bring copies of your resumé (more than you think you will need), a padfolio with a pen, and a copy of your references. Do not bring your backpack.



ACE THAT INTERVIEW: USE **STAR!**

Answering questions in a job interview is often daunting. The key is anticipating questions and practicing how you will respond. The best interviewees are those who can respond completely and succinctly to questions while highlighting their strengths and skills.

You may be asked behavioral interview questions that prompt you to provide examples of situations you have encountered in the past and help the employer understand how you will deal with different situations at their organization. Ideally, the examples you provide will convince the interviewer that you have the skills, experience, and behaviors that are a match for the position and the culture of the organization.

Use the following framework (the STAR method) when answering interview questions to organize your answers in a way that highlights your skills and gives employers an idea of how you might fit into their organization.

S	SITUATION	Describe the situation.
T	TASK	Task involved in the situation.
A	ACTION	Action you took to solve or complete the task.
R	RESULTS	What was the result of your action? What have you learned since?



APPLYING STAR

SITUATION: (Class project, student activity, volunteer experience, job, ...)

Example: As a member of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers student chapter ...

TASK: (Goal, problem to be solved, improvement to be made, ...)

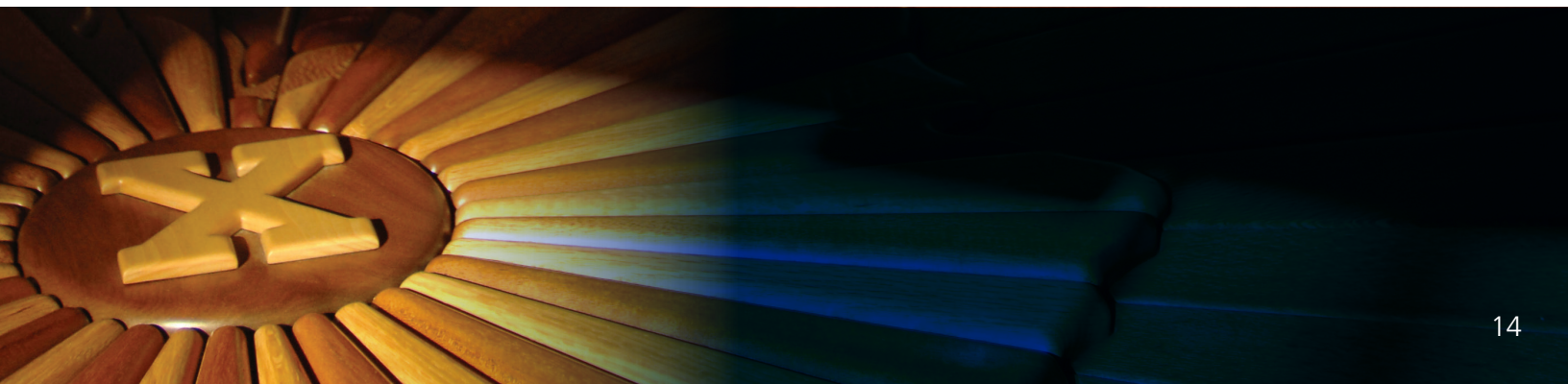
Example: "I suggested establishing a mentoring program for area junior high school students to increase their interest in math and science and as a way for engineering students to explore careers in teaching."

ACTION: (Planning and implementation done to reach goal, solve problem, ...)

Example: "I formed a committee to research the topic and then developed procedures, policies, and marketing ideas. To recruit participants, we designed a direct-mail postcard to send to all mechanical engineering students. After presenting our proposal to a local middle school science teacher, we were welcomed into the classroom."

RESULT (The outcome, influences, changes, ...)

Example: "Ten pairs of students were active in the mentoring program last year. As seniors, two engineering graduates entered the teaching profession, and the junior high students started an engineering club after school. We have already started organizing this year's program with the same teacher. As a result of this experience, I learned the importance of continual professional development, both individually and as a team."



QUESTIONS INTERVIEWERS MAY ASK:

- *Tell me about yourself.*
- *Why are you interested in our organization? What do you know about us?*
- *Why do you want to work in (career field)?*
- *What work experience has been the most valuable to you and why?*
- *Give an example of a problem you have solved and the process you used.*
- *What is your greatest accomplishment?*
- *Describe a situation in which you had a conflict with another individual and how you dealt with it.*
- *Why did you choose to attend Xavier and how did you select your major(s) in _____?*
- *What types of situations put you under pressure and how do you deal with the pressure?*
- *What three trends do you see in the future for our industry?*
- *What are your top three strengths?*
- *What is your greatest weakness?*
- *Tell me about a time you failed.*
- *What are some of the most creative things you have done?*
- *What has been one of your greatest disappointments and how did you respond?*
- *Tell me about a time when you went above and beyond.*
- *What characteristics do you think are important for this position?*
- *Describe a situation in which you were criticized and how you responded.*
- *Where do you see yourself in five years?*
- *What salary are you expecting?*
- *Why should I hire you?*
- *What questions do you have for us?*

Connect with a Career Coach to discuss additional interview preparation tools including mock interviews.

ANATOMY OF AN INTERVIEW

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR INTERVIEWER:

- *How would you describe the culture of your organization?*
- *To what extent will I be responsible for determining my work objectives?*
- *Describe the rotational training program associated with this position/internship.*
- *How is employee performance evaluated during the training period? What career paths have others generally followed after completing the program?*
- *As an intern, what kind of projects will I receive?*
- *In what ways has this organization been most successful in terms of products/services over the past several years?*
- *If I work hard and prove my value to the company, where might I find myself in five years?*
- *What is a typical work week for a (position) in your company?*
- *Does your organization encourage its employees to pursue additional education?*
- *What other positions/departments will I interact with the most?*
- *What are the key business reasons driving the need for this position?*
- *Describe the three top challenges that I'll face in this job.*
- *What are the key deliverables and outcomes this position must achieve?*
- *Describe the top three initiatives for your company/department and how this position is linked to these initiatives.*
- *What are the key metrics for measuring success in this position?*
- *How do you feel my style will complement the team culture?*



EXPRESSING YOUR

THANKS

It is good practice to send thank-you emails to those who give you their time, either in person or over the phone.*

WHEN TO WRITE THANK-YOU NOTES:

- *When you meet a professional at a conference, classroom presentation, job fair, etc.*
- *After a job or informational interview.*

TIPS FOR SAYING THANKS:

- *Always write thank-you notes within 48 hours (24 hours is optimal).*
- *Sending an email thank-you note is advisable, especially if the hiring manager is set to make a fast decision. Following up with a handwritten note demonstrates further initiative.*
- *It is especially important to write a thank-you note after an employment interview to at least the primary interviewer.*
- *If you are interviewed by more than one individual, it may be helpful to write to each person.*
- *When writing individual notes, it is important to personalize them as much as possible. It requires more time and effort, but it's an impressive touch!*

ANATOMY OF A POST-INTERVIEW THANK-YOU NOTE:

PARAGRAPH 1: Shows gratitude and makes specific reference to the job.

PARAGRAPH 2: Reiterates interest in the position and stresses key points working in the candidate's favor. When writing to more than one interviewer, you may want to note a particular question asked by the interviewer or thank them for a specific kindness that was extended.

PARAGRAPH 3: Stresses the "fit." The "Why Me" part of the letter.

PARAGRAPH 4: Restates gratitude and closes on a positive note.

**Please see Hire-A-Muskie for sample thank-you notes.*

**While handwritten letters might make you stand out, often time is of the essence. If you decide to do both, write different things in each.*

EVALUATING A **JOB OFFER**

FIRST AND FOREMOST, CONGRATULATIONS!

YOU OBVIOUSLY STAND
OUT TO THE EMPLOYER.

WELL DONE. SO, NOW WHAT?

- *When you first receive the email or call with a position offer, always be and act excited: "Thank you so much! I am very excited about this opportunity."*
- *Then, even if you know you want the position, ask for time:*
 - *"I would like a little time to think about and review the position and benefits (if applicable). When would you like an answer?"*
 - *Make sure you respond to them no later than that date (earlier if you absolutely know or want to negotiate).*

NOW'S THE TIME FOR A BIT OF REFLECTION

Employers occasionally offer the job and salary simultaneously. Do not feel obligated to say yes right away. It is customary to ask for 24-48 hours to review the offer. Take a few days to think about pros and cons, allowing you time to review all of the information and benefits. Make sure you contact them with your answer by their deadline.

If you know you are not interested, let them know sooner than later. You want to allow them time to contact the other candidates in a timely fashion. For more information on what to consider and want to say (including declining an offer and more), please visit www.xavier.edu/career/students.

Once you accept an offer, you cannot change your mind. Reneging on a job offer can cause significant damage to your professional reputation. Employers have wide networks and you never know who that employer knows that could damage your chances for a position in the future.



THE ART OF SALARY NEGOTIATION

Being a new college graduate, it can be overwhelming trying to figure out the appropriate compensation for your first job. The following are some tips to remember.

PLAN AHEAD AND KNOW YOUR WORTH:

- *Prior to your interview, research the company's salary ranges and salary ranges for this type of position and industry.*
- *Keep in mind your level of education and experience.*
- *Know the lowest salary you would consider.*
- *DO NOT ask about salary and benefits during the interview process. You can negotiate after an offer is made.*

CONSIDER EVERYTHING:

- *When determining your salary, remember to include the value of benefits, such as health insurance, flexible spending accounts, bonuses, tuition reimbursement, advancement opportunities, paid vacation, and stock offerings. This information is often found in the human resource page of the company website.*
- *Remember to consider both short and long-term career goals. Will this position pay off in the experience you obtain?*

IT'S NOT PERSONAL:

- *The employer does not need to know about your current student loans or current financial situation.*
- *Employers do not take it personally when you ask if there is room for negotiation.*

KNOW YOUR STRENGTHS:

- *Relevant work experience, graduate degrees, technical expertise, or a written job offer from another employer providing a higher salary are all strengths that can be used when approached the right way.*

QUESTIONS YOU MAY ASK DURING THE NEGOTIATION:

- *Is there room for negotiation?*
- *I'm very interested in the role, but I would like to discuss the salary you're offering.*
- *What is the promotion potential?*

SALARY CALCULATORS AND RESOURCES:

Nearly everyone finds salary negotiation to be challenging and stressful. Salaries depend on a variety of factors such as education, experience, job description, and location. The following links should serve as a resource to help you research how job salaries or offers compare to those surveyed.

- *NACE Salary Calculator*
(www.jobsearchintelligence.com/NACE/salary-calculator-intro)
- *Salary.com* (www.salary.com)
- *Homefair.com* (www.homefair.com)
- *PayScale* (www.payscale.com)
- *Glassdoor* (www.glassdoor.com)
- *LinkedIn* (www.linkedin.com/salary/)

"WHAT IF I HAVE AN OFFER, BUT AM STILL WAITING TO HEAR BACK FROM MY FIRST CHOICE?"

STALL:

Ask for additional time. Employers should give you time to do your due diligence to make the right decision, but they are also trying to get the position filled in a timely manner. Take time to really think about the opportunity before you make a final decision.

CONTACT THE OTHER EMPLOYER:

Call the contact at your first choice. Ask them where they are in the search process. Tell them that you have a job offer (don't mention with whom) but they are the company/organization you are most passionate about. This information may speed up their process or let you know where you stand.

DON'T BURN BRIDGES:

Ethically, it is not appropriate to renege on an offer. Once you accept an offer with an organization, do not continue to search for a better opportunity. Keep in mind that in addition to representing your peers and Xavier University, it's a small world and people talk. You do not want them talking about you. Also, who knows who is going to be influential in a future position years from now.



AI IN CAREER DEVELOPMENT: KEY TAKEAWAYS

Generative AI enhances efficiency, skill development, and competitiveness in the job market, but it cannot replace unique human experiences. Users must balance automation and individual input to ensure personal qualities remain unique as well as avoid detection by employer screening tools. Remember to always verify AI outputs for accuracy.

KEY PRINCIPLES FOR USING AI IN CAREER DEVELOPMENT

- **Augment, Don't Replace:** Use AI to brainstorm, edit, and organize, but rely on Career Coaches and human connections to build authentic professional relationships.
- **Draft First, Refine Second:** Write original application materials to capture your authentic voice, then use targeted prompts to polish and optimize the content.
- **Verify & Personalize:** Fact-check all output to prevent hallucinations, generic phrasing, or bias. Employers use AI detectors, and generic applications are easily overlooked.
- **Protect Your Privacy:** Remove all personally identifiable information (full name, phone number, address) before uploading documents, as many platforms use inputs for model training.

EFFECTIVE PROMPTING GUIDELINES

- **Provide Context:** Include your background, goals, and preferred output format.
- **Set Boundaries:** Explicitly outline limitations and topics to exclude.
- **Iterate:** Treat prompting as a dynamic conversation—refine, rephrase, or adjust the focus based on generated responses.

SAMPLE PROMPTS

- **Job Tailoring:** "Identify key terms and skills from this job description: [paste job description]."
- **Proofreading:** "Review this resume for clarity, word choice, grammar, and spelling: [paste resume]."
- **Interview Prep:** "Generate 10 potential interview questions categorized by skill type based on this job description: [paste job description]."

Resources: Xavier's AI Usage Policy

www.xavier.edu/policy/documents/acceptable-use-of-artificial-intelligence.pdf

Xavier's AI in Career Development and additional prompts via the Prompting Guide

www.xavier.edu/career/students