ECS JOB SEARCH GUIDE

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College of Engineering Corporate Partners Program

Contact information:
1410 Engineering Dr.
Madison, WI 53706
Phone: 608/262-3471
Fax: 608/262-7662
Email: ecs@engr.wisc.edu
ecs.engr.wisc.edu
PLANNING YOUR JOB SEARCH

You are embarking on a challenging and important endeavor—a job search. In good economic times, ECS registrants could rely almost solely on campus recruiting events to secure job offers. In less predictable times, you will need to work harder to (1) develop solid job search skills, (2) promote yourself to campus recruiters, and (3) identify and research employers who do not recruit on campus.

The skills you develop today are essential for a lifetime of job search or career change skills. Most experts predict you will change jobs every 3–5 years. Therefore it is critical to develop and continually renew lifelong job search skills and build relationships to support you throughout the process.

Attitude and effort correlate directly with job search success. Take personal responsibility. Use every resource available to you in ECS, your department, and your personal network. Get organized. Stay focused. Ultimately, the job search is your responsibility.

TIMING YOUR JOB SEARCH

ECS suggests that all job candidates start their searches 1–2 semesters before their planned first day of work. ECS sponsors a large career fair at the start of each semester with campus interviews following for 6–8 weeks.

Co-ops and interns should always plan at least one semester ahead of their intended work terms. December, May, and August grads should all begin preparation for the job search the summer before the planned graduation date. FALL SEMESTER is the busiest semester for campus recruiting and many employers only visit campus once a year. Your search may continue to SPRING SEMESTER, which is excellent for attracting employers who are filling immediate openings upon graduation.

Preparation is important to conduct a successful job search. Assessing your strengths, refining your job search objective, developing a solid résumé and identifying employers are your first steps. Before you contact a potential employer, you must complete several weeks of job search work. This work will greatly enhance your confidence in communicating with employers at career fairs, by email, and in interviews. Most job searches take 3–6 months from start to finish. Plan ahead and focus on your goals.

“Digital Dirt” or Internet Presence

If you are serious about your job search, we strongly urge you to scrutinize all aspects of your Internet presence before beginning your search. Particularly in technical areas, employers use all available avenues to gather information about job candidates. With a simple search, they can review social media sites, web pages, blogs, and other links made by you or others.

Test your Internet presence by conducting a search of your own, and then use available means to block personal information. If you have an online profile on any social networks, carefully review it for content that would make an employer wince. Change information on your personal web page that you wouldn’t want your current or future boss to see. If another site contains objectionable information about you, contact the webmaster about changing or removing it. If that’s not possible, you should be ready to explain it, if asked. Since online networks indeed hold great advantages—including promoting your professional strengths and personal interests and connecting you with like-minded people—consider creating a free account on a site such as LinkedIn. Unlike social networks like Facebook, this service, which has millions of registered users, focuses much more on the professional than the personal.

Job Search: Six Steps

Step 1: Assess Skills and Accomplishments
Clearly identify, understand, and describe your skills and accomplishments. The effectiveness of your résumé, letters, and interview skills starts here. Network.

Step 2: Develop Résumé and Profile
Based on skill and strength assessment plus market knowledge and list of targeted positions and industries, build an effective résumé. Include key words, technical skills, leadership, school, and work experiences. Network.

Step 3: Target Employers
Know your market. Determine viable employers interested in hiring people with your skills. Read about companies and agencies. Who are you really interested in? Focus on finding specific employers versus flooding the market with résumés. Network.

Step 4: Contact Employers and Activate Your Network
Develop polished email communications requesting interviews, INVITED status, or information regarding opportunities. Introduce yourself at career fairs. Adapt your résumé to specific employer needs. Utilize your personal network to find contacts. Follow-up regularly until interview is scheduled.

Step 5: Practice Interviewing and Interview
Review descriptions of skills and strengths. Verbally practice responses to questions using specific examples. Discuss the match between your skills and employer needs. Evaluate interview preparation and improve skills.

Step 6: Make Job Offer Decisions
Understand that 1st screening interview leads to 2nd on-site interview. Effectively follow-up after interview. Potential job offer requires evaluation and formal acceptance. Accept job; prepare for first day of new career.

ASSESS YOUR SKILLS

Spend time assessing your personal/professional skills and strengths—the basis of any job search

The strengths you identify in thorough skills-assessment form the foundation of your job search. This foundation leads to effective résumé development, letter writing, and examples you will use in the interview. Start by carefully considering the following questions:

• What are your strengths?
• What are your accomplishments?
• What experiences have provided challenges and opportunities to grow?
• What have your mentors taught you?
• What are your successes and failures?

Only after reflection and honest responses to these questions will you be successful in the job search—because this understanding leads to your decisions regarding résumé development, effective interview talking points, selection and research of viable employers, and overall confidence as you learn to market your value to others.

To conduct an effective self-assessment, use many methods, tools, and resources to develop a list of experiences, successful projects, and activities that have helped shape your interests and development. Look beyond the simple listing of your degree(s), coursework, and experiences. Identify your unique skills and patterns of success. List those things you are “good at” and “passionate about”—not those skills you feel you “should” have. Consider specific work on projects and coursework that provide you with satisfaction, challenge, and that inspire your enthusiasm. Consider your strengths in problem solving, assessing, and summarizing complex issues. Consider situations in which others compliment you on your abilities and strengths. This assessment forms the beginning stages of identification and articulation of skill and strength development.

ECS TIPS

• Assess your 3 to 5 strongest skills.
• Ask friends and family members for assistance.
• For each skill, describe how you developed and used the skill in an academic, work, or team experience.
• Use this exercise in preparing for both résumé writing and interviewing.
Skill Samples

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Adaptable/adjustable</th>
<th>Implements a goal</th>
<th>Physical stamina</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Analytical</td>
<td>Improviser/Creative</td>
<td>Procedure development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaches others</td>
<td>Innovative</td>
<td>Promotes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborates</td>
<td>Interprets a complex plan</td>
<td>Provides constructive feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicator</td>
<td>Interprets data</td>
<td>Reliably meets goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conceptualizes</td>
<td>Intuitive</td>
<td>Resolves and mediates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinates projects</td>
<td>Leader</td>
<td>Sees possibilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creative</td>
<td>Listener</td>
<td>Self-starter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decisive</td>
<td>Logical</td>
<td>Sets goals/priorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrates patience</td>
<td>Makes hard decisions</td>
<td>Solves problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detail-oriented</td>
<td>Manages crisis effectively</td>
<td>Speaks publicly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develops prototypes</td>
<td>Manages time well</td>
<td>Strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diplomatically resolves issues</td>
<td>Mediator</td>
<td>Supervisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energetic</td>
<td>Meets deadlines</td>
<td>Synthesizes information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurial</td>
<td>Meets others easily</td>
<td>Takes reasonable risks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitatory</td>
<td>Motivates</td>
<td>Rationalizes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follows a good leader</td>
<td>Negotiator</td>
<td>Researcher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follows through</td>
<td>Organizes others to help</td>
<td>Resolves conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal-oriented</td>
<td>Persistent</td>
<td>Team player</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imaginates new methods</td>
<td>Persuades</td>
<td>Theoretical</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Provide Specific Examples

For each skill, answer the following questions in writing. Yes, in writing! Write a detailed response to each question, using one or more skills. Read the descriptions thoroughly for accuracy and detail. Now, practice responding to them… out loud!

How have you helped a team reach goals? How did you research a complex system? How do you go about solving complex problems? What are your strengths? How would others describe you? In what situations have you shown persistence? What are your short-term goals? Tell me about yourself. What motivates you to do your best work? In what area do you need to improve? Now, condense each skill development set of details into a 1–2-minute response. Be concise, yet descriptive. Describe a specific, real-world example to indicate to a recruiter how you developed a specific skill into a strength. Any response is a good response as long as you experienced it, learned from it, or developed a skill as a result.

DEVELOP YOUR RÉSUMÉ & REFERENCES

Add job goals to skills assessment—include work-related and academic experiences and extra activities.

The process of developing a résumé is an extension of your self-assessment. Unless you have thoroughly and honestly determined what your skills are and identified specific situations in which you have either developed or successfully used your skills, your résumé will not be distinctive or effective. Keep in mind that résumé writing is not rocket science (!), but neither is it simple. It requires careful thought, attention to detail, and understanding of purpose. Prior to working on résumé specifics, please keep in mind the following important ground rules:

11 Résumé Basics

1. Be concise. Résumé length depends on your skills and experience. You may need more than one page to effectively state your strengths but do not use space carelessly. Most undergraduates will develop a one-page résumé; MS students and alumni may require two, and PhD candidates, three pages or more when including publications, presentations and references.
2. Know your objective. Your purpose in writing an effective résumé is to obtain an interview and to guide your interview discussion. Customize your résumé for the opportunity.
3. You cannot write a résumé in an hour or two. Writing an effective résumé is time-consuming; requires planning, feedback, edits, and adjustments. In fact, a résumé is never “complete”; adjustments continually improve content and format.
4. Presentation matters. Format or layout should be professional, consistent, and logical. Templates are strongly discouraged.
5. Be clear and concise. Few will actually “read” your résumé; they will scan it. Only if it catches their attention and contains keywords, will they bother to read it. Key information such as degrees and titles should be easy to find. Information is arranged by importance.
6. Use keywords. Employers search résumés for keywords. List every primary software tool, instrumentation, research method, and computer language. Read current job postings and employer websites to determine key skills currently sought after. Include buzzwords in your area of interest that match your search and skillset.
7. Spell check (with U.S. English version). Don’t simply rely on MS Word’s spell-check function. After all, “software” and “soft wear” are both correct in the “eyes” of the computer.
8. Ask for feedback. You may be a good engineer and researcher, but you are not an expert in résumé writing. ECS staff and others with experience in current employment practices should be consulted. Listen carefully and make wise decisions regarding the development of your résumé.
9. Think of résumés as advertisements. There is a target audience and the most important and relevant information is emphasized. Relate this to résumé writing. Sparingly use bullets, boldface, italics to emphasize details. Generally, one form of highlighting a specific entry is sufficient. Boldface, CAPITAL LETTERS and italics are excessive.
10. Fifteen minutes of fame. Any topic on your résumé welcomes a question. Can you talk about your academic project, ASME membership, computer skills or leadership role for 15 minutes? The résumé lists and describes events; the interview validates them. Think about the next step—the interview!
11. Do not pay anyone to develop your résumé. They don’t know you. And, it costs too much.
### Objective Statements

Your résumé objective statement is the single most important part of your résumé. It provides focus for the résumé. The rest of the résumé must support the objective by providing educational, academic, or real-world experiences related to the objective. A strong objective statement will:

1. **Be employer-oriented** (what you can do for employer), rather than self-oriented (what you want to gain)
2. **Include specific functional areas of interest** (based on your education and experiences)
3. **State the type of opportunity sought:**
   - Co-op, Intern, Entry-Level (professional)
4. **Not be too specific or too broad in scope**
5. **Tailor to the position as much as possible including employer name, job title, location, etc.**

### Functional Areas

Within the objective statement it is important to include 2–3 specific functional areas of interest (based on your education and experiences). Only if you are willing to significantly limit your employment opportunities should you list only one specific interest or engineering functional area. PhD candidates can sometimes justify this focused job search. Most BS and MS students and alumni, however, will have a broader area of interest to maximize job opportunities. Use the examples above to add special interest areas to your objective statement.

Consult past and present postings for similar jobs, and your departmental website, both of which list specific focus areas of study for proper phrasing of technical interest areas. (See Key Words and Action Verbs on page 11.)
ECS TIPS

- Identify the degree and level (i.e., BS Chemical Engineering), expected degree date, institution and GPA.
- The official name of the school is University of Wisconsin–Madison.
- Also list study abroad experiences.
- Possibly include brief descriptions of class academic projects, “selected” course listings, scholarships and other honors.

How to Write It

Education

University of Wisconsin–Madison
B.S. Mechanical Engineering, expected May 20XX
  - Major GPA 3.2/4.0 Overall GPA 2.9/4.0

Academic Design Projects

- Turf Smurf: Designed and fabricated a device that simulated golf cart wear on various grasses for a turf grass company as a member of an interdisciplinary team.
- Rowing Exercise Machine Modification: Worked with corporate customer to design, fabricate and implement a universal rowing machine usable by people with multiple sclerosis, cerebral palsy, and paraplegics. Developed prototype and presented project to group.

PhD: Limit Education section to degree, date expected, and advisor and thesis topic.
List research and teaching assistantships in Experience section.

If little or no work experience: List and describe academic projects. Possibly include brief descriptions of class academic projects, “selected” course listings, significant course work, academic honors and senior projects in this section if you do not have related work experience or if they are directly linked to your objective.

Selected Course Work


——OR——

Education

BS Industrial Engineering, expected May 20XX
University of Wisconsin–Madison
  - First semester transfer student

Pre-engineering, 20XX–XX
University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee
  - GPA 3.6/4.0
  - Dean’s List 3/4 semesters
  - Algoma Alumni Scholarship
  - Wisconsin Regents Scholar

Experience Section

The content of your experience section is critical and more flexible than you may think. You may include experiences that are related or unrelated to engineering, as well as paid or unpaid.

Related engineering work, including co-op or intern experiences, should be listed first. Use phrases describing the skills developed or used, projects on which you worked, and results or goals met or exceeded.

Significant academic projects might be included in the Experience section (rather than Education) to call more attention and allow more space for complete description, especially if you do not have co-op or internship experience. You may include teaching and research positions, volunteer, and leadership experiences.

Include keywords in describing your work. Be quantitative whenever possible, such as “reduced processing time by 10%” or “managed $1M design project.” Include skills developed, awards won, and results achieved. In most cases, you’ll list your experiences in reverse chronological order. It is optional to deviate from this guideline to emphasize unique experiences. If, for instance, you last worked as a summer landscaping assistant while the previous semester you were an engineering intern, break the Experience section into two: Engineering Experience and Additional Experience, so you can list the internship first.

ECS TIPS

- Obvious experiences include paid engineering work—although not all students have this kind of experience.
- Include academic projects here (if not included in Education). Describe them as if they were work experience. Research projects are experience.
- Include non-related work—emphasize skills rather than duties.
**Develop Your Résumé & References**

- Updated drawings in ProEngineer. Entered and verified data for SAP upgrade.
- Entered and obtained data for online catalog. Served as German translator.
- Developed code to extrapolate 3-D data from 2-D paraboloid model for wall-shear rate measurements in the carotid artery.
- Analyzed corporate quality system to conform to new norm—ISO 9000 (Vision 2000).
- Completed critical analysis of operational and management processes at three MTS production locations in Italy.
- Managed operations on $2M family grain farm.
- Acquired invaluable mechanical aptitude as a result of continuously scheduled and unscheduled maintenance of large farm equipment.
- Measured the modulus of elasticity, shear modulus, mechanical damping in bending and torsion, specific gravity and moisture content of toothpick-sized specimens.
- Led weekly meetings (of 8) to facilitate continued discussion, problem solving and completion of research.
- Enhanced experience with various instrumentation tools, including digital oscilloscope, microscope, lock-in amplifier, split diode laser and light detector.
- Designed a strategic drain mechanism in Pro-E.
- Designed an Excel Macro using Visual Basic to convert raw leak test data into usable charts.
- Designed a strategic drain mechanism in Pro-E.
- Measured the modulus of elasticity, shear modulus, mechanical damping in bending and torsion, specific gravity and moisture content of toothpick-sized specimens.
- Led weekly meetings (of 8) to facilitate continued discussion, problem solving and completion of research.
- Enhanced experience with various instrumentation tools, including digital oscilloscope, microscope, lock-in amplifier, split diode laser and light detector.
- Designed a strategic drain mechanism in Pro-E.
- Designed an Excel Macro using Visual Basic to convert raw leak test data into usable charts.

**How to Write It**

Use descriptive phrases to emphasize “what” you did and “how” you did it. Use action verbs and

Deliberately write your résumé so that key words will be found by the employer through visual or electronic scans.

**Key Words—For Objective Statement and All Résumé Sections**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>alloys</th>
<th>estimation theory</th>
<th>fission</th>
<th>photonics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>applied mathematics</td>
<td>fluid mechanics</td>
<td>geomechanics</td>
<td>plasma physics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>applied solid mechanics</td>
<td>geometric modeling</td>
<td>GIS</td>
<td>polymer processing</td>
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<tr>
<td>automation</td>
<td>health care/medical informatics</td>
<td>HVAC</td>
<td>powertrain systems</td>
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<tr>
<td>bioinformatics</td>
<td>information systems</td>
<td>IC engines</td>
<td>process control and design</td>
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<tr>
<td>biomaterials</td>
<td>interfacial science</td>
<td>LID</td>
<td>product design</td>
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<tr>
<td>bioMEMS</td>
<td>kinematics</td>
<td>machine design</td>
<td>radiation science</td>
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<tr>
<td>CAD/CAM</td>
<td>mechatronics</td>
<td>medical imaging</td>
<td>radiation transport</td>
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<td>catalysis</td>
<td>microanalysis</td>
<td>motion control</td>
<td>radiobiological</td>
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<tr>
<td>composites</td>
<td>nanomechanics</td>
<td>nuclear power</td>
<td>rehabilitation equipment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>computational mechanics</td>
<td>nanotechnology</td>
<td>nuclear power</td>
<td>rheology</td>
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<tr>
<td>computer-integrated</td>
<td>sensor physics</td>
<td>solar energy</td>
<td>robotics and computer imaging</td>
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<tr>
<td>manufacturing</td>
<td>solid modeling</td>
<td>solid mechanics</td>
<td>software engineering</td>
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<tr>
<td>cryogenics</td>
<td>superconductors</td>
<td>structural engineering</td>
<td>water resources</td>
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</table>
| design automation | thermal hydraulics | structural mechanics | |}

**Action Verbs**

Use consistent verb tense (generally past tense). Start phrases with descriptive action verbs. Supply quantitative data whenever possible. Adapt terminology to include key words. Incorporate action verbs with keywords and current “hot” topics, programs, tools, testing terms, and instrumentation to develop concise, yet highly descriptive phrases. Remember that résumés are scanned for such words, so do everything possible to incorporate important phraseology and current keywords into your résumé.

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<td>innovated</td>
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<td>expressed</td>
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<td>trouble-shoot</td>
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<td>monitored</td>
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PRESENTATIONS

R.M. Jones (speaker), J.J. de Pablo, and M.D. Graham, “Macromolecules in Microdevices: Multiscale Simulation of DNA Dynamics in Model Microfluidic Geometries,” to be presented at the Fifth International Conference on Modeling and Simulation of Microsystems (20XX), San Juan Puerto Rico, USA

Languages

- Chinese (Mandarin), native
- French, fluent
- Italian, basic

Include language proficiency

Cultural Diversity or Global Profile

- Lived and studied in France; Extensive western European travel
- Experienced in working in diverse environments

Antique olive font—10 pt.

Work Authorization

Contact the International Student Services Office regarding employment regulations, Curricular Practical Training (CPT) and Optional Practical Training (OPT) (www.iss.wisc.edu/, 608/262–2044).

If you are studying in the U.S. on a student visa or other temporary visa, it is important that you understand your employment privileges and restrictions. Additional information can be found on the U.S. Department of State website (travel.state.gov).

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PUBLICATIONS


Times NR font—11 pt.

How to Write It

Leadership  
S.U.B.E. (Society Uniting Business and Engineering)
- Vice President
- Worked closely with Industrial Advisory Board to organize events.
- Developed funding proposals and designed marketing strategies for organization.

Computer Skills  

Skills

Global Languages  
Fluent in Cantonese: Basic understanding of Mandarin

Computer Languages  
C++, Java, Python, SQL

Computer Programs  
PRO-II, CapCost, Windows, MS Office

Languages

- Chinese (Mandarin), native
- French, fluent
- Italian, basic

Include language proficiency

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Other Résumé Section Headers

While the previously mentioned résumé sections—Contact Information, Objective Statement, Education and Experience—are expected on your résumé, other relevant information should be included as well. The following section headings illustrate some of the available options: Honors & Awards, Scholarships, Memberships, Patents, Research Interests, Teaching Interests, Publications, Presentations, Interests, Volunteer Activities.
Qualifications
- Identified and resolved problems with the design and improved the feature functionality
- Evaluated current products and implemented proposed improvements schedule

Research Products, Corp.
- Created designs for improving existing and developing new processes
- Conducted product performance analysis

Education
- Advanced Graphic Analysis
  - Developed specifications of an I/O device for 100MB/s transfers;
  - Designed, fabricated, and tested a real-time VLSI cache simulator.
- Computer Science
  - Implemented neural networks in Matlab.
  - Thermo-fluid simulations with Fluent 6 and Gambit: Definition of geometry and flow cases
  - Experience in neural networks implemented in Matlab

Experience
- Argonne National Laboratory
  - Designed and built experimental setups to characterize single-phase and two-phase flow
  - Studied single-phase flow through complex geometries inside carburetors with numerical modeling and artificial neural networks.
  - Implemented carburetor model in one-dimensional engine simulation software to study the effect of carburetor elements on power and emissions.

- University of Wisconsin-Madison
  - GPA: 3.9/4.0

- Computer Skills
  - C++, Apple OS X, Java, Geo-Slope, Maptek Vulcan
  - Windows 95, Windows NT, UNIX

- Languages
  - Spanish, fluent
  - German, 3 HS semesters

- Leadership
  - Future Problem Solvers, Regional Champions
  - Soccer, Captain, All-state, 5 letters
  - All-Academic, State of Illinois

- Activities
  - Geological Engineering Club
  - Intramural basketball and soccer

References

Objective
Geological engineering co-op opportunity in water resources management or remediation for 2 to 3 work terms

Education
B.S. Geological Engineering and Geology, expected December 20XX
University of Wisconsin-Madison
GPA: 3.4/4.0
Budapest University of Technology and Economics, Budapest, Hungary
January–June 20XX

Experience
- The Computer Center, Inc., Madison, WI
  - Office Assistant, October 20XX–present
    - Maintained database of customer information, developed communication skills through daily customer interaction, and performed general office tasks.
    - Received consistent positive performance evaluations from supervisor.

- Parks & Recreation Department, City of Port Mark, Port Mark, IL
  - Head Lifeguard, Summers 20XX–XX
    - Managed the operation of a municipal pool.
    - Counted and recorded daily admissions receipts.
    - Supervised a staff of seven lifeguards.
    - Required strong organizational skills.

- Strooza’s Sentry Foods, Port Mark, IL
  - Night Manager, Part-time during HS and Summers, 20XX–20XX
    - Deposited nightly receipts and secured building.
    - Created weekly schedules for assistants.

- Computer Skills
  - C++, Apple OS X, Java, Geo-Slope, Maptek Vulcan

- Languages
  - Spanish, fluent
  - German, 3 HS semesters

- Leadership
  - Future Problem Solvers, Regional Champions
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  - All-Academic, State of Illinois

- Activities
  - Geological Engineering Club
  - Intramural basketball and soccer

References
RÉSUMÉ—Professional BS Résumé Sample

Jan S. Bailey
1234 Monroe St., Madison, WI 53705
608.123.4567, student@wisc.edu

Objective
Professional position in manufacturing or maintenance engineering. Special interests in mechanical structural analysis and design.

Education
University of Wisconsin-Madison
B.S. Engineering Mechanics, expected May 20XX
- Major GPA 3.7/4.0
- Cumulative GPA 2.7/4.0
- Paid 80% of all college expenses through 20 h/wk jobs.

Academic Design Projects:
- Mars Wind Machine: Completed stress and displacement analysis of Gromit airfoils. Determined most effective internal airfoil construction and material.
- High Voltage Power Line Hybrid Crossover: Developed an efficient design process. Completed stress/strain analysis for worst-case scenario; appropriate materials selection/dimension analysis.

Coursework:
- Advanced Strength of Materials, Finite Elements, Mechanical Vibration

Engineering Experience
Kohler Co., Kohler, WI
Co-op Engineer May–December 20XX 2 work terms
- Developed and fabricated acoustic scanning robot. Monitored exhaust emissions.
- Worked with team of multi-disciplinary engineers in sound power analysis.
- Co-presented final project to management. Earned Employee of the Month Award.

Elson Management Co., Madison, WI
Maintenance Worker/Repair Personnel, August 20XX–current
- Troubleshoot HVAC, plumbing, and electrical problems in large residential units for management firm.
- Promoted to weekend supervisor and client support manager after 2 years.
- Trained nearly 20 part-time staff in problem-solving and customer relations.
- Worked PT during summers and breaks; part-time 10-20 hrs/wk during school.

Other Experience
Engineering Career Services, UW-Madison
Staff Assistant, August 20XX–present
- Developed strong interpersonal and organizational skills. Worked 10 hours/week during recruiting. Assisted staff, students, and recruiters in assisting campus visitors.

Skills
- Software: ProEngineer, LabVIEW, ANSYS Workbench, MATLAB, AutoCAD, Access
- Languages: Spanish (fluent), French (somewhat proficient)

Major GPA, design projects and selected coursework can support your objective and add strength to your Education section.

RÉSUMÉ—2-Page Professional MS Résumé Sample

Yijun (Yvonne) Wong
U.S. Permanent Resident
1234 Engineering Hall, Madison, WI 53706
608.123.4567, student@cae.wisc.edu

Objective
Advanced computer architecture, particularly in logic and architectural design. VLSI design, board-level design, and accompanying layout and interfacing.

Education
University of Wisconsin-Madison
M.S. Electrical Engineering, expected May 20XX
- GPA: 3.8/4.0
- Advisor: Professor Roberto Sangiovanni
- Thesis: ……………………………

University of Wisconsin-Madison
B.S. Electrical Engineering, August 20XX
- Computer Engineering Option, GPA 3.51/4.0

Experience
University of Wisconsin-Madison, Dept. of Electrical & Computer Engineering
Teaching Assistant, September 20XX–present
- Taught introductory electronic circuits to 60 general engineering students.
- Lectured, developed exams, and distributed grades.

Astronautics Corp. of America, Madison, WI
Project Engineer, January 20XX–August 20XX
- With team of seven, designed, built, and debugged the CPU of the Astronautics ZS-1 supercomputer.
- Designed the 300 MHz ECL Master Clock Oscillator boards and clock distribution tree.
- Developed specifications of an I/O device for 100MB/s transfers; high-speed TTL and ECL signal behavior on transmission lines.

Certain Solutions (self-employed), Madison, WI
Engineering Consultant, March 20XX – present
- Solved noise-related printed circuit board problems for area firms.
- Developed improved board layout design rules.

Research Interests & Projects
Design, fabrication and testing of real-time VLSI cache simulator. c3000 transistor hardware monitor that computes would-be cache hit rates for a variety of cache types in parallel. Chip is currently being fabricated by MOSIS.

Designed voice synthesis project in a computer projects course. Received the Davis Award for Projects in Control Systems, October 20XX.

(Continued on the next page)
Yijun (Yvonne) Wong
2 of 2

Technical Skills

Programming Skills
C, C++, Verilog, Matlab, VHDL, CUDA, Thrust, Open MP, MPI, Python, Assembly coding, Shell programming

Programming Tools
ModelSim, Design Vision, LabVIEW, Altera Quartus, PSoC Designer, Allegro PCB Designer, AVR Studio.

Computer Platforms
Windows, Linux, OS X

Hardware
B03I, B086, System on chip, PSoC, Mixed signal architecture, Xilinx, Arduino, Raspberry Pi

Publications & Presentations

References

Professor Roberto Sangiovanni
Dept. of Electrical & Computer Engineering
University of Wisconsin-Madison
1234 Engineering Dr.
Madison, WI 53706
sprofessor@engr.wisc.edu
608/123-4567 or 608/987-6543

Professor Lee Park
University of Wisconsin-Madison
1234 Engineering Dr.
Madison, WI 53706
professor@wisc.edu
608/123-4567

Dr. Atul Parikh, Manager
Astronautics Corp. of America
544 Research Park
Madison, WI 53711
employer@company.com
608/123-4567

NOTE: Two-page résumés are never printed back-to-back. Use two separate pieces of paper.
Experience (continued)

Research Assistant, Universidad de los Andes, Bogotá, Colombia 10/20XX – 7/20XX
Energy Conversion Research Group – Department of Mechanical Engineering
- Compared typical fuels found in Bogotá, based on analytical combustion calculations for adiabatic flame temperature and NOx emissions.
- Conducted an energy audit to minimize the cost of electric energy consumption in the Aqueduct of town Facatativá.
- Reviewed international experiences of running CNG- and diesel-fueled transit buses and generated recommendations for the successful implementation of CNG in Bogotá’s mass transport system.

Teacher, Universidad de los Andes, Bogotá, Colombia 8/20XX – 5/20XX
- Lectured ‘Technical Drawing’ for two groups of 30 students, 3 hours/week (2 semesters)
- Supervised two graders.

Intern Engineer, General Motors, Bogotá, Colombia 7/20XX – 1/20XX
- Supplied technical assistance to Commercial and Engineering Departments.
- Conducted market research for new vehicles.

Computer Skills
Thermo-fluid simulations with Fluent 6 and Gambit: Definition of geometry and flow cases by running scripts in Unix environment
Advanced knowledge of EES
Intermediate knowledge of GT-Power 6, with implementation of user defined functions.
Code-writing in C and Fortran
Experience in neural networks implemented in Matlab
Advanced knowledge of EES
Experience in Chemkin, Stanjan, Gauseq, Matlab, Kiva3d and SolidWorks

Laboratory and Instrumentation Skills
Labview and data acquisition systems
Implementation of unsteady compressible internal flows
Implementation of unsteady boundary conditions with user defined functions
Combustion gas analyzers
MOUDY impactor and Total Suspended Particle samplers
DMA electrostatic particle classifier
Condensation particle samplers
Inductively Coupled Plasma Optical Emission Spectroscope

Languages
Spanish (native speaker) French and Italian (reading proficiency)

Professional Societies
American Society of Mechanical Engineers
Society of Automotive Engineers

Awards and Honors
Best Paper Award—SAE Small Engine Technology Conference, Graz, Austria 20XX
Graduated with Honors—Universidad de los Andes, Bogotá, Colombia 20XX
Young Researchers Scholarship—COLCIENCIAS Colombian NSF, Bogotá, Colombia 20XX

Interests
Photography, theatre, windsurfing

Publications

Arias, D. A., and Shedd, T. A., 20XX, Steady and dynamic models of fuel and air flow in carburetors for small engines. ASME Journal of Fluids Engineering. (Accepted for publication)


Presentations


References

Professor Timothy A. Shedd
University of Wisconsin-Madison
Department of Mechanical Engineering
1234 Engineering Dr.
Madison, WI 53706
608.123.4567
professor@engr.wisc.edu

Professor Sanford A. Klein
University of Wisconsin-Madison
Department of Mechanical Engineering
1234 Engineering Dr.
Madison, WI 53706
608.123.4567
professor@engr.wisc.edu

Professor Emeritus William A. Beckman
University of Wisconsin-Madison
Department of Mechanical Engineering
1234 Engineering Dr.
Madison, WI 53706
608.123.4567
professor@engr.wisc.edu

ECS TIPS

Never print resume materials back-to-back! Do not staple resume pages except for use at career fairs.
- 3-4 references are common for BS and MS candidates; 3-5 are appropriate for PhD candidates.
- Choose a balance of academic and work experience references. Include a reference from MS institution if different from PhD institution.
Jo Alumni
alumni@uwalumni.com  608.123.4567   123 Mineral Point Rd., Madison, WI 53705

Objective
A position focusing on mechanical/industrial design and product development.

Qualifications
Experience in product development and design coupled with creativity and innovation
Necessary communication skills gained with client and employee interactions
Leadership developed by managing projects and team-based environments

Work Experience
FARNSWORTH GROUP, INC., Madison, WI, June XX – Present
Development Engineer/Project Manager
• Product Development
  - Evaluated current products and implemented proposed improvements schedule
  - Redesigned software interfaces to better serve end-users
  - Brought a new product from concept to market
  - Identified and resolved problems with the design and improved the feature functionality before product construction began
• Business
  - Created an office business plan focusing on creating a marketing strategy and increasing operational efficiency
  - Developed a marketing image, as well as materials for our products and services
• Project Management
  - Developed project schedule and budget
  - Coordinated work with a multi-office team
• Customer Relations
  - Collaborated with client employees to effectively achieve the client's goals
  - Managed internal and external client relations for marketing and development

RESEARCH PRODUCTS, CORP., Madison, WI, May XX – August XX
Product Testing Technician
• Statistical Analysis
  - Implemented statistical analysis for quality control purposes
• Technical Communication
  - Documented analysis and presented results
  - Successfully conveyed technical thoughts and ideas to employees of varying disciplines

GEORGIA PACIFIC, CORP., Port Edwards, WI, May XX – August XX
Mechanical Engineering Assistant
• Design
  - Created designs for improving existing and developing new processes
• Project Management
  - Coordinated projects with multiple contractors and vendors

Additional Experience
K & K CAD DESIGNS, Wisconsin Rapids, WI, May XX – August XX
CAD Drafter/IT Administrator
• CAD Knowledge
  - Provided CAD services in a wide range of applications
• IT Knowledge
  - Oversaw the maintenance of company computers
• Designed theft-proof coin-operated newspaper dispenser
• Invented and prototyped anti-slipping device for automobiles
• Designed a unique ergonomic keyboard
• Designed and prototyped a fishing pole for paraplegics
• Invented a dual-beam flashlight
• Designed concepts for a mp3 player, a PDA and a laptop computer

Education
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
BS Mechanical Engineering, May XXXX
Advanced Electives:  Engineering Design with Polymers
Advanced Graphic Analysis
Mechatronics in Control and Product Realization
Business Venture Creation

Skills
AutoCAD    PLC Microcontroller Programming
Pro/Engineer Unix    Business Plans
SolidWorks Presentation & Marketing Materials
Ansys    Windows OS
• Designed concepts for a mp3 player, a PDA and a laptop computer

Interests
Technology    Space Exploration
Product Design    Automation
Medical Research    Filmmaking

Activities
Engineering EXPO 2000: Executive Committee,
Engineering Dean's Leadership Council
Student Advisor
Engineering Projects in Community Service; The Leader/Snape Institute
American Society of Mechanical Engineers
Webmaster
Freelance Graphics Artist and Amateur Filmmaker
Soccer, Football, Basketball, Volleyball, Kendo
Computer Game Mods Creation

ECS TIPS
Font is Tahoma. Times New Roman, Arial, etc., are fine.

◆ Font size is 10 point. Range up to 12 pt. is fine.
◆ Margins are .875.” Range from .05” to 1.0” is suggested.
◆ Note header on page 2.
Jo Alumni
alumni@uwalumni.com 608.123.4567 123 Mineral Point Rd., Madison, WI 53705

References
Associate Professor Michael D. Graham
Advisor
University of Wisconsin-Madison
1234 Engineering Drive
Madison, WI 53706
608.123.4567
professor@engr.wisc.edu

Professor Juan J. de Pablo
Advisor
University of Wisconsin-Madison
1234 Engineering Drive
Madison, WI 53706
608.123.4567
professor@engr.wisc.edu

Assistant Professor Paul F. Naeyel
University of Wisconsin-Madison
1234 Engineering Drive
Madison, WI 53706
608.123.4567
professor@engr.wisc.edu

Professor Emeritus R. Byron Bird
University of Wisconsin-Madison
Department of Chemical Engineering
1234 Engineering Drive
Madison, WI 53706
608.123.4567
professor@engr.wisc.edu

NOTE: See your ECS advisor for questions regarding your references.

1. The reference page should always include your full name.
2. The header should include a page number if the reference page is to be included as a second or third page of the résumé.
3. Or, the reference page should include the full header (name and all contact information)—as shown here. This page should be used as an addendum page to the résumé.

NOTE: It is only appropriate to include your photo on international résumés. DO NOT include a picture or any personal information such as age or marital status on résumés in the United States.
**Consider and Ask References**

Think carefully about selecting your best 3–4 references:
1 academic, 1 work-related, 1–2 additional of either.

Carefully consider people who are enthusiastically willing to serve as references for your job search. You will list reference names and contact information on your résumé. Employers will generally contact references by phone or email; they will not request a formal letter of recommendation. So, how do you select references? Some factors to keep in mind as you review past and present mentors, supervisors, advisors, and professors in an attempt to develop the best reference list possible:

1. The ideal reference list includes a former employer or supervisor and an engineering professor, assistant professor, or lecturer. The third reference will be an additional employer, professor, or mentor.
2. Always ask individuals if they would be willing and able to serve as your job search reference. Provide them with a relatively easy way to decline your request. By proceeding in this manner, you will be assured that, if accepted, the reference is genuinely enthused about your career path and will not be “bothered” when employers call.
3. References should be included as part of or as an addendum to your résumé.
4. Although references are generally not checked prior to the first interview, you will be better prepared for the job search if you have completed your references list as soon as possible.
5. Include a phrase or title defining the relationship between you and the reference. It should state “advisor,” “co-op supervisor,” “mentor at Harley-Davidson,” or “professor for ME 309 and ME 416.”
6. Provide each reference with a complete résumé and list of references.

Be prepared to give your reference list to a recruiter. A reference list can also be attached in your follow-up thank you email sent immediately after the screening interview.

Formatting suggestions include:
- **Do not** include the statement References Available Upon Request on your resume. It simply states the obvious. Use this valuable résumé space more effectively to further describe experiences or list qualifications.
- For a one-page résumé, develop a separate reference page as an addendum to your résumé.
- Graduate students or experienced alumni with a multiple-page résumé should develop a reference page as an addendum or may present references as the last section of résumé.
- Obtain approval from each reference and determine which contact information to present to employers (phone, email, or both—what does the reference prefer?)
- Keep your references aware of the status of your job search—still looking, considering offers, or accepted-employment.
- Thank your references.

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**EXPLORE POTENTIAL EMPLOYERS**

Keep an open mind to all potential employers; small business employs almost half of all engineers.

**Where to Find Organizations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>myECS</th>
<th>Professors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LinkedIn</td>
<td>Industry journals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruiter business cards</td>
<td>Your personal network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family and friends</td>
<td>Current news</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alumni</td>
<td>Local career centers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past supervisors</td>
<td>Research contacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The Essential On-Line Tool**

Every day new on-line tools emerge to help you find potential employers. Today’s top tool is LinkedIn.

LinkedIn is the resource for developing your professional network, or “connections.” Surveys have indicated that people do not want to use Facebook for their job search—it’s purely social. LinkedIn is just as powerful as Facebook but with a focus on connecting professionally. You want to take great care and time in creating your LinkedIn profile—showing the strength of your professional development. Like a résumé, this is often your first introduction to potential employers, so it needs to be well-crafted.

LinkedIn has job postings, links to relevant articles, discussions on key industry topics, “Groups” based on alma mater or interest, in addition to your professional connections. Use these services to expand your network. You will need to be active on the site; don’t think you can just create a profile and job offers will pour in. You need to actively connect and engage with other users to build your network of connections and research opportunities.

**Key tips for LinkedIn**

- Complete the profile thoroughly, including descriptive headline with keywords
- Include a professional photo
- Always customize the email when requesting to “connect”
- Actively use Groups to engage other professionals
- Only make professional connections, not personal
- Recommend people you would like to recommend you
RESEARCH EMPLOYERS

The quality of your employer targeting and research determines much of your job search success.

Long before actually applying, research which employers have the greatest potential for your interests and qualifications. In fact, employer research parallels résumé writing and serves as a major component in writing effective cover letters/emails.

After creating a targeted list of employers, you will use your time more effectively by exploring opportunities with only those employers whose needs match your qualifications.

Glassdoor is one way to learn more about specific organizations. The site contains information on open jobs, real employee salaries, reviews from employees, company overviews, CEO approval ratings, salary reports, interviews and questions, benefits reviews, office photos and more! Obtain valuable insight into jobs, real employee salaries, reviews from employees, company overviews, CEO approval ratings, salary opportunities with only those employers whose needs match your qualifications.

After creating a targeted list of employers, you will use your time more effectively by exploring opportunities with only those employers whose needs match your qualifications.

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What to Find Out:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Products or services</th>
<th>Parent company</th>
<th>Job descriptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Major competitors</td>
<td>Leading-edge projects</td>
<td>Career paths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customers</td>
<td>Growth goals</td>
<td>Contact names</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current conditions</td>
<td>Training programs</td>
<td>Alumni employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market niche and share</td>
<td>Locations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

BUILD YOUR PROFESSIONAL NETWORK

What is the Purpose?

To gather a list of contacts who will help you with your career, professional development, and current/future job searches. To screen jobs before you take them, careers before you transition to them, locations before you move there. To find answers to very specific questions you have about your job search.

With Whom Should You Network?

Start with those familiar to you: roommates, family, friends and acquaintances, however near or far geographically. Ask each contact for the names of 2 or more people they know who are in your current field or in your field of interest. Ask for contact names from groups and sources in which you are a member, college alumni, co-workers, places where you study, shop, or spend time. Continually build this network by building professional relationships. Keep careful notes and records of your contacts. LinkedIn is a great way to help you keep in touch with your connections.

How Do You Do It Right?

You deliberately attend meetings, conferences or conventions in the field of interest. You deliberately talk with people and exchange contact information. Ask for names of contacts from your co-workers, from departments at local colleges, or career offices. Once you have names, email them, using your contact as a referral person. Introduce yourself and state your purpose. Ask if they have specific advice… and start building a relationship. Honor their time. Have specific questions for them. Thank them for their assistance.

Signs That You’re Doing It Wrong

You are doing it wrong if you approach busy individuals, ask them to have lunch with you, and have no specific agenda or prepared questions. If they ask during lunch what you need to talk about, and you lamely say, “Well, I don’t know. So-and-So just thought we should get to know each other; this is not networking. You have clearly not done your homework!”

Unadvertised Jobs: “The Hidden Job Market”

60–80% of jobs are secured through networking… before they are even advertised. Once advertised, there is fierce internal and external competition.

Pyramid Scheme

Networking is a pyramid scheme—in a good way. Consider every contact an important one; talk to everyone you know and ask for referrals.

Keep It Live

Keep your contacts current on your job search. Check in with them often to indicate your seriousness of purpose and to extend appreciation for any assistance they might offer. Do not just contact every time you need job search help.

Grow Contacts

Ask contacts to provide two new contacts. Do your homework to show new contacts your seriousness and willingness to work hard. Ask intelligent questions. “Based on my research of Medtronic’s website, I know they are currently researching XYZ. Mr. Daniels mentioned that you are familiar with XYZ. What do you think makes this research unique? Perhaps you know someone I could talk with directly about it?”

You Can’t Do It Alone

It is important that you enlist the assistance of everyone you know, as well as conduct thorough employer research yourself. You will experience success by increasing the number of people who know of your career strategy and by asking for information, advice, recommendations, and referrals.

Employers Do It

Employers network to find good candidates! To reduce risk in hiring new people, they talk to people within the company and to colleagues across the country to identify strong candidates. Companies have a desire to hire people to whom they have a “link,” and the most logical way to do this is by networking.
CONTACT EMPLOYERS: COVER LETTERS

Every résumé requires an introduction—an explanation as to why a résumé is sent. An effective cover letter introduces your résumé, summarizes your immediate career goals, and is used for many reasons:

- Respond to specific job postings for direct hire
- Request an interview invitation
- Inquire about opportunities
- Follow-up an interview to show appreciation

Form Letters
Never send a “form” letter to employers. At first glance to the student, this is an easy and quick way to contact hundreds of employers with resumes. Often called the “shot gun” approach, candidates erroneously use this approach to claim that they have done an “exhaustive” job search, sending résumés to hundreds of employers and receiving no responses. Upon this premise, they conclude that there are no “jobs” out there, and they blame the bad economy or others for their joblessness. How often have you heard, “I’ve sent out 400 résumés and posted a résumé on every major job board, but no one is getting back to me. There are no jobs.” ECS would never condone this as even an “outlier” strategy for conducting an effective job search.

Letter Format (See page 32 for proper business letter format)

The use of form letters is a waste of your time, so create a targeted list of employers. Then develop letters or emails specifically for each employer. Each communication will include these basic elements:

Introduction: Clearly and simply state why you are writing to the employer. It is crucial for you to make it clear that you deserve further consideration. If appropriate, identify the person, by name, who suggested you contact the employer. This use of networking is particularly effective.

Body: Emphasize the match between your qualifications and the employer’s needs. Do not simply repeat your résumé but expand upon 1 or 2 qualifications that fit the specific position for which you are applying. Describe how your background has prepared you as a “good match” for the ongoing and/or future needs of that specific employer.

Closing: Request employer action (i.e., an interview, an INVITED letter, or a response for a site visit) at the employer’s earliest convenience. Indicate the next step you will take, such as “I will contact you during the week of October 2 to follow up on this request.” Close with a goodwill/appreciation statement: “I look forward to meeting with you. Thank you for your time and consideration.”

Tone and Timing

Professional Tone: While the message content is important, the tone is equally important. Be professional. Address the message to Mr., Ms., or Dr. XXX. It is rarely acceptable to use first names in a business salutation. Avoid using slang and contractions (“I’ve” and “you’ll”). Be courteous and respectable.

Effective Timing: Traditionally, “new college hires” are recruited on campus in early fall and early spring, but no one is getting back to me. There are no jobs.” ECS would never condone this as even an “outlier” strategy for conducting an effective job search.

A TRUE (but unfortunate) EMAIL STORY

CHARACTERS: (student names changed)
Bob (UW-Madison engineering student; strong candidate)
Ms. Hanson (Human Resources Manager, Large, Good Co.)
Wally (Engineering student’s buddy)

PLACE: (place not changed; it happened)
CAE Lab
Late one night
Not too long ago

Bob returns from an excellent second interview with Large, Good Co. in San Francisco. Soon after arriving back on campus, he is contacted by Ms. Hanson with an offer; an excellent offer for permanent employment upon graduation. Bob is very pleased and ready to accept offer. All things are good.

Late that night, while doing homework at CAE and talking with buddies online, he opens Ms. Hanson’s email one more time to look at the job offer details and dream. His mind wanders to the great time he had on the flight to the second interview, the people he met, and the beginning of an excellent career with Large, Good Co. He has done all the right things and it is paying off.

Then he receives an email from Wally who is going out of town to party over the weekend. Bob wants to tell Wally about his job offer and “wish him well” for the weekend. He selects “Reply to email” and tells Wally about his second interview, the job offer. He closes by telling Wally to have a very good time (in detail) at the out-of-town party. You know what happened already, don’t you? Bob, thinking he was replying to Wally, was actually replying to Ms. Hanson. The message intended for Wally was casual and social with inappropriate language for business communication.

When Ms. Hanson (expecting a respectful, business-like response to her offer of employment with Large, Good Co.) received the email response, she immediately rescinded the job offer. Even after repeated phone calls to “explain” the situation, the job offer remains “pulled”! Bob had to start over in his job search.

CONTACT EMPLOYERS

ECS TIPS

◆ Email business communication is MUCH different than personal email communication. Re-read this statement. Slow down and think of what you are doing.

◆ Do not hit the “send” button! Review and spell check. Check the tone for professionalism. This is not a social, how ya’ doin’? type of email!

Business Email Etiquette

- The biggest mistake students make in using email for their job search is treating it too casually. This is business! Not social.
- Be professional. Edit your message and double check the address prior to selecting the “send” button.
- Don’t be sloppy. This isn’t “Instant Messenger.” You are not asking someone one for a date, or gathering a group to study or party. You are looking for a job.
- What emotion does your email convey? What are the implications and perceptions? Email does not project emotions as well as face-to-face or even phone conversations. It lacks vocal inflection, gestures, and a shared environment. It also does not communicate normal cues such as dress, diction, or dialect. The reader will make assumptions based on your name, email address and facility with the language. You need to be meticulous. Write in a precise, clear manner.
- Make everything completely clear and unambiguous. Use perfect spelling, eloquent words, and correct grammar. Don’t be conversational. Do not use funny, cute, or non-professional email addresses.
- Sarcasm and humor are particularly dangerous to use in email. Don’t.
- Choose your words very carefully. Sadly, a large number of people suffer mishaps because they did not understand how to adjust their communication styles to the medium of email.

Email Reminders for Job Seekers

In most cases, it is acceptable to communicate with employers by email. This includes the initial contact, follow-ups after an interview, and thank you’s. Email can be very effective (i.e., quick)—or disastrous if sent to the wrong person, written too informally, conveying a negative message, or containing spelling or grammatical errors. Use strictly formal business communication tones when communicating with an employer by email.

Dear Ms. Rooney:

On the recommendation of UW–Madison Professor Roberta Meckler, I am inquiring about research-oriented engineering opportunities within GIM. I will complete my PhD in electrical engineering in August 20XX and have an excellent academic record and solid employment experience in both industry and academia. (2 returns after each paragraph)

My research initiatives in optimal sensors and signal-processing algorithms for aerospace monitors match the research of your recently established facility in Arlington Heights. While at the regional IEEE conference in Chicago last month, I presented a paper on this topic and received positive feedback from a number of colleagues, including Mr. James Smith, a representative of GIM. My major area of study at UW–Madison has been biomedical engineering. Combining my minor in computer science and my work experiences, I feel I can make significant contributions to GIM. (2 returns)

My résumé is enclosed for your review. I would like to arrange an interview with you at your earliest convenience. I will follow up this letter with a phone call within two weeks, in the hope of arranging an interview. Thank you for your consideration. (2 returns)

Sincerely,

Wallace J. Main (2 returns)

Enclosure: Résumé

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**FOR HARD COPY LETTERS:**
- 1" side margins
- Use 10–12 pt. font size
- Use simple font styles like Times New Roman, Arial, Tahoma or Garamond
- Sign the letter if mailing
- Emailed cover letters are appropriate for your job search
- Professional communication rules apply for both paper letters and email communication

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**Samples of Letters and Emails**

**Letter of Application**

“Harris Corporation came to my attention as I researched firms specializing in small engine design (more detail about your background and the company’s area of research/manufacturing/services). I am seeking a co-op position as a design engineer and am available for up to three co-op work terms. Currently, I am a junior in mechanical engineering at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. My particular interests are in the area of small engine design and testing. I have pursued my interest in small engines in a variety of ways, both on and off campus (more details here). While at UW–Madison, I have successfully completed required and elective mechanical engineering courses, including (include some courses taken or currently enrolled in). In addition, I have worked 10–15 hours per week while maintaining a strong GPA. To develop my communication and leadership skills, I have actively sought key positions in engineering student organizations on campus. Some highlights of my experiences and preparation are:

- Career Connection volunteer
- ASME member
- Strong academic background: GPA 3.2/4.0
- Avid lifelong interest in rebuilding and maintaining small engines

I would like the opportunity to talk with you about my qualifications as they relate to your engineering needs. I will contact you in two weeks with the hope of arranging an interview with you at your earliest convenience. Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to meeting with you.”

**Referral Letter**

“Susan Pioneer from Elionix Corp. in Chicago suggested that I contact you regarding professional job opportunities still available with ProEngin. I am seeking a fast-paced technical position in which I can work collaboratively with a variety of colleagues and customers. My strengths are in applying both communication and technical skills to solve problems and in adapting to new situations quickly. In addition to my BS Electrical Engineering degree, I concurrently completed a BS Physics degree in May 2006. This background, as well as my varied work experiences, will have prepared me to make contributions on many levels within your organization. I have attached my résumé for your review and am available to discuss my qualifications further at your convenience, either in Chicago or by phone. I look forward to talking with you regarding available opportunities.”

**Follow-up After CAREER CONNECTION**

“It was a pleasure meeting you at ‘Career Connection 20XX’ on the campus of the University of Wisconsin–Madison. We discussed the possibility of interviewing when you returned to campus on October 12. Please know that I am very interested in working in your Phoenix manufacturing facility or being a part of your newly developed engineering training program. As you may recall, I have just completed a 2-term co-op experience with Plexus in Neenah, Wisconsin, and look forward to seeking opportunities for full-time employment. I hope to hear from you soon regarding my invited status for campus interview sign-up. If you have any questions regarding my qualifications, please contact me. My résumé is attached for your review. Thank you for your time and consideration.”
Thank You for Mock Interview During CAREER CONNECTION

“Thank you for participating in the University of Wisconsin—Madison Mock Interview Program, sponsored by Engineering Career Services.

As a result of our interview and the valuable feedback you provided, I have made significant changes in the way I prepare for interviews. My employer research is better defined and I work harder to specifically explain to the employer how my background and training can be of immediate assistance to a department.

In addition, I have made subtle changes to my résumé and realize the value of being able to describe every aspect of the résumé.

I have mentioned to friends that you were one of the recruiters who volunteered to help engineering students improve interviewing skills. Now, we all have a better idea of what to expect and how to answer those tough questions. Thank you.”

Letter Requesting Invited Status for Campus Interviews

“As an electrical engineering student expecting to graduate from the University of Wisconsin–Madison with experience in control systems, I am most interested in interviewing with you on October 21 when you visit campus.

Mr. John Mathews, your representative at ‘Career Connection,’ suggested I contact you to request INVITED status for campus interviews. If, after reviewing my résumé, you see a match between my qualifications and your needs, please enter my name or ID number into your myECS INVITED list.

My coursework and co-op experiences in engineering have enabled me to develop strong technical skills that would be of immediate use to your organization (include more details in this paragraph). In addition, I am extremely conscientious and very enthusiastic about the area of control systems.

Thank you for your time. I look forward to interviewing with you in October.”

Interview Thank You and Follow-up

Send immediately after interview.

“Thank you for your time and consideration during our interview on Thursday. I enjoyed our discussion on the new widget product you are developing and appreciated your taking me on a tour of your facility. As we discussed your needs and toured the facility, my interest in joining your team became even stronger.

In giving further thought to our discussion about working in the widget industry, I realized I had a similar experience several years ago while working with new optical technology at ABC Corp. While it required more time to get up to speed, I dedicated extra personal time to become familiar with the specifics of that project, and was able to deliver our prototype ahead of schedule. With my dedication, team work, and experience in developing optical technology, I am confident I would be an asset to your team and make a valuable contribution to Techno Products, Inc.

I appreciate your consideration and am excited by the prospect of working with you and developing the new widget product line. Enclosed is an additional copy of my résumé for your convenience. I look forward to talking with you again soon.”

1st Follow-up Email

Send 2 weeks after thank you email for interview

“I am still very interested in pursuing opportunities with ABC Corp. in the widget division. As we discussed on campus in Madison last month, my academic project in ______ will enable me to make immediate contributions as an entry-level engineer. Please let me know if I can provide you with any other materials to help you make your decision. I look forward to scheduling an on-site visit at your convenience. Thank you, once again, for your time and consideration.”

2nd Follow-up Email to Interview

Send 2 weeks after 1st follow-up email

A professional phone call of continued interest is also appropriate instead of this email

“After meeting with you on October 14, I remain extremely interested in your XXX position and I feel confident that I can work with your team to maintain your high level of performance and customer service.

Recently, I have scheduled second interviews with two other companies and received one offer on which I will need to decide by the end of the month. Since ABC has always been my employer of choice, I would very much appreciate a communication regarding my application status. I respectfully request the opportunity to conduct a second interview on-site with you.”

Acceptance of Job Offer

Send AFTER first accepting job offer by phone (in person)

“I am pleased to formally accept your offer of a position as an industrial engineer with Maynard, Inc. After our phone conversation of last week and after reviewing your written offer, I understand my starting date will be January 15, 2007 and that my monthly salary will be $4,020.00.

Enclosed is a copy of your formal offer letter with my acceptance signature. I look forward to beginning my career with you.

Thank you for your confidence in my qualifications. I will work hard to meet and exceed your expectations.”

Rejection of Job Offer

“This letter confirms our phone conversation this morning indicating that I will not accept your job offer to join the staff at Rollando Products. As you know, this was a very difficult decision for me, but I have decided to accept another opportunity.

As I approach graduation and reflect on my experiences and prepare for the future, I am grateful for the many opportunities offered me. While at Rollando as an intern engineer, I learned a great deal. You have always treated me with professionalism and provided me with mentorship that forms a solid foundation upon which I will build my career.

Thank you.”

Apology Letter

This is a letter you DO NOT want to write. Missing a campus interview will automatically result in a deactivation of your myECS account.

“Please accept my sincere apology for missing our interview today. I take complete responsibility for my failure and request that you do not assume all engineering students at Wisconsin are as irresponsible as I was in this circumstance.

The engineering mechanics students rely on Boeing’s visits to campus as a means of securing excellent summer internships as well as full-time positions.

I remain interested in Boeing opportunities and attach my résumé to this apology in the hope that you might find my qualifications strong enough to warrant a phone interview.

Thank you for your consideration—and, again, I offer my sincere apology.”
**PREPARE FOR INTERVIEWS**

The initial screening interview normally lasts 30 minutes (45 minutes to 1 hour for PhD candidates). Like any presentation, the better prepared you are, the more successful you will be. Be aware of the importance of first impressions. Use a solid handshake (no limp or clammy handshakes). Make eye contact, and smile. Be friendly and relaxed, yet professional. Expect some small talk. Follow the recruiter’s lead. Focus and show interest. Listen to questions carefully. Never respond simply “yes” or “no”; provide examples and explain “why.” Display confidence, not arrogance.

One person, an engineer or a human resource manager, will usually interview you. Check with ECS business cards for the recruiter’s job title and department. This will typically help you be prepared for what type of interview you might have. It is less common, but sometimes two recruiters will interview you at the same time. This can be more stressful. Try to relax. Maintain eye contact with each recruiter as you answer their questions.

Remember that the interview is an opportunity for you to learn more about the employer as well as for the employer to evaluate you as a potential employee. Keep in mind that you are not an ideal match for every employer’s needs, so it is important to understand early that a “match” between employer and candidate is imperative, not only for the employer, but also for you. 

Individuals on “both sides of the table” should evaluate each other, discuss needs and interests, and honestly determine the “fit.”

Provide specific examples with all answers. Ask questions (see previous pages for suggested questions) either during the interview or at the end. Be prepared to supply a 2- to 3-minute summary of your qualifications and interests. Prepare a confident closing statement reiterating your interest in the position either during the interview or at the end. Be prepared to supply a 2- to 3-minute summary of your qualifications and interests. Prepare a confident closing statement reiterating your interest in the position.

**Interviewing from the Recruiter’s Viewpoint**

Before you prepare for the interview, stop and take a step back to review the interview from the recruiter’s viewpoint. Think about why each question is asked—some say to analyze the question behind the question—and try to understand what skills or attributes are actually being evaluated in your response. If you can understand this process and prepare accordingly, you will not only survive, but also succeed in interviews. 

Interviews are business meetings. Prepare accordingly. Know what you want to talk about; know your résumé thoroughly; be able to cite examples of skills, lessons learned or goals met all across the résumé page. Dress like you care. Give the impression that this is an important meeting for you.

Recruiters will not try to embarrass you or cause you stress. They have a difficult task in conducting 10 to 15 interviews daily. Help them select you by being prepared. Ultimately, recruiters must find from 1–5 candidates who “fit” their needs. The quality of candidates referred for second, on-site interviews is a direct reflection on the recruiter’s ability to know and choose talent. His or her job is a difficult one.

**Preparation for an Interview**

This is where all your work ultimately pays off—skills assessment, résumé development, and communication with targeted employers.

Preparation and practice are key to successful interviewing. A lack of thorough employer research is often interpreted as poor preparation and a lack of interest in the employer.

1. Know your résumé “inside and out.” Be able to thoroughly and comfortably discuss any item on the résumé thoroughly by citing specific examples.

2. Understand that the résumé emphasizes your skills and accomplishments; it will serve first as a deciding factor leading to an interview. Once an interview is scheduled, the recruiter will often direct the interview using the résumé as an outline.

3. Verbally practice answering questions (Yes! Out loud!) and talking about your skills and accomplishments. Recall how in Skills Assessment, we emphasized the importance of spending time writing descriptions for skills, strengths and accomplishments. Now is the time to practice again.

4. Review and organize facts found in employer research. Demonstrate your knowledge of the employer’s products or services. Take it a step further by clearly drawing the link— the match—between your skills and the employer’s needs. Do not leave this important step open for employer interpretation. Show them the match!

5. Attend employer information sessions on campus. Introduce yourself to the recruiter(s) and mention that you are looking forward to your interview the next day. Ask intelligent questions and show enthusiasm.

6. Prepare your portfolio, clothing, and transportation the night prior to the interview. Check the weather forecast for any contingencies you will need to make. Get plenty of rest. Set dozens of alarm clocks, if necessary. You will not be able to recover if you are late.

7. Dress with respect for the importance of the interview. Show you care.

8. Every answer requires a specific example to support your claim; never provide a simple one- or two-word answer.

9. At the end of the interview, it is extremely important for you to ask questions. Lack of questions indicates lack of interest. Finally, summarize your interests and qualifications for the position.

**What to Wear**

**Business attire is appropriate for interviews.**

**WOMEN—Business Attire**

- **Suits:** Dark colors, grays, blues, blacks. Solids or muted pinstripes. Conservative jacket and slacks or skirt are same color and fabric. Skirt length: AT KNEE OR BELOW. No tight skirts or pants.
- **Shirts:** Conservative color. Shirt collar or jewel (rounded) neckline. Pressed, straight collar. Short or long sleeved. Blouse or shell. Not even a hint of cleavage visible. Long or three-quarter sleeve lengths preferred.
- **Shoes:** NO BARE TOES. Flats or pumps (no higher than 2” heels—no spikes). Polish and clean shoes.
- **Hose/Jewelry:** Neutral or skin tone hose. Bring an extra pair for emergencies. Tights are not as dressy as sheer weight hose. Keep jewelry to a minimum.
What to Wear

**MEN—Business Attire**

- **Suits:** Dark colors, grays, blues, blacks. Solids or muted pinstripes. Jacket and pants should be same color. Button jacket when standing; unbutton when seated.
- **Shirts:** Cotton is best. White or conservative color. Press shirt carefully, particularly the collar or have the shirt laundered at a drycleaner. Wear plain white crewneck T-shirt under shirt.
- **Ties:** Silk. Same width as lapels (2¾” - 3½”). Complementary color. No logo/cartoon ties.
- **Shoes/Belt:** Polish and clean shoes. Matching belt color.
- **Socks:** No white socks. Dark color to complement suit.

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Business casual is appropriate for career fairs, employer information sessions and for more informal segments on an on-site interview.

**WOMEN—Business Casual**

- **Jackets & Pants or Skirt:** Jacket is not necessary. Darker colors best; soft colors-business patterns. Wool blend or professional weight fabric. Jacket and pants do not need to be same color.
- **Skirt Length:** No short skirts—at the knee or longer. No tight skirts or pants.
- **Woven Shirts:** Any muted, conservative solid, stripe, or plaid. Button-down or straight collar. Long sleeves are best. Not even a hint of cleavage. Check button closures across chest; not too tight. Sweater sets. Not even a hint of cleavage.
- **Shoes:** No bare toes. Pumps or flats with 1-2” heel; no spikes. Polish and clean shoes.
- **Hose:** Tights or socks are appropriate.

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**MEN—Business Casual**

- **Jackets & Pants:** Jacket is not necessary. Nice wool blend. Pressed cotton pants are OK. Jacket and pants do not need to be same color.
- **Shirts:** Any muted, conservative solid, stripe, or plaid. Button-down/straight collar. Long sleeves. Natural fibers and blends. Must have collar. No crew neck (T-shirt) collars. Sweater vest or sweater over collared shirt.
- **Ties:** Unnecessary, but acceptable.
- **Shoes/Belt:** Dark leather slip on or lace-up. Polished and clean. Belt should match shoe color.
- **Socks:** NO WHITE SOCKS. Dark color should complement pants/shoes.

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What to Bring

**Résumés:** Include several copies of your current résumé. Provide one to the recruiter as you are sitting down to the interview. ECS provides employers with a current copy of your Resume Profile (not a résumé) and list of courses/grades to the employer. Your complete résumé will provide more detailed information for the recruiter and indicate a sense of preparedness.

**Transcripts:** Today, this very minute, go to your My UW account and print several unofficial copies of your transcripts. Employers will want them! Do not be scrambling to print them at the last minute. Go to the Registrar’s Office to obtain copies.

**References:** Bring your reference list and any evaluations of work performance.

**Other:** Not required but may be helpful: reference letters, evaluation forms, photos/illustrations of projects (Future Truck, Concrete Canoe, Bridge Building, Engineering EXPO, Schoofs Prize for Creativity or any of the other COE student competitions), articles, abstracts, publications.

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**ECS TIPS**

- Be prepared to discuss any item on your résumé for 15 minutes. The recruiter may ask one question or 10. Be prepared to describe examples.
- Know what kinds of topics employers will typically want to know about: For instance, your background, academic training, goals and interests.

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**PRACTICE OUT LOUD:**

It’s Not Easy Talking About Yourself

Now is your time to talk about yourself. After all this preparation, you should know what to say! If you are thoroughly prepared, you know skills employers are seeking, what strengths and accomplishments you have developed, and what this particular employer needs in new engineering hires! You know your résumé and do not need to refer to it throughout the interview. You have practiced talking about your skills and have reviewed lists of potential questions. You are ready and able to talk.

Before you go through an actual interview, you should first go through at least one mock interview, offered through ECS and other resources. Practicing interview responses is key to understanding how to improve your interviewing skills. The mock interview is more than an opportunity to work out interview jitters; it is an opportunity to practice and improve your interviewing technique and answers. It is also a chance to hear constructive feedback from someone with experience in the field. It is not enough to look at an interview question and say, “Yeah, I know the answer to that one.”
Interviewing

Attitude: The Most Important Aspect of Interviewing

The key element to successful interviewing is not your experience, your grades, what classes you took, your extracurricular activities, or any of the other basic necessities. Those skills are what got you the interview. The key element to successful interviewing can be summed up in one word: attitude.

If you want to rise above others with better experience, better grades, or better anything, you will need to work on developing a highly positive work attitude. Your attitude determines whether you will “make the cut” or be discarded. Remember, there are plenty of competitors with the ability to do almost any given job—especially at the entry level. The way most employers differentiate at the entry level is by candidates’ attitudes toward the job. Your attitude is often what recruiters will remember when the dust has settled after reviewing 10, 20, or even 100 candidates—the one who was sincerely willing to put forth [his or her] very best effort. If you have the attitude of wanting to do your very best for the company, being focused on the company’s needs, of putting yourself forth as the person who will be committed and dedicated to fulfilling their needs, you will likely be the one chosen.

Why is attitude so important? Because most companies already have their full share of multi-talented superstars who care about no one but themselves. Ask any manager who the most valuable member of his team is, and he will point not to the overrated superstar, but to the person who has the “can do” attitude, the person who can be counted on in any situation, the person who truly strives for excellence. Give me a team player who is achieving at 99% and I will take her over a flashy superstar who is running at 50% efficiency any day of the week. And so will 99% of all hiring managers. So don’t worry if you are not “superstar” quality. If you can show me, in your words and actions, that you are ready to put forth your very best effort toward achieving excellence, you will be chosen over the superstar.

You can show your winning attitude in the way you present yourself. Incorporate the actual words “positive attitude,” “excellence,” and “striving to be my best” into your interview language. Then show by your stories and examples how these words positively affect your life. Show me when and where you have put forth extra effort above and beyond the call of duty. Show me how you beat a deadline, how you excelled in a project, or how you made a difference by going the extra mile.

If you can show me, by words and examples, your “can do” attitude, it is you I will hire, while all of the superstars will receive polite rejection letters to add to their growing collections.

24 Worst Job Interview Mistakes

1. Arriving Late
2. Arriving Too Early
   10-15 minutes is appropriate.
3. Dressing Wrong
   The safest choice for any interview is a tailored suit in a conservative color like black, navy, gray or tan. The employer will let you know if something other than proffessional dress is expected.
4. Dressing in a Rush
   Try on your entire interview attire several days before the appointment to confirm everything fits and is in good condition.
5. Smoking
6. Drinking
   Even if this is a lunch or dinner interview and others are ordering cocktails, it is always best to order mineral water or soda. Only if your host insists on buying a bottle of wine should you have a few sips from the glass to be social. Don’t finish the glass, or they will pour you a new one.
7. Chewing Gum
8. Bringing Along A Friend or Relative
   Don’t laugh … this happens!
9. Not Doing All Your Homework
   It is not necessary to memorize the company’s annual sales and profit figures, but you should know something about their products or services.
10. Skipping a Dress Rehearsal
    Make a list of the questions you would ask if you were interviewing someone for this job, then rehearse the best answers using a tape recorder and/or a friend for feedback.
11. Not Admitting a Flaw
    To the question, “What is your greatest weakness?,” illustrate a weakness that you’ve tackled successfully. Respond by identifying the weakness, describing specific steps you have taken to improve, and communicating the results. Be honest: nobody believes you when you say your flaw is working too hard.
12. Not Knowing Your Own Strengths
13. Asking Too Many Questions
14. Not Asking Any Questions
15. Inquiring About Benefits Too Soon
    Ask not what the company can do for you but what you can do for the company—at least at this point in the selection process. If you seem more interested in the three-week vacation policy or the new dental plan than in actual job duties, the prospective boss may develop serious concerns about your priorities. Naturally, you have a right to know about the benefits package, but chances are the personnel representative or hiring manager will bring it up on his/her own. If this doesn’t happen, you can broach the subject after an offer has been made in writing. Explain that the offer you will accept depends on the value of the whole compensation package.
16. Revealing Your Price Tag (Never Bring up $5)
    Research what is appropriate in case they ask you, but you don’t bring it up.
17. Crying Discrimination
18. Bad-Mouthing Your Boss
19. Name Dropping
20. Energy Failure
    It doesn’t matter if you only slept four hours last night and are coming down with a cold. When you get to the interview, you have to appear bright-eyed and eager.
21. Handshake Failure
22. Glancing At Your Watch
23. Playing The Hero/Heroine
    In 999 of 1,000 jobs, you will work as part of a team. Stress how well your talents and experience would mesh with those of others in the department.
24. Losing Your Cool

PREPARE FOR INTERVIEWS

PREPARE FOR INTERVIEWS
Typical Interview Questions

Don't try to memorize (or fabricate) the “right” answers to interview questions. The only “right” answers are those that truthfully describe an event in your life, including what you learned from the event, what skills you developed, what skill you used, or what you would have done differently. Have confidence that your response is strong if it reflects active self-assessment, specific details and relates to the question being asked.

Also try to understand the question under the question: understand why the question is being asked and what the employer is evaluating. Respond with specific, thoughtful descriptions of your real past and present experiences, the skills developed and lessons learned from them.

Have you skipped ahead to this section—not reading this entire handbook? If so, you won’t be prepared—and you won’t succeed in the interview. If you have thoroughly prepared for all aspects of the job search and followed us carefully to this point, you will know what to say and how to respond. Questions are not as important as answers. However, a list of potential interview questions must be included, so here they are:

Reasons for Studying Engineering
1. What led you to choose your field of major study? Why did you select UW–Madison?
   Was it a good decision?
2. What classes were the most challenging? The least challenging?
3. Describe your most rewarding college experiences.
4. Are your grades an accurate indication of your academic achievement?
5. Do you have plans for graduate or professional school?
6. Why weren’t you more involved in college activities?
7. What was the best part of your college experience?
8. A college degree is nothing special; everyone I am interviewing has one. What else do you have to offer me?
9. Provide an example of how you acquired a technical skill and converted it into a practical application.
10. How frequently did you skip classes while in college?

Employer Knowledge/Interest
11. How have you prepared for this interview?
12. Why are you interested in opportunities with my company? What do you know about our company?
13. Why should we hire you instead of other equally qualified candidates?
14. Which trade publications do you read to keep informed about current trends?
15. What technical skills would you bring to this position?
16. What qualities do you think this position requires?
17. What interests you least about this job?
18. What do you see as the major trends in the field?
19. Why do you want to leave your current employer?
20. What salary would you anticipate?

Work and Academic Experiences
21. Describe a situation in which your ideas or work conflicted with the ideas or work of a co-worker or supervisor.
22. What type of people do you find difficult to work with?
23. What have you learned from your past jobs?
24. How did your co-op/intern position contribute to your career growth?
25. Tell me of a situation where you worked under pressure.
26. You seem to have limited work experience; why do you think you could do this job?
27. What part of the position’s responsibilities interests you most?
28. If I contacted your references, what would they each say about you?
29. Have you ever been fired?
30. Do you make your opinion known when you disagree with a supervisor?
31. How would you handle a situation in which you couldn’t get along with your boss?
32. What new idea or suggestion did you make to your immediate supervisor in the last couple of months?
33. How would you describe the perfect supervisor?

Motivations and Goals
34. Tell me about the last time that you made a change in your life.
35. What do you consider to be your greatest strengths? Weaknesses?
36. Give me two examples of good decisions you have made in the last six months. Why were they good?
37. What have you done that demonstrates your initiative?
38. What would you change about yourself if you could?
39. When have you been a leader?
40. Would you rather write a report or give an oral report? Why?
41. What was the latest book you’ve read or movie you seen?
42. Are you a risk-taker?
43. How do you handle pressure situations?
44. How do you relieve stress?
45. Tell me about yourself.
46. How have you gone about determining that this field is right for you?
47. What is the biggest risk you have ever taken?
48. What is your strongest transferable skill? How has it been helpful to you?
49. What accomplishment has given you the most satisfaction? Why?
50. What are the most important rewards you expect in your career?
51. What motivates you to put forth your greatest effort?
52. How do you define success?
53. What two or three accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction? Why?
Response to Failure or Criticism

54. How do you react to criticism?
55. Think about something at work or school that you consider a failure. Tell me about it.
56. Tell me about a mistake you made, and how you handled it.
57. What is the worst communication problem you have experienced?
58. Tell me about a time when you put your foot in your mouth (misspoke).
59. Describe the biggest problem you have faced within the last six months. How did you handle it?
60. What is the most unethical situation you have encountered?
61. Have you ever been convicted of a crime?
62. When was the last time you lied?
63. Who is currently angry with you?
64. Tell me about a team you were on when all members did not carry their weight.

Interaction with Others

65. Describe an instance where you made effective use of facts to secure the agreement of others.
66. Describe a creative idea that you produced which led to a significant contribution to the success of an activity or project.
67. Describe your vision of a leader.
68. What qualities are essential for success in business today?
69. What is leadership?
70. When is it time to follow?

Future Goals

71. What are your short-range goals? How are you preparing for them?
72. What do you see yourself doing five years from now?
73. Which of your personal goals have you reached and not reached?
74. What are your long-range career objectives?
75. Tell me about a time you overcame obstacles to reach a goal.

Questions for You to Ask the Recruiter

1. What attracted you to this company? What do you think its strengths and weaknesses are?
2. What are the most critical factors for success at your company?
3. How would you describe your management style?
4. What are the greatest challenges for entry-level hires within your organization?
5. How would you characterize the organization? What are its principal values? What are its greatest challenges?
6. Can you tell me about the people who will look to me for supervision?
7. What is the company's customer service philosophy?
8. What is the makeup of the team as far as experience?
9. What does the company value most?
10. What kinds of processes are in place to encourage collaboration?
11. How do my skills compare to other candidates you have interviewed?
12. What kinds of assignments might I expect during the first few months on the job?
13. What characteristics help a person succeed in this field?
14. How often are performance reviews provided?
15. What do you consider ideal experiences for this job?
16. Please tell me about the people with whom I would be working.
17. What would be a typical career path for someone like me entering your organization?
18. Please describe the management style or engineering environment at your organization.
19. What are my opportunities for learning new skills?
20. How much influence will I have over the type of work I will do?
21. May I talk with people who are in a similar work environment in your company?
22. What do you like best about working at ABC Co.?
23. How do you like to see the break room? Are you married?
24. Do I get paid for overtime?

*ECS TIPS*

Do NOT ask these questions:
- What will my salary be?
- What does your company do?
- Where are you located?
- Do I get paid for overtime?
- Can I see the break room?
- Are you married?
- How many warnings do you get before you are fired?
- How much vacation will I receive?
- Do I get overtime?

And the obvious ones not to ask:
- What will my salary be?
- What does your company do?
- Where are you located?
- Do I get paid for overtime?
Behavorial Interviews

"Tell me about a team experience in which one member did not meet expectations." This question demonstrates the type of question common in behavioral interviews. Based on the premise that the best way to predict future behavior is to evaluate past behavior, this form of questioning allows the recruiter to assess your abilities based on what you have already done.

Typical Behavioral Interview Questions

• Tell me about an obstacle you have overcome.
• Tell me about the most unethical situation you’ve observed or experienced.
• Tell me about your last experience with success.
• Tell me about a goal you have met.
• Tell me about a time you criticized the work of another.
• Tell me about a time you motivated a dysfunctional team to excel.
• Tell me about the biggest risk you have taken.

S.T.A.R. Response Style for Behavioral Questions

In responding to behavioral questions, it is best to provide a specific example to support your response. Frame the response using an example from your resume including academic projects, classes, work experiences, and out-of-class activities.

Be very specific as you cover the four necessary steps (Situation, Task, Action & Result) for optimum success:
• Situation: Give an example of a situation you were involved in that resulted in a positive outcome.
• Task: Describe the task(s) required in the situation.
• Action: Talk about the various actions you initiated or completed.
• Result: Provide the results directly connected to your actions.

To maximize this method, you should add what you learned from the situation that you will bring to your job as an intern, co-op or professional entry-level employee.

The behavioral interviewer has been trained to objectively collect and evaluate information, and works from a profile of desired behaviors that are needed for success on the job. Because the behaviors a candidate has demonstrated in previous similar positions are likely to be repeated, you will be asked to share situations in which you may or may not have exhibited these behaviors. Your answers will be tested for accuracy and consistency. If you are an entry-level candidate with no previous, related experience, the interviewer will look for behaviors similar to those of the target position.

Case Interviews

"Simply put, a case interview is the analysis of a business plan or situation. Unlike most other interview questions, it is an interactive process. Your interviewer will present you with a business problem and ask you for your opinion. Your job is to ask the interviewer logical questions that will permit you to make a detailed recommendation. The majority of case interviewers don’t have a specific right answer that you, the candidate, are expected to give. What the interviewer is looking for is a thought process that is both analytical and creative (what consultants love to call ‘out-of-the-box’ thinking). Specific and creative knowledge of the industry covered by the case question is a bonus but not necessary. An understanding of the business models and processes as well as global business experience is helpful for success."15

Question categories can be identified as:

• Market-sizing questions focus on determining the market size for a particular service or product.
• Business operations questions refer to running a business and getting a product out the door. The focus may include purchasing and transporting raw materials, manufacturing processes, scheduling of staff and facilities, product distribution … the day-to-day running of the business.
• Business strategy questions deal more with the future direction of a firm. Good strategy questions may have a market-sizing piece, a logic puzzle, multiple operations issues, and a dose of creativity and action. These types of questions tend to be quite complex.
• Résumé case questions come directly from the candidate’s résumé. One example may be, "I see that you play rugby. Describe all the different positions on a rugby team, and the play strategy for each."16

Brainteaser Interviews

Part of the philosophy behind “brainteaser” interviews is that “IQ is all that matters.” Bill Gates’ hiring philosophy is based on the fact that a smart person can be trained to do anything. Intelligence is valued over skills or experience. Therefore, logic puzzles, riddles, hypothetical questions and trick questions have become commonplace in computer industry and the fast-paced consulting business interviews.

Questions may include:
• How many times a day do a clock’s hands overlap?
• Why are soda cans tapered at the top and bottom?
• If you could remove any of the fifty U.S. states, which would it be?
• Why do mirrors reverse right and left instead of up and down?11

“It’s all about thinking outside the box—just make certain you know what kind of box.”112

Other recruiters will ask unique brainteaser questions during a “typical” interview. It is important to stay focused and be adept at answering all types of questions. Keep your poise and sense of humor … and think carefully about the question. Recruiters are often evaluating your skills, creativity, and ability to think on your feet.15

Telephone Interviews

Telephone interviews are often used as a screening device prior to extending face-to-face interviews. You will be evaluated to determine the benefit of inviting you for an on-site visit. Because of the obvious focus on communication skills, the phone interview can be intimidating. In addition, students often make the mistake of not preparing as thoroughly for this type of interview as they would for a campus interview.

Using the telephone for social and informal purposes is easy for most of us. However, using it for business purposes is quite another matter. During the job search, remember that a telephone interview (much like business email) must be strictly professional. You must adopt a manner in using the phone that conveys your seriousness of purpose, ability to concisely communicate your strengths, and desire to work for the employer.

The clear advantages of the telephone interview are that you are in a comfortable, familiar place and that you can have all your papers at your fingertips.

The disadvantages are also quite obvious. Your voice is the sole means of communication. You cannot obviously use eye contact, facial expressions, body language, or other visual means of communication to express your interest in the job opportunity. Nor can you respond to the recruiter’s nonverbal cues or attempt to interpret his/her interest.

You are selling yourself using only words and the tone of your voice. Some general advice follows:

• Prepare as if this were a face-to-face interview. Know your résumé inside and out. Be able to provide specific examples to support your strengths, interests, and abilities. Show enthusiasm. Ask questions.

• Write down the names of the recruiters. Refer to them as Mr. or Ms., unless otherwise indicated. Take quick notes during the interview. At the close of the interview, thank the interviewer using his or her name.

• Speak slowly. Articulate clearly. Choose words carefully. Your diction, voice level, intonation and choice of words are your main forms of communicating.

• Enunciate. Don’t chew gum or smoke. Don’t use a speakerphone. Keep the mouthpiece close to your mouth.

• Smile. Believe it or not, smiling while you talk helps! You will sound more interested and friendly. A smile over the phone can be recognized.

• Allow for silences or pauses. If you need more time to consider a question, simply ask for it, since silences are more pronounced on the phone.

• Listen. With no other communication clues except a voice, it is critical for you to focus and listen carefully. Ask for clarification if you don’t understand a question.

• Dress nicely. It will help you maintain a serious, professional manner.

• Don’t interrupt, although some “over-talk” is bound to happen on the phone.

In addition, always have materials ready for interviews:

• Résumé, references page, transcripts. Other portfolio items, such as list of publications, presentations, patents, as well as sample projects and papers.

Follow-up the Interview

The interview is not the end of the job search process; follow-up is required.

It is important not only to reflect on your interview performance, but also to continue a dialogue with the recruiter. What does this mean? It means that it is in your best interest to follow-up the interview with a thank you email or letter and maintain a regular follow-up schedule. Employers are interested in hiring people who are interested in the position. Indicate your interest by continuing to communicate with the recruiter until a decision has been made. Use discretion regarding frequency—do not become a “pest.”

Within one to two days, send an email message thanking the recruiter for the interview, clarifying topics discussed in the interview, and re-emphasizing interest in the employer’s opportunity. A well-written, well-timed thank you message will not “get” you a job, but it can “tip the scales” if all other factors are equal.

By sending a thank you message, you will:

1) show common courtesy and appreciation
2) stand out from the crowd
3) reiterate interest in the opportunity
4) make points you forgot during the interview
5) demonstrate your writing skills.

Regularly contact the recruiter after the thank you letter; do so approximately every 2 weeks until a decision is made. Offer to provide other materials, such as transcripts or samples of your work.

Develop a spreadsheet with employer names, recruiter contacts, interview dates, and follow-up dates. Since you are actively searching, a spreadsheet will help you track the interactions with many, many, many employers and recruiters.
On-Site, Second Interview Preparation

After a successful campus interview, you will often be asked to participate in a "second interview" at the employer’s site. The employer visit is generally a full day of interviewing and related activities. Once the employer visit is conducted and an evaluation completed, an offer may be made. The employer visit is given many names: plant trip, second interview, site visit, or office visit.

Just as the employer visit has many names, it has a variety of facets. It is difficult to describe every aspect of what to expect in an employer visit because employers vary greatly in how they execute them. The length of the trip, number of people involved, levels of people interviewing, types of tests conducted, and degree of formality can differ from one employer to the next.

The second interview provides an excellent opportunity for you to get a firsthand account of what it’s like to work for the employer and for the employer to determine how you would work in that environment. In other words, the interview is a mutual one.

Purpose

• Allows the employer an opportunity to make an in-depth assessment of you prior to extending a job offer.
• The employer visit is time-consuming and expensive for employers, so they screen a large number of applicants down to a few who are invited to visit. The employer visit is generally the last step in the selection process before an offer is made. At this point, the employer is confident you have the technical skills and intelligence to do the job.
• The employer visit provides you with an opportunity to learn more about the position, the long-term career opportunities, the company’s employees, the company itself, and the local community. The employer will usually be doing as much selling as evaluating because this is the information you will use in deciding whether to accept or decline an offer. You, like the employer, are trying to determine whether or not a good fit exists.

Preparation

This is the final contact before an offer is made; do not take preparation lightly.

Prior to the visit, review all resources available about the employer.

Be knowledgeable about the employer, its products or services, and career opportunities. The more prepared you are, the more probable it is the employer will recognize enthusiasm, motivation, maturity, and thoroughness as assets you possess.

Develop insightful questions to ask at the interview. Ask about the position, work environment, and employer’s needs. Your questions demonstrate the amount of preparation you have invested in the visit, as well as your seriousness of purpose. Appropriate questions will probe topics such as typical entry-level projects. You still should NOT ask about salary or benefits but be prepared to answer any questions regarding expected salary. Research entry level averages and ranges on the ECS website.

Finally, good preparation includes paying proper attention to appearance, dress and attitude. Dress in either business or business casual clothing. Remember, it is better to err on the side of being too conservative than too casual. Be sure all pieces of your wardrobe are clean and pressed. Practice impeccable grooming habits, including clean and freshly trimmed hair and nails.

Finalizing Logistics

An invitation to an employer visit will usually come from a specific contact person. This person becomes your source of information about all aspects of the trip. Any questions prior to the trip can be addressed to the contact person.

The majority of employer visits are one full day in length, but be prepared to spend 2-3 days, including travel and an overnight stay. Travel will be either by flying or driving, depending upon your preference, the employer’s discretion, and the distance. Usually, trips of more than 200 miles will justify air travel.

Some employers will make all the arrangements for your visit. They will reserve and pre-pay the hotel room and flights. They will send you an itinerary with flight numbers and hotel reservation numbers. Be sure to request this information and to carry the details with you while traveling. If the employer is not pre-paying the flight or hotel, talk to your contact person to clarify reimbursement procedures. Call or email your contact person, confirming all plans to avoid any last-minute mix-ups or confusion.

Key information to have with you at all times:

• Trip itinerary with times and names of people you will be meeting
• Contact person’s name, phone number and email
• Travel and accommodation arrangements (including air, hotel and car rental confirmation numbers
• Maps and driving instructions

Arrival

If you have a morning interview, arrive in the city the night before. Avoid very late flights or the last flight into the city. An employer representative may arrange to pick you up at the airport, so don’t dress too casually for flying. Otherwise, take a courtesy van or taxi to your hotel. Keep all receipts for ground transportation expenditures for reimbursement.

When checking into the hotel, ask for any messages (the employer may have left information for you) and provide any pre-payment documentation. Regardless of payment arrangements, most hotels will ask to imprint a credit card for charges not covered by the employer, such as personal phone calls and room service.

Schedule a morning wake-up call with the front desk, allowing plenty of time to get ready. Keep phone calls and room charges to a minimum. When checking out, review the bill to ensure its accuracy; keep the receipt for your records.

The Evening Before

Some employers arrange for an employee to have dinner with you the evening you arrive, or breakfast the morning of your interview. This is an opportunity for you to meet a recent hire while getting an informal flavor for the day’s schedule, the employer, the city and any other pertinent topics. The degree of informality and nature of conversation at dinner can vary, but keep in mind that any dinner companion can serve as an evaluator. So, reflect maturity and professionalism.

Dress appropriately (ask for advice on appropriate dress). Eat moderately, AVOID alcoholic beverages, and participate in the discussion of employment opportunities, community and hiring needs. Be yourself, but be your best professional self.

Before retiring for the evening, confirm your morning wake-up call at the front desk and set the clock-radio alarm. Get enough sleep and give yourself extra time to get ready in the morning, it is extremely difficult to recover from tardiness, so plan ahead. In most cases, you will need to check out of the hotel upon leaving for the employer site. Provide extra time to do so. Take your luggage if you’ll be leaving for the airport immediately from the employer site. If you’ll return to the hotel, check your baggage at the front desk for later pick-up.

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Interview Day

An itinerary of the day is critical to help you plan for the day. It should include times and locations of interviews, names of employees, maps and a site map. You may have 3-5 interviews with various levels of management in a one-on-one or group setting or panel interview. In any case, understand that the employer does not wish to intimidate you; hiring staff simply want a variety of input regarding your “fit” with the company. In some cases, you may be part of a group visit, where a number of candidates participate in group interviews and activities. While the group visit is more difficult for the employer to arrange, the visit allows staff the opportunity to see each candidate among his or her peers. Conversely, it permits you to see those who might be a part of your training group.

Most employers are well prepared for your on-site visit. They conduct formal interview training for their managers and usually provide very good interview sessions. Interviewers have scanned your résumé and are familiar with your background. The interviewers will attempt to assess your motivation and drive—to see what makes you strive for success. Each interviewer will probe for strengths and weaknesses. You may be asked the same questions by many people throughout the day yet must give as fresh and thorough an answer to the fourth as to the first.

If you are interviewing at a plant-visit location it is probable that an employment manager or plant manager will conduct a tour of the plant. You should be aware that you are being “interviewed” and evaluated even during a tour. Pay attention and ask questions. Anyone you meet, from receptionist to CEO, is a potential evaluator. Considering this, remain sharp and professional at all times.

Departure

The last meeting of the day often will be with the contact person or human resources manager. They will address your final questions, explain follow-up procedures, discuss reimbursement and take care of other details. Be sure that all your questions have been answered prior to leaving.

After the Visit

Following your visit, send a letter or email of thanks to all the people who interviewed you, including the main contact person. The message should reaffirm interest in the position and highlight qualifications. This letter provides you one last opportunity to position yourself for potential hiring. Most employers will contact you within two weeks of the actual visit with an offer or a rejection. Some, however, may make an offer at the interview, while others will take as long as a month. It is acceptable to ask when employment decisions will be made, as well as to check on delays if the estimated decision date passes with no contact.

Reimbursements

- Clarify proper reimbursement procedures with your contact person. Know what expenses are pre-paid and what will be reimbursed. A note of caution: Don’t take advantage of the employer. You should ask to be reimbursed only for legitimate expenses, not souvenirs and expensive extras.
- Reimbursement of expenses will vary among employers, but nearly all will pay for travel, lodging and food. Keep receipts and clarify what expenses will be reimbursed prior to spending your own money. Incidental expenses usually reimbursed include parking, business phone calls, cab fares and tips.
- Expenses generally not reimbursed include room service snacks, gifts, newspapers, in-room movies and personal phone calls. Meals should be reasonable and items such as alcohol should be avoided. The in-house hotel restaurant is usually a good measure of how much to spend on a meal. Enjoy the visit but don’t be extravagant.
- If cash or credit is a problem, the University of Wisconsin-Madison College of Engineering offers the Koresh Loan. This $500 loan is available to any engineering student, is interest free for three months, and is immediately available. This $500 loan is available to any engineering student, is interest free for three months, and is immediately available.
- Some employers will invite a group of candidates for second interviews on the same day or weekend. Candidates may be invited to attend from across the country, from various campuses. This approach is easiest for employers who can schedule interviews with multiple candidates in a short period of time.
- The challenge to you, however, is to distinguish yourself from the other candidates. To do so, try to acquire more than a cursory knowledge of the employer. Be sharp. Network with alumni and former co-ops and interns to learn more about the employer, the work setting, and the goals of the employer. Work to show exceptional interest and enthusiasm for the opportunity.
- Get along with others. Be pleasant and friendly to the other candidates. Your interactions throughout the day are typically evaluated.

On-Site Interview Formats

A series of individual interviews is the most common format for the second interview. For the most part, the representatives are primarily interested in whether you can do the job and work well with them. Focus on your work-related experiences, research and academic projects, positive relationships with co-workers, and examples demonstrating your competence and compatibility. While it may be difficult to remain fresh for each representative, it is imperative that you do so.

ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEWS

The employer will want to assess specific behaviors staff deem necessary for success. To make this assessment, employers may call upon managers, executives, new hires and human resources personnel to interview you individually. A full day of interviews might reflect a typical workday, as the employer judges your confidence and ability to work with and talk to a variety of people. Over the course of several individual interviews, the employer will determine if you would be a “good fit” with the company. The interviews, with people you would work for and with, often include a meal (an important component of the interview) and tours of the facility.

GROUP INTERVIEWS

Some employers will invite a group of candidates for second interviews on the same day or weekend. Candidates may be invited to attend from across the country, from various campuses. This approach is easiest for employers who can schedule interviews with multiple candidates in a short period of time.

The challenge to you, however, is to distinguish yourself from the other candidates. To do so, try to acquire more than a cursory knowledge of the employer. Be sharp. Network with alumni and former co-ops and interns to learn more about the employer, the work setting, and the goals of the employer. Work to show exceptional interest and enthusiasm for the opportunity.

Get along with others. Be pleasant and friendly to the other candidates. Your interactions throughout the day are typically evaluated.

Panel interviews involve one candidate being interviewed by several employment representatives. Students who are working for an employer as a co-op or intern often experience a panel interview near the end of their work term. Success in this less common interview style hinges on the same strategies useful in all interviews: demonstrating awareness of the employer and its goals, being able to elaborate confidently on your résumé, and maintaining a positive attitude.

Examples of behavioral questions:

- What was the most difficult challenge you faced and how did you overcome it?
- Everyone has to bend or break the rules sometimes. Give me an example of when you have had to do this.
- What is the toughest decision you made while at the UW-Madison? Tell me about it. What alternatives did you consider?
- Describe projects or ideas you have conceived within the last year. How did you know they were needed or would work?
- Give me an example of when you felt the greatest sense of achievement.
- Can you give me examples of doing more than required? When responding to behavioral or situational questions, describe the (1) situation, or task (2) action, and (3) results.

Realize that by citing behavior in past experiences, you indicate how you might perform in future situations. Be able to articulate things you learned, know what worked, and understand what you would have done differently. Be able to convey this information, and illustrate your ability to assess your behavior and build successfully from these experiences.
**Prepare for Interviews**

**Questions Worth Asking**

Never pass up the opportunity to ask questions. Questions clearly indicate genuine interest. A lack of questions can be interpreted as lack of interest.

**Ask Your Prospective Supervisor:**
- What would be my primary responsibilities?
- What would I be expected to accomplish in the first six months on the job?
- What are some of the department's ongoing and anticipated special projects?
- How much contact does the department have with management?

**Ask a Prospective Co-Worker:**
- What do you like best about working for this department/company?
- Can you describe a typical workday in the department?
- Do you feel free to express your ideas and concerns here?
- What are the possibilities for professional growth and promotion?
- How much interaction do you have with superiors, colleagues, and customers?
- How long have you been with the company? Does your future here seem secure?
- Is there anything you would change about the company if you had the chance?

**Ask the Human Resources Manager:**
- What do employees seem to like best about the company?
- What is the rate of employee turnover?
- How large is the department where the opening exists?
- What are the chances of being relocated after starting the job?
- What type of orientation or training do new employees receive?
- How often are performance reviews given?
- What are the long-range possibilities for employees in similar positions who consistently perform above expectations?

**Discussions of Salary**

Do not be caught off guard if the employer brings up salary near the end of the interview. Conversely, do not be the one to bring up this subject. If questioned about salary expectations, however, be prepared to discuss the topic. Know the “going rate” for an entry-level engineer by reviewing ECS salary statistics as well as national statistics.

We recommend that you give a salary range or indicate that you are willing to consider any reasonable offer. For example:

- Give a range: “I would hope that with my background and qualifications a salary in the $55,000 to $59,000 (or high-$50s) range would be offered.” The range given should be realistic and based upon prior research of starting salaries in the industry and for the position being discussed.
- Indicate that you are willing to consider any reasonable offer: “I'm sure that if you make an offer it will be commensurate with my qualifications and the current salary structure for the industry.” or "I am very interested in the challenge, responsibilities and rewards of the position you may offer me."

If a verbal offer is extended at the interview, be appreciative and graciously ask for two things: (1) the offer in writing and (2) time to consider the offer. Most employers will offer an acceptance date within 2 to 8 weeks after the initial offer. If asked to make a decision on the spot, show your appreciation for the offer but say that you need time to consider such an important decision.

**Testing**

You may be tested as part of the interviewing process. This testing may consist of substance tests, behavioral questions, and writing samples, as well as standard mathematical, verbal or behavioral tests conducted as part of the interview evaluation process. Although there is little or no preparation possible for these kinds of tests, it is best to get plenty of rest the evening before a test to aid clear thinking.

In addition, after the second interview, many employers will make an offer contingent on a negative test for drugs and controlled substances. This test takes the form of a urine specimen analyzed for appearance of a substance. Be aware this test may occur and be advised that failure to submit to a drug test may end further employment consideration.

**The Offer**

While it is unlikely that you will be hired on the spot or told that an offer will definitely be forthcoming, be prepared if an offer should be extended then, always ask for a chance to think it over. Accepting immediately is poor policy because you lose your opportunity to give thorough consideration to all aspects of the offer. Even if you think the offer is exactly right, the employer’s enthusiasm and your own may cloud your objectivity. Show appreciation, but always ask for time to consider the offer as well as a formal offer in writing.

When the written offer arrives, read it carefully. It should specify your job title, salary, and the name of the department and supervisor to which you will be assigned. The offer may be contingent upon your passing a physical exam and/or drug test. It will usually have a deadline by which you must accept in writing, ranging from two to eight weeks, depending on the time of year and the current market. The actual starting date may be specified then or after your acceptance.

Keep in mind that you and the employer have different concerns about “time.” Most likely you would like ample time to hear from other employers and consider all your alternatives. Employers, on the other hand, want to know your decision as quickly as possible. If you reject their offer, they will need to quickly contact second-tier candidates.

Offer deadlines are taken quite seriously. If you do not meet the deadline, the offer may be withdrawn; if you need more time to consider an offer, ask for an extension. Be specific as to how much time you will need to make a decision. Show appreciation, enthusiasm for the offer, and emphasize the importance of making the right decision.

While making a decision on an offer, be sure to talk to all other employers who showed interest in you. Contact them directly, explaining that you are close to making a decision regarding your job search, are very interested in their opportunities, and ask about your status with them. Hopefully, they also will be able to make an offer if interested.

**OBSERVATIONS OF A PLANT TOUR**

Work environment goes beyond the physical details of the organization’s office or plant. Critical things to consider include observing employees and the organization’s culture and values.

**Observe:**
- Do people seem happy?
- Are they enthusiastic about their work?
- Are they friendly?
- Do they seem helpful?
- Do you like the people? The facilities?
- Does it seem like a good place to work?
- Do you feel comfortable with the people and the facilities?
- Do people know each other’s names including between levels?

**Notes**

- **DON’T accept an offer while at the same time hoping that a better one will come along.**
  - If you accept an offer, you are morally and ethically bound to keep it. Accepting and then changing your mind brings discredit on you, your university and references. It will ruin your chances of ever working for that employer.
In Summary

• Only consider job offers after you receive them in writing. (Co-ops and interns should consider verbal offers, although it is good to request a written offer.)
• It is acceptable to ask for additional time to consider the offer. A minimum of 2 weeks is generally offered.
• Once you accept, honor your commitment to the employer. Decline all other offers immediately to allow other candidates the opportunity. Discontinue all interviewing and other job search activities.

Should You Accept? Things to Consider:

• Will you enjoy working with your future co-workers and supervisors?
• Will you have a good opportunity to express yourself on the job?
• Is the working environment satisfactory?
• Will you be fully using your primary skills?
• Is there sufficient diversity and challenge?
• Will you be able to get the kind of feedback you require to see the results of your efforts?
• Are there open avenues of communication?
• Do you clearly understand what your responsibilities will be, to whom you will report, and how evaluations will be conducted?
• Do you clearly understand typical work hours and overtime expectations?
• Is the company product or service something you believe in?

Sample Criteria for Recruiter Evaluation of Candidates

After each interview, recruiters complete an evaluation of your skills and fit with the employer needs and culture. Each recruiter is different in his or her ability to evaluate you; each has different criteria upon which to base the evaluation. The best advice we can give you is to be honest, be confident in your examples of skill development, and be aware that recruiters will be listening to your responses to determine the most promising candidates to invite for second, on-site interviews.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRITERION</th>
<th>DEFINITION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Achievement Orientation</td>
<td>Displays achievement against a standard of excellence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis</td>
<td>Identifies issues; secures information; relates data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility</td>
<td>Ability to adapt to and work effectively within a variety of situations, and with various individuals and groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Ability to be understood and to understand others, expresses thoughts clearly, and accurately listens to others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conceptual Thinking</td>
<td>Expresses self effectively in individual and group situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer Service Orientation</td>
<td>Ability to identify patterns/connections between situations that are not obviously related, and to identify underlying issues in complex situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Leadership</td>
<td>Listens to and understands internal/external customers; anticipates needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiative</td>
<td>Ability to learn Assimilates and applies information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovation and Creativity</td>
<td>Guides individuals/groups toward task accomplishment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judgment</td>
<td>Influences events; takes action; self-starts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning/Organizing</td>
<td>Looks at problems in new ways and applies new solutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress Tolerance</td>
<td>Makes logical decisions; develops alternative actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teamwork</td>
<td>Establishes courses of action to complete goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical Expertise</td>
<td>Performs well under pressure or opposition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Standards</td>
<td>Ability to work cooperatively with others, to be part of a team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Motivation and expertise to use technical knowledge to solve problems or distribute that knowledge to others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Level of understanding deemed necessary by employer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sets high standards of performance for self and others</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTES (Remember to keep notes about your interview experience):
**Should You Negotiate?**

In many cases, YES! It does not hurt to ask. It is important to know market rates and ask, not demand. How you ask is important.

The best position from which to negotiate is to have more than one offer and strong qualifications. Generally, most students are interested in negotiating salary.

Review the following options and considerations:

- **Negotiations may not be necessary.** The job may be appealing and with a good employer. You may like the people with whom you’ll be working and the geographic location. The salary may be within the average range for an engineer with your background and experience. The benefits also may be good. The market might be tight. Then, there is no need to negotiate.

- **Timing is critical.** The opportunity to negotiate exists only between the times an offer is extended and before it is accepted.

- **Do not talk salary or negotiate until an offer has been extended.** If the recruiter discusses salary prior to making an offer, you might respond, "Perhaps we can discuss the salary once a job offer is made."

- **Base your salary negotiation on fact, not emotion.** Use cost-of-living statistics and UW-Madison or national salary averages.

- **Base salary negotiation on your market value, not on what you think you “need” or “want.”**

- **Choose negotiation items carefully.** Do not negotiate every item. Prioritize your needs. Do you feel you deserve a higher starting salary? Relocation expenses? Different start date? Another week of vacation? Does your spouse require assistance in a job search? Ask for only one or two items. Base your request on fact.

- **Be fair.** Do not be greedy. On rare occasions, job offers have been rescinded due to what has been viewed as very unrealistic candidate expectations.

- **Do not take negotiations personally.** Employers may be unwilling to negotiate some items. Accept and Decline All Offers in Writing

Once you have made the decision to accept or reject an offer, verbally accept and immediately follow-up in writing. Be sure to clarify the “start date,” relocation reimbursement, salary, and other important issues in your letter, and in particular, items that were modified during negotiations. Immediately decline (in writing) all other offers. This is a professional courtesy, as well as a way of making opportunities available for others.

Notify all other employers who are still considering you. Thank them for their interest and tell them that you have accepted another offer.

In addition, thank your references, professors and any others who served as mentors throughout this process.

**Report Job Offers to ECS**

Log in to myECS and report on the JOB OFFERS section of the website.

Note: The College of Engineering uses aggregate information for national rankings, salary surveys, and ABET accreditation.

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**Khosla-Sorum Matrix for Evaluating an Offer Using Rating System**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Work</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Advancement</th>
<th>Fellow Workers</th>
<th>Supervisor</th>
<th>Training</th>
<th>Pay/Fringe Benefits</th>
<th>Environment</th>
<th>Travel</th>
<th>Expenses</th>
<th>Performance Reviews</th>
<th>Growth/Reputation</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>My Gut Feeling</th>
<th>OVERALL RATING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Terrific - 5</td>
<td>Very Good - 4</td>
<td>Good - 3</td>
<td>Average - 2</td>
<td>Poor - 1</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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**Sources:**

- “Guide to the Company Visit,” Ralph Miranda and Robert Greenberg, University of Tennessee-Knoxville, with a grant from The Westinghouse Electric Company.
MY JOB SEARCH CHECKLIST

Step 1: Assess Skills and Accomplishment
• Reflected on strengths, abilities, preferences
• Asked friends and family for input
• Identified 3-5 strongest skills

Step 2: Develop resume and profile
• Developed targeted resume with an objective
• Contacted references
• Proofread resume and submitted it to ECS for review

Step 3: Target Employers
• Worked to expand personal and professional network through student organizations, career fairs and other activities
• Engaged in targeted career conversations with network connections and asked for additional contacts and referrals
• Developed a prioritized and targeted list of possible employers

Step 4: Contact Employers and Activate Your Network
• Used network, ECS, LinkedIn and uwalumni.com to find specific people to contact at each employer of interest
• Customized resume and cover letters for each employer of interest
• Proofread, proofread, proofread

Step 5: Practice Interviewing and Interview
• Read through list of possible interview questions, thought of specific examples to use, and practiced telling those examples out loud
• Prepared for each individual interview by doing extensive research on employer and opportunity
• Acquired appropriate interview attire

Step 6: Make Job Offer Decisions
• Carefully considered opportunities and discussed options with ECS staff
• Communicated professionally with employers to negotiate, accept and reject offers
• Report decision through myECS
Extreme Engineering Solutions designs and manufactures advanced computing products that operate in a variety of extreme environments – including for industrial, commercial, military and aerospace customers.

EXTREME BADGERS WANTED!

Founded by Wisconsin engineers, X-ES is proud to support the UW College of Engineering through job opportunities, sponsorships and classroom involvement. We hire about 40 students each year to join our thriving co-op program – and you could be next. Check out our many opportunities at xes-inc.com/careers.

Photos include just some of the 30 UW-Madison students who worked at X-ES in 2015.